

Myra Bercy-Rhodies
Freret Street Po'Boy and Donut Shop – New Orleans, LA

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Date: April 23, 2015

Location: Freret Street Po'Boy and Donut Shop – New Orleans, LA

Interviewer: Sara Roahen

Transcription: Deborah Mitchum

Length: One hour, twenty minutes

Project: The Lives and Loaves of New Orleans

Sara Roahen: This is Sara Roahen for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It's Thursday, April 23, 2015. I am on Freret Street at Freret Street Po'Boy and Donut Shop with its proprietor, and I was wondering if we could begin by your telling me your full name and, in your words, what you do for a living.

[00:00:21]

Myra Bercy-Rhodies: Okay. My name is Myra Bercy-Rhodies. What I do for a living currently is operate this restaurant. I was formerly an educator. I worked in a school system. I taught school for several years and then moved on to work at the state level in education. And after that I just decided to work this restaurant, run my own business myself full-time.

[00:01:00]

SR: What do you mean when you say that you worked at the state level in education?

[00:01:05]

MBR: I was an education consultant with the department of education, just worked with many of the charter schools in the New Orleans area and other areas in the state, providing technical support and other assistance and also compliance monitoring and stuff like that.

[00:01:28]

SR: How many years were you in education before you did this?

[00:01:30]

MBR: Thirteen years, thirteen years. Before that I was in social services, a social worker. So this is actually my third career. I was a social worker first, educator second, now entrepreneur.

[00:01:49]

SR: Before I ask you more about that transition, could you share with us your birth date, if you don't mind?

[00:01:58]

MBR: My full birth date? *[Laughs]*

[00:01:59]

SR: *[Laughs]* It's up to you.

[00:02:00]

MBR: February 16.

[00:02:03]

SR: Okay.

[00:02:04]

MBR: Do you need the year?

[00:02:06]

SR: I don't need it unless you're willing to share it. *[Laughs]*

[00:02:08]

MBR: Okay, '71.

[This portion of the interview has been omitted.]

SR: So, do you run this place by yourself?

[00:02:40]

MBR: Yes. Actually, I started it with my husband. We're divorced. I started it with him in 2009 and we ended up opening up another business in 2012, which he runs and turned it into a nightclub and bar. So I run this one and he was running the other one.

[00:03:12]

SR: Can you tell me where you were born and raised?

[00:03:17]

MBR: New Orleans, in the Ninth Ward.

[00:03:20]

SR: That's where you grew up?

[00:03:23]

MBR: Yeah, grew up in New Orleans East, primarily.

[00:03:28]

SR: Okay. Now I'd like to ask you about this transition that you made between your careers. Social work to education doesn't seem like a huge jump. From there to opening up a po-boy and donut shop on Freret Street seems like a pretty big jump. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

[00:03:50]

MBR: Well, the only thing I knew when I was taking this jump was that I knew what kind of food I wanted to serve here, and I knew what type of food I liked. And just going out to eat and eating some of the foods that were prepared that were traditional New Orleans foods, I felt like it just wasn't good enough. I don't see how they can get away with serving it. So I said to myself, well—.

[*End file one*; 00:04:26]

[00:00:00]

SR: Okay, I'm back with Myra Bercy-Rhodies. Did I say that correctly?

[00:00:07]

MBR: Yes.

[00:00:08]

SR: Okay, and we were talking about the transition between your educational careers and this career, and you started talking about how you knew what kind of food you wanted to do.

[00:00:22]

MBR: Yes. I pretty much wanted to do the type food that I grew up eating, that my grandmother, my mother, great-grandmother, that they all cooked, which was classic New Orleans Creole food. I grew up eating that all my life. So I said that, when going into some of the restaurants that we have—. A lot of people, they do New Orleans food, they cook this type of food, but I just felt like it wasn't up to par, and I felt like I knew what it was supposed to taste like and that if they can sell this in a restaurant then I know I can sell what I have. So we did it. Just took the leap of faith. I was very familiar with this area because my kids went to school up here, so I would drive up and down Freret Street every day. So I knew that it was coming up, I knew that there was a revitalization process that was going to be taking place here, so I thought that this would be the perfect spot for it and ended up finding this building.

[00:01:46]

Actually, we were supposed to start out as a sandwich shop down the street, just a small sandwich shop just selling po-boys only, nothing else. Then we ended up adding fried chicken. Then we ended up adding gumbo, then red beans and rice, then breakfast, then donuts, and then it just became what it is today. We're more than just a donut and po-boy shop; we pretty much can do it all. I mean we're doing stuffed bell peppers, smothered chicken with rice and gravy, baked chicken with garlic roasted potatoes, smothered okra with shrimp and smoked sausage—or stewed shrimp—or some people like to say shrimp étouffée—jambalaya. We do so much here, but everything we do is southern and it's Creole and it's New Orleans—everything.

[00:03:00]

SR: You said that you first were going to be a sandwich shop up the street. Was this the original location, or did you start—?

[00:03:07]

MBR: No. Well, this was the original location, because when we—. We found that building, but then we got a great offer here so we never actually moved over there. We ended up coming here and it just took off.

[00:03:22]

SR: So you answered part of my question. I'm still curious: When you decided you wanted to get out of education, you could have gone to social work, you could have opened up a clothing store—you know, a number of things. Why a restaurant? It's not less work than being in education.

[00:03:50]

MBR: It's really not. I really don't get the time off that I had in education, but when I first opened up I had a lot of help running it. I decided to work in it full-time in 2013 after being laid off from the state when there was a big layoff. I didn't want to give up my career in the beginning. I went to school; I felt like I went to school so many years for it. I went to undergrad, went to graduate school, plus more. And got all of these degrees and just put in all this time and I didn't want to give it up. But after seeking out employment and just feeling like, from the interviews and jobs, I was not going to make the money that I used to make because there were some changes in education going on, particularly here in New Orleans. That is when it was hard, and I was on both sides of the fence, but that's when I decided, "You know what? I'm going to stop looking for a job and I'm going to run this restaurant myself and run my own business."

[00:05:17]

Why this? I can't say it's something that I just said—. I can't say in the beginning I had a real passion and wanted to have a restaurant, but it happened. I think it happened because I did what I knew how to do, which made it easy. I come from a family of great cooks. I got those recipes and followed those recipes and just did what I knew, and really it's not that hard when you surround yourself with a lot of good people, so that kind of eases the burden a little.

[00:05:59]

SR: Thanks for that explanation. Can you tell me—? I mean, you mentioned that your kids went to school in this area.

[00:06:10]

MBR: Yes.

[00:06:10]

SR: I know that they're in college now already, you said, but where did they go to school? And is this the only neighborhood you were thinking of, or were you thinking of other neighborhoods?

[00:06:21]

MBR: My kids attended New Orleans Science and Math High School. And no, this was not the only neighborhood that I thought of. I thought about New Orleans East, I thought about the Lower Ninth Ward and the Upper Ninth Ward. But this was a location that, after researching the market and looking at how businesses—the success rate of mom and pop, so to speak, businesses, how well they do in a New Orleans East area versus the Lower Ninth Ward area versus this, I kind of found from the research that they exist better in a location like this as opposed to New Orleans East. You get more foot traffic coming in, which is good for a business

like this, because more people notice you. And that was one of the reasons why I chose this area, and also because they were working on revitalizing it.

[00:07:42]

SR: That was what year, when you opened?

[00:07:44]

MBR: 2009.

[00:07:45]

SR: So in 2009, Freret Street was changing, but I would say that it was still at the very beginning. I mean it wasn't a done deal.

[00:07:59]

MBR: No. At that time this was not—. This was, what, four years after Hurricane Katrina, so it was still in a rebuilding phase but building had not really started. You had one restaurant down the street, a Latin restaurant, and that was it. Then I came and we were the only two restaurants on the street, and I stayed open seven days a week, twelve hours a day. The Latin restaurant opened for lunch, then closed, then opened again for dinner. But, I was here alone for years until they looked at the success that business could drive in this neighborhood, and that's when other businesses started coming.

[00:08:58]

But the neighborhood changed, and it continues to be changing through gentrification, so that is occurring right now. You have so many—I'll use the term that they're using—"transplants" from other states moving in the neighborhood. So it's a lot of things that's going on that's changing the way the neighborhood used to be.

[00:09:30]

SR: I'm guessing that as a business owner you feel positive about the gentrification, quote, unquote.

[00:09:42]

MBR: As a business owner, I do, as long as it brings me business. [*Laughs*] I would have to say I am very positive about it as long as it brings me business, but I also see it from a different perspective too. I love diversity. I think it's a wonderful thing, and I think it should just—. It needs to stay mixed, and that is how I feel about it, because we need that in this city. It's a good thing.

[00:10:20]

SR: Yeah, I was going to ask how you felt about it as a New Orleanian, not just a business owner.

[00:10:26]

MBR: Well, personally I don't—. I like gentrification if it causes diversity, if it's going to create a mixed-raced neighborhood, but I don't like gentrification if it moves all of your natives out and just changes the whole makeup and scheme of the neighborhood—if it pushes people who have been there all of their lives out, or if it doesn't make necessary accommodations or if it doesn't do enough to cater to the people who were there. I feel like it should be an assimilation process where the new people integrate with the old people and they just create a great diverse neighborhood. I think it's good and I think diversity is good, so that is the way I would love to see gentrification.

[00:11:32]

SR: Can you tell by your clientele how it might have changed since you opened, or not changed? That was one of my questions: Has your clientele changed as the street has changed? And, if so, how?

[00:11:48]

MBR: Well, pretty much my clientele is the same it has been. I've always had a diverse clientele, which I love. A lot of that diversity comes from the neighborhood, but also from the universities, the hospitals, and all of the other businesses around here. So I can't say—. I'm not going to say as far as race and ethnicity that it has changed because it's still the same. But I'll say geographically it has changed because now I'm reaching more people. I have people coming as far as Baton Rouge. I'm not kidding. I had someone a couple of weeks ago, came here; they said—I don't know how true it is—that they drove here from Memphis to come and get a po-boy and some donuts. So, the reach is further, so that is how it's changing because I got people coming in from other places, distances, telling me they drove all the way here to eat.

[00:13:03]

SR: And that doesn't have to do with the gentrification, but what do you think that has to do with?

[00:13:07]

MBR: My marketing, and word of mouth. That's what it has to do with. It has nothing to do with gentrification.

[00:13:15]

SR: What about—? So I had problems parking here today, which is just crazy if you've lived around here long enough [*Laughs*] to have witnessed the change. I can't believe I can't

park near Freret Street. Does the competition help or hurt your business, do you think, at this point?

[00:13:35]

MBR: Oh, it's not hurting it. I think it's a great thing because it's great for the entire neighborhood. But a lot of the parking, I think, has to do with—. We got some construction going on, so that's kind of getting in the way of parking. Parking is limited by me, I think, because the streets are narrow. And then it's off-street parking. You're going to always struggle with that, so you always have to find somewhere to park when you're in a neighborhood like this that really the size of the street does not allow parking space. But it's not really hurting it that bad. It would be wonderful if I could have my own parking space for this. But, look, people find a way to find somewhere to park and get here, so it's not really that big of a problem.

[00:14:36]

SR: Yeah. No, I think in a city people are used to it. And I was kind of joking. You know, I found a parking space. [*Laughs*]

[00:14:43]

MBR: [*Laughs*]

[00:14:44]

SR: But I just, you know—.

[00:14:45]

MBR: You'll find one. You might have to drive around a little, but if you really want to get somewhere you're going to take that drive, prepare your umbrella, do whatever you have to do, and you're going to walk it until you get here.

[00:14:57]

SR: True. You know, I forgot to ask you up front, because we got into a good conversation: What is the official name of this place? How do you call it?

[00:15:06]

MBR: Freret Street Po’Boy and Donut Shop.

[00:15:09]

SR: What neighborhood do you live in?

[00:15:16]

MBR: I live in New Orleans East, all the way on the other side of town.

[00:15:21]

SR: You have a drive now, with all this construction going on.

[00:15:24]

MBR: Yes.

[00:15:25]

SR: So, I mean you’ve kind of answered the question—. You answered the question really well: why you chose this kind of food. I first found out about you as a po-boy shop, and that’s still how I identify you, maybe because that’s what I originally got here. This project is primarily about po-boys, I’m going to ask you about your other food too. But can you tell me a little bit about where you see po-boys in, you know, the importance of Creole food? Or why po-boys and not some other kind of sandwich—talk about po-boys a little bit?

[00:16:10]

MBR: To me, a po-boy is just as important as a hamburger. I think it is just as American as a hamburger, but it’s unique to us and you really can’t get—. Even if you can have the ingredients you can’t get a po-boy anywhere else but here, and it’s because the bread won’t

allow you to. Po-boy bread only lasts for a day, [*Laughs*] so you can't ship it off anywhere and set up a po-boy shop anywhere else. So I think that is one of the greatest things about it. That is the thing that makes this city so unique and so popular and well known for the po-boy: the bread. And you said: Why a po-boy? Why not? I mean it's a very good sandwich. It's—. You know, you have all varieties of them, and when I think about it, when I think about po-boys, if I start thinking about my childhood I just remember that's the type of sandwich we got for lunch. I remember my grandfather going to work and coming home with half of the ham po-boy sandwich that my grandmother made for him. She would make a real big—. I guess it was a twelve-inch. Maybe it was longer than that, I don't know, and he would come home and we would race to him to try to get that—you know, to get his lunch, to eat it.

[00:18:16]

So I just remember growing up with those sandwiches. We ate that for dinner, we ate it for lunch, and it really was not like—. It wasn't a sandwich—. I mean we would go places and get it, to po-boy shops, sandwich shops, but we also made them at home. It's just normal. It's just a very good sandwich on a very, very good bread. I can't see—. Certain things I can't eat on sliced bread. I cannot eat hot sausage on sliced bread. I can't have shrimp or oyster on a bun or sliced bread. I just can't see it. It's got to be on a po-boy. I can't see roast beef on sliced bread or a bun. It has to be on a po-boy bread.

[00:19:07]

SR: When you were growing up and you would eat those sandwiches at home, did you call them po-boys?

[00:19:13]

MBR: Yes, all the time. Then there was a certain way that we ate it. Like the oyster po-boy, which was my dad's favorite, my daddy's, he liked his with just butter. Just butter, hot sauce, and ketchup, that's it. And the bread had to be warm. So he would spread the butter on, put the oysters on and then the hot sauce and the ketchup. And he used to buy that. There was this oyster house. I can remember going as a kid. I can't even tell you the name, I don't even remember, but my parents used to go there and my daddy would get the raw oysters. But then he would get a sandwich too, and that's how he got it. We would all get the sandwich. They would get a po-boy for the kids and cut it and we'd share it and stuff. But I think out of all of them, that's my number one favorite po-boy, the oyster.

[00:20:22]

SR: Where was the oyster house?

[00:20:24]

MBR: It was on Claiborne Avenue, near the Circle Food Store. Actually I think it was right next door to it. I was so little I can't quite remember, but it was in that area. I do remember it being close to the Circle Food Store.

[00:20:43]

SR: So that's your favorite po-boy now, is oyster po-boy. How do you get it? Do you do it like your daddy did, or do you get it dressed?

[00:20:51]

MBR: Well, I like it with butter, a little hot sauce, ketchup, and lettuce and tomato. But because I try to watch calories, sometimes I eliminate the butter and I'll just do hot sauce and ketchup and lettuce and tomato. That's how I do mine.

[00:21:10]

SR: Thanks for those memories. When your grandma would make your grandpa a ham po-boy, how would she dress it?

[00:21:19]

MBR: She dressed it with mayonnaise, lettuce, tomato, pickle, and cheese, American cheese, and mustard. Which I don't like mustard, but she put mustard on it. And it was cold. She didn't grill it. It was cold.

[00:21:39]

SR: A lot of people have mentioned—. Well, a lot—. I've talked to a few people on this project so far, and ham seems to be the po-boy that people remember from their youth, the main po-boy.

[00:21:52]

MBR: Yeah. That's what I remember. That was the main po-boy. I don't know why, but it was the main po-boy. That's the po-boy that you saw the most, and maybe it was because maybe ham was the most affordable, or maybe it was the easiest. I know definitely it had to be the most easier one to take for lunch because it didn't require warming. You could take it cold and it'll still be edible when you got ready to eat it. So I'm sure that's why. But listen: we had some po-boys that other people might not talk about that my family ate also. Like my mother used to eat a liver cheese po-boy. A lot of people might not know about that, a liver cheese po-boy, or a hogshead cheese po-boy; tongue, lunch tongue or something made with tongue. I never ate it but they would eat that. My dad, my mom, my grandparents, my family, aunts, uncles, they would eat lunch tongue, a po-boy—and luncheon meat. These were the cheaper types of meat though, but you could take it for lunch.

[00:23:14]

SR: Could you describe, for the record, what liver cheese is?

[00:23:18]

MBR: Liver cheese, it's like a pâté. It's liver that's made in a pâté form and is shaped and put in some type of fat casing, a casing made of fat. It's hardened and then they slice it for sandwiches.

[00:23:46]

SR: Have you ever tried serving that here?

[00:23:49]

MBR: No. No, I haven't. We thought about it, but I don't know how many people would have purchased it, because people don't even talk about it anymore. You can't find it [in stores.] I know the younger generation, the people who are out here doing the most eating and going to restaurants the most, a lot of us don't even know about it.

[00:24:15]

SR: You do sell a ham po-boy here.

[00:24:19]

MBR: Yes, definitely.

[00:24:20]

SR: Do you serve that hot or cold?

[00:24:23]

MBR: Hot or cold, either way. Whichever way you want it.

[00:24:28]

SR: You talked about the po-boy bread earlier. I'd love to go a little deeper into that.

What is it about traditional New Orleans po-boy bread that makes you not be able to eat a roast beef or a fried seafood sandwich with a different kind of bread?

[00:24:45]

MBR: The bread is crunchy on the top and it's soft in the middle, but it's not so soft to where it would be soggy when you're eating it. So when you're eating a sandwich on po-boy bread, regardless of what you're eating, you're getting that crunchiness and that little softness in the center. But I think it's the crunchiness, and then its flavor, that it has along with the other ingredients that just make it so good. When you try that type of sandwich on a bun or sliced bread, even if you toast the bun or the bread, it still won't have that crunchiness at the top. You're not going to get that crust, and that's the difference. That's what makes it so good, to me: that crust. And even if you toast it you're not going to get it, and you're not going to get that flavor. It's just the flavor that is unique. If I could describe that flavor, I would say it tastes—. How would I say that it tastes? It's almost like a buttery flavor. The top is almost like a buttery, crunchy-type biscuit flavor. That's how I would think. But it's just not as heavy. It's light. It's very light, so it would be like a light, crunchy crust of a biscuit that's buttered.

[00:26:39]

SR: I'm trying not to get too hungry here.

[00:26:41]

MBR: *[Laughs]*

[00:26:42]

SR: Do you toast your po-boy bread?

[00:26:45]

MBR: Yes. That makes it even better, because you want it a little toasted and warm.

[00:26:51]

SR: What kind of bread do you use?

[00:26:53]

MBR: Which brand?

[00:26:54]

SR: Yeah.

[00:26:54]

MBR: Leidenheimer.

[00:26:57]

SR: Do you get that delivered every day?

[00:26:59]

MBR: Every day. You just missed the guy. [*Laughs*] Every day.

[00:27:04]

SR: Can you tell me about your po-boy menu? What kind of po-boys do you have?

[00:27:10]

MBR: We have your seafood po-boys: oyster, shrimp, fish. The meat po-boys are roast beef—of course that’s very popular. We take a round roast, we stuff that with garlic, onions, and bell peppers, and we cook it for about fourteen hours in an oven until it falls apart. Then we have hot sausage, smoked sausage, hamburger, ham, turkey. I’m trying to think. Did I miss—? We got specialty po-boys: the Freret Street Special; the po-boy club; the deluxe, which is ham, turkey, and bacon. And the Freret Street Special is roast beef, ham, and turkey with Creole mustard. You can get them all dressed.

[00:28:09]

SR: What do you mean when you say that you stuff the roast beef with those vegetables?

[00:28:15]

MBR: We actually take a knife and we cut slits into the roast and we stuff it with garlic, onions, and bell peppers. We put it inside the cavity of the roast; then we put it on top and we season it, and we cover it, and we let it roast until it falls apart.

[00:28:41]

SR: A lot of po-boy shops just buy a roast beef loaf and slice it and throw some gravy on it—

[00:28:49]

MBR: Mm hmm.

[00:28:49]

SR: —and call that—. Why don't you do that?

[00:28:52]

MBR: I don't like the way it tastes. Everything I do in here, I do it the way I like it, and that's why we actually take our time in preparing everything from scratch. I've had several customers to make the comment that the food here tastes like homemade, and the last time I was told that, my response was, "That's because it *is* homemade." It really is. We cook like you cook at home. So I'm not going to take any shortcuts with anything, especially the roast beef because I like a real roast beef. This is how I grew up eating it, so I don't want a deli roast beef. I don't want that. I want the real deal, so that's why I do it. It's more expensive to do it that way and it's more time-consuming, but it's worth it in the end because of the taste.

[00:29:57]

SR: Your roast beef is really falling apart. How long do you cook that?

[00:30:01]

MBR: About twelve to fourteen hours, and we cook it on a low fire, 200.

[00:30:07]

SR: In the oven on 200? That's really low.

[00:30:10]

MBR: Yeah. It cooks overnight.

[00:30:13]

SR: What is your most popular po-boy?

[00:30:18]

MBR: The shrimp. *[Laughs]* Everybody loves the shrimp. We actually got two: the shrimp and the hot sausage.

[00:30:28]

SR: Are the most popular?

[00:30:29]

MBR: We sell a lot of those.

[00:30:31]

SR: That's something I'm hearing over and over again: that shrimp is the most popular. You're talking fried shrimp?

[00:30:37]

MBR: Fried shrimp, and it is. I don't know. It is the most popular po-boy in New Orleans. I can tell you what the least popular is, too: the turkey. *[Laughs]* The turkey po-boy is the least popular.

[00:30:58]

SR: Why do you think that is?

[00:31:00]

MBR: It really was never a traditional po-boy. It's new. When did people start eating turkey? I can't even remember, but I mean I'm sure you remember at one time we didn't have turkey that you could buy from the deli—sliced turkey, like you had ham. People only ate turkey for Thanksgiving. I think when people think “po-boy,” they're not thinking turkey. They're not thinking healthy. If it's fatty, if it's greasy, if it's full of gravy, they want all that, because that's what makes a good po-boy.

[00:31:41]

SR: You have gravy on your roast beef po-boy, I'm guessing.

[00:31:45]

MBR: It's cooked in gravy. It's cooked in—. The gravy that we have on that roast beef is from the debris. It's the gravy that is made from cooking it. So it's just the juices from it, and we thicken it, and it's full of seasoning and stuff so it's really good.

[00:32:07]

SR: Can you get that gravy on other po-boys?

[00:32:10]

MBR: If you ask, yeah. I mean we have people who get it on French fries. We do a French fry po-boy. I forgot about that.

[00:32:17]

SR: Yeah, when you said, “Do you know what the least popular is?” I was wondering if it was the French fry po-boy. I love French fry po-boys, but I don’t know very many other people who order them.

[00:32:28]

MBR: We get a lot of—. We get more orders for a French fry po-boy than we get for turkey.

[00:32:34]

SR: What kind of people order it? Is it old-timer New Orleanians or vegetarians?

[00:32:42]

MBR: Actually, it’s young people. It’s your college students. It may be vegetarians. I never ask. I know they’re not vegetarians when they want the roast beef gravy on it, because we have debris in it. But it’s actually college-age students.

[00:33:03]

SR: What’s your position on mayo with the roast beef po-boy: yes or no?

[00:33:08]

MBR: For me, light, but not really—. I’m not a mayo person, but, yes. You got to have it. Mayo is good on it.

[00:33:20]

SR: Can you tell me a bit about your fried shrimp? I don’t need you to divulge top secrets, but if you wouldn’t mind telling us how you prepare that—maybe what kind of oil you use?

[00:33:34]

MBR: We use vegetable oil. We fry everything in that. We just take the shrimp; we have a wet-wash we put it in first, which is made of—. Well, it's a wet-wash, which is made of eggs and milk. We put it in that first, and then we flour it up in cornmeal and flour, and then we fry it. Of course we season it. The cornmeal and flour is seasoned, and we just fry it up, as simple as that.

[00:34:15]

SR: You mentioned hot sausage. Can you talk a bit about your hot sausage? I noticed on the menu that you list a specific brand.

[00:34:23]

MBR: Patton, because Patton is a tradition here. When you think hot sausage, that's what you think, Patton's. And it's been around forever, the little red and white bucket. I can remember that as a child growing up. We didn't have the patties when I was a kid, we just had the links, but when you saw that bucket you'd know you was getting a hot sausage po-boy for dinner. That's what people here love, that's all we grew up eating. And I can remember after Katrina [Hurricane Katrina in 2005] when everybody evacuated and we were in Texas—or wherever people were—it was hard on people because certain dishes—like your gumbo. We put it in gumbo. When you wanted gumbo, you had to have this Patton's hot sausage. When you wanted hot sausage, we were craving it, Patton's. So I think some kind of way we got a hold of Patton's. They were destroyed in the Ninth Ward, but I think they came back somewhere else, and we got a hold and people started ordering Patton's and having it shipped to Texas.

[00:35:38]

The thing I have to say about New Orleanians is we got to have our food, and it's a certain brand that we want and we have to have it. Nothing else can substitute. Nothing else can

substitute. And I can say that for the beans too, the red beans. Gotta be Camellia. No other beans will do.

[00:36:05]

SR: Do you think that if you had a pot that wasn't made with Camellia beans, you would notice?

[00:36:12]

MBR: Yes. I've had it before, in Texas and other places. We notice, and it's not just the red beans; it's the white beans too. I don't know how, but we notice. You know the difference.

[00:36:29]

SR: Can you describe the difference of the beans?

[00:36:31]

MBR: Well, a different brand, either the beans—sometimes they don't cook as soft. They don't get as plump. They're a little hard, or they could be a little dark sometimes, too dark. Sometimes they have a starchy flavor, like it's too grainy or starchy and you can taste all of that in the cooking. I don't know how it's like that, but that's what it comes out to be. Camellia, when you soak it overnight it plumps up, it's very, very creamy. And if you get a real good fresh pack, it doesn't come out dark. It's not a real dark bean. It's reddish-pinkish-looking, and that's when you know it's really good.

[00:37:20]

SR: I'm with you on that. And the Patton's hot sausage—so, I mostly see patties. Do you do patties here?

[00:37:30]

MBR: We do patties. We have links, but we use that for gumbo.

[00:37:36]

SR: Can you describe the flavor of Patton's versus other hot sausages?

[00:37:41]

MBR: Well, Patton's has a—. It's not just heat that you're tasting when you're eating Patton's. I've tasted hot sausage that was just heat, but you don't taste the onions, you don't taste garlic, you don't taste the paprika, the parsley. But in Patton's you can taste the garlic, you can taste the other seasonings and the other flavors. So it has not just heat but flavor, and that's what you're looking for. Now there is another hot sausage that I grew up eating, if you want to know it. It's made by—and I don't even think they're in business—Bachemin's, and they made a very good hot sausage. They used to make it in their shop right next to the Circle Food Store, and they had all this stuff in it and you could see it and it was really good. My mouth is watering talking about them. But other than that, I've not tasted a good hot sausage from anybody else. I won't even buy it.

[00:39:05]

SR: I don't think they're open anymore. They were open when I first moved here, but not anymore.

[00:39:10]

MBR: He was making it—. Yeah, I don't think so. I wish I could find them. But, yeah, they're not.

[00:39:18]

SR: Do you have a—? Are you particular about your mayo?

[00:39:22]

MBR: Yes. Kraft or Hellmann only. That’s it. But I’m not a mayo person, if you’re talking about my palate. But certain things I’ll eat it on, and those things I would only eat [with] Kraft or Hellmann. I grew up eating Blue Plate. My mom cooked with that. That’s all we had in the house, and I didn’t like mayo at that time so I wasn’t crazy about it. But today that’s what I buy, but a lot of people in my family still buy Blue Plate and they won’t have any other.

[00:40:02]

SR: That’s a local brand.

[00:40:05]

MBR: Yes.

[00:40:06]

SR: If somebody comes into your shop and orders a po-boy “dressed,” what does that mean?

[00:40:13]

MBR: “Dressed” means mayonnaise, lettuce, tomato, and pickle. That’s it.

[00:40:19]

SR: And you do that for every po-boy.

[00:40:22]

MBR: Every po-boy. Unless, you know—with the seafood, that’s what “dressed” is, but some people know—. If you don’t say it we won’t do it, but “dressed” can also include ketchup and hot sauce, but you have to say it. And if you want mustard, but you have to say it, because traditionally “dressed” is mayo, lettuce, tomato, and pickle.

[00:40:46]

SR: I lost my po-boy train of thought here. I'll take a new tack for a minute. You said earlier, way earlier in our conversation, that you knew you wanted to do traditional Creole cooking. Do you identify as a Creole? Are you Creole?

[00:41:08]

MBR: Yes. My family is.

[00:41:11]

SR: Could you tell, for the record, for people who aren't familiar with New Orleans culture, what that means?

[00:41:17]

MBR: Well, everybody has—. There have been so many definitions about what a Creole is. First thing, the way it's read or the way it's defined here that I've found, is that a Creole person is a person who is of African descent but who is also mixed with French, Spanish, or Native American. My background is all four: African American, French, Spanish, and Native American. I have a very strong, strong Native American background. But then Creole is also a culture, and that culture is based on food, a way of life, just a way of living. Even in the same state—we identify with Creole in one way here, in the southern region of Louisiana or in New Orleans. But then when you go to places like Opelousas or Lafayette, they have Creole too, but theirs is a lot different than ours. I live here and I don't understand it too. [*Laughs*] But then you have another group of Creoles who were descendants from France, and they're the Caucasian Creoles, so that's a whole other thing.

[00:42:54]

But as far as me and my family, we're the Creoles of color. That's how we're defined, and when I—because I kind of dabble a little bit in genealogy and researching. I had a great-

great-great-grandfather who was born in France named John Vigne that's on my father's side. On my mother's side, my great-great-grandmother, who was my grandfather's mother, is listed on a Dawes roll. She's 100 percent Cherokee Indian. Her, her sisters, they're listed on that roll. But if you look at my grandfather and my mother, those features are very strong in my family. Then we had a relative who was, from what I understand, born—. My great-grandfather on my father's side was born in one of the Latin American countries—I think Cuba or Honduras or somewhere—and in the household growing up you wouldn't think it, and I realize that now some of the foods that we ate wasn't—. It's in those cultures. Like fried plantains. My grandmother used to cook that. We ate—. I'm trying to think of—. My mom used to make the corn maque choux, which is Native American. She cooked a lot of Native American dishes. So I just grew up eating a whole lot of different types of food.

[00:44:52]

SR: Would your mom refer to those foods as Native American, or you just—?

[00:44:55]

MBR: She never did.

[00:44:56]

SR: You know in retrospect.

[00:44:57]

MBR: I know now from just studying it. But growing up, no. She just called it what it was, corn maque choux or whatever. She used to cook the succotash with the corn, shrimp, sausage, and a mixture of stuff. I can't even [re]call all that stuff, but it was good. They just never said where it came from. It's a lot of things they did but they just never identified where it came from.

[00:45:31]

SR: Well, like you said, it's a way of life.

[00:45:34]

MBR: Yeah, it was just a way of life. You learned it; it was just passed down from generation to generation to generation, and you just picked up on it.

[00:45:45]

SR: Did people in your family tell you about the ancestry, the Native American and the Latin American ancestry, or was that all things you learned when you started researching?

[00:45:56]

MBR: They talked about it, but I mean the oral history was like this: "Mama Ida was Indian and she had long, long hair," and all of this kind of stuff. They talked about it that way. They would say, "My daddy's daddy, he wasn't born here. He was from another country. I think he was Spanish," and he was this and that. And my great-grandmother's grandfather was born in France, so they would say that. We know because my maiden name is—. Well, that is not his name, it's Vigne, but my maiden name is Bercy. It's a French name. But I don't know too much about that. So, from the oral you take bits and pieces and you start to put that together. But then when I started doing the research I did get some birth certificates, death certificates, and all of these type of things that actually show like my great-grandmother's—that her dad came from France. So putting those things together, that is how I was able to confirm some of that.

[00:47:20]

SR: Mama Ida—is that who you said was the Native American?

[00:47:25]

MBR: Yeah.

[00:47:26]

SR: Yeah. Did she live in New Orleans?

[00:47:28]

MBR: Actually she—. They didn't live in New Orleans. They lived in, I believe, Assumption Parish. I'm not absolutely sure on all of that. I believe Assumption Parish.

[00:47:45]

SR: I really like your gumbo, and I notice on the menu that you call it "Creole Gumbo." What makes it Creole to you, that gumbo that you serve? And describe it a little bit, if you would?

[00:47:58]

MBR: Well, I think it's the ingredients we put in it, Creole filé gumbo. It's a filé gumbo, but it's not the typical type of gumbo you get in a lot of the restaurants here. It's not a shrimp gumbo, just shrimp. It's not a chicken and sausage gumbo, just chicken and sausage. It's a full-bodied gumbo with shrimp, smoked sausage, hot sausage, and chicken. What else do we put in there? Shrimp, smoked sausage, hot sausage, and chicken. And it's a thicker roux, and we put filé in it also. I think that's, to me, what makes it a Creole gumbo: because it's the type of gumbo that, anywhere in New Orleans, if you go in an African American neighborhood and if you go to somebody's house and you get a bowl of gumbo, you're going to see that plus more—the crabs and all this other stuff. So it'll be a lot of meat in it, but it'll be cooked like that, and that's why I call it that.

[00:49:04]

SR: Is there okra in that gumbo?

[00:49:06]

MBR: No, but when you're thinking about a Creole gumbo, a Creole okra gumbo is really the real Creole, because this is a Creole filé gumbo. But the okra gumbo, which is my favorite—we put all those meats in that, too, along with tomato. Tomato is really the base of Creole cooking, and when you put the tomato in it, that's what really makes it Creole.

[00:49:35]

SR: So you don't put any okra or tomato in this one.

[00:49:38]

MBR: No, but we do have a dish that we cook—the smothered okra with shrimp and smoked sausage—that we put tomato and okra in.

[00:49:46]

SR: With the gumbo—there will be people reading this or listening to this that don't know what filé is. Could you tell us what that is and why you use it, what you think it adds to the gumbo?

[00:50:02]

MBR: Okay. Filé is actually a leaf. It comes from a filé tree, a saffron—am I saying that right?—a sassafras tree. And it was derived from the Native Americans. It's ground up and made into a powder and it's used actually to thicken sauces. It's a thickener, but it also has a little flavor. I can't see having a gumbo without it. A filé gumbo, it has its own little flavor, but you got to be careful when you're using it. You don't want to use too much, and it's kind of brownish-green. But you can use it for more than gumbo. If you're making a sauce, a gravy, you can put that in it to thicken it up if you don't want to use flour.

[00:50:58]

SR: Have you ever done that?

[00:51:01]

MBR: I use it when I'm making shrimp étouffée or the crawfish étouffée; anything that has that Creole/Cajun flavor I'll use it. But if I'm making like a smothered pork chop or a smothered chicken or something like that, I won't use it for that because I don't want that flavor.

[00:51:23]

SR: This is difficult, but could you describe the flavor for me a little bit?

[00:51:30]

MBR: Of the gumbo?

[00:51:31]

SR: The filé.

[00:51:32]

MBR: It is difficult. It's almost like a wood type of flavor. It's not sweet. It's nutty. It's a nutty flavor. That's how I would describe it: it's a nutty type of flavor. But when it blends with your thyme and all of those other seasonings it balances out really good. That's the only way I can describe it.

[00:52:17]

SR: You're really good at describing flavors.

[00:52:20]

MBR: *[Laughs]* Thank you.

[00:52:22]

SR: I would say that this is not just happenstance, that you ended up in the food business.

[00:52:26]

MBR: Probably not. *[Laughs]*

[00:52:29]

SR: And you said that there's also roux. Do you start with a roux, and what color do you get your roux?

[00:52:39]

MBR: We do start with a roux. It's like a caramel color, a dark caramel color. Dark brown.

[00:52:47]

SR: Is there anything—? You know, I've done a lot of gumbo interviews too, and there are a lot of rules. But for every rule I find someone who's breaking the rule.

[00:53:01]

MBR: *[Laughs]*

[00:53:02]

SR: Do you have any gumbo rules, not just in the restaurant, but in general? Like things that you would not put together, or things that you would not put in a gumbo?

[00:53:12]

MBR: Well, when you're doing a roux—this is the rule that I learned from my mother—you got to brown the roux really, really good. You got to get it dark. It has to be caramel color or else your gumbo or whatever you're cooking with that roux will taste like flour. It won't even have a flavor, it'll just taste like flour. And when I learned to cook roux—trial and error, just cooking it—when I didn't brown it the right way, my food did taste like flour. It didn't taste good. So, that's one. The other one is when you're making a roux, of course you're using oil, cooking oil, and you're browning it in that. My mama told me that the secret—. This is how you know when your roux is ready: when the grease comes up. When it's full of grease at the top,

that's when your roux is done and it has flavor. If the grease hasn't come up, it's not done. The other thing is: you don't make a roux with water; you make it with grease. *[Laughs]* So if you're thinking about, you know, cutting calories and stuff like that, water is not going to get it. What else? I think those are the things. Those are the rules that I grew up with.

[00:54:49]

SR: I've never heard anybody say it that way, but that makes a lot of sense to me. I feel like there's a certain comfort level reached once I see the oil and the flour sort of separate.

[00:55:02]

MBR: Yes, and that brings in that flavor that you get. It's a flavor that, when you combine that with your seasonings—your onions, your bell peppers, garlic, and all of this other stuff—and you mix all of that up together, that, along with that roux, when it's cooked right, it just balances out and all of those flavors come together and it gives it the flavor. And when you're eating it, you don't taste flour. You don't taste white flour, and that's what you're trying to cook out of it.

[00:55:46]

SR: How long do you cook your gumbo once everything's together?

[00:55:50]

MBR: The roux or the gumbo itself?

[00:55:52]

SR: The gumbo.

[00:55:53]

MBR: Once everything is together, I would say about two hours. About two, depending on the size of the pot too. The larger the pot, the longer it'll take.

[00:56:07]

SR: How do you know it's done?

[00:56:09]

MBR: When the grease floats to the top, because you still have more grease. Even though you'll separate that grease from your roux, in the cooking process you're going to have grease that's going to come from your ingredients as well as the roux. When that grease comes to the top, that is when you know it's done, and you let it cool and you skim all that grease off.

[00:56:35]

SR: Okay, thanks. What kind of oil do you use? You said "cooking oil." Vegetable oil, canola oil?

[00:56:42]

MBR: You can use whatever kind you want, but traditionally I grew up in a household where my mother used vegetable oil. But some people do it with Pam. I learned to do it with Pam. I won't tell my mother that, though.

[00:56:55]

SR: The spray?

[00:56:56]

MBR: Yes, to cut calories.

[00:56:59]

SR: How do you get enough grease?

[00:57:03]

MBR: Spray enough Pam. You got to spray a lot of Pam in the skillet, and you have to use a nonstick skillet. Now, I'll be honest: it's not as good as the one with the grease, but it's good. It's without the fat.

[00:57:18]

SR: I love talking about gumbo because I learn something new every single time.

[00:57:23]

MBR: *[Laughs]*

[00:57:23]

SR: I've never heard of that.

[00:57:25]

MBR: Yes, yes. When you want to cook healthy, there are ways that you can take the food that we grew up eating. I've learned to take those same recipes and make them healthier and cut out the fat.

[00:57:43]

SR: Do you do that at the restaurant, or are you just talking at home?

[00:57:45]

MBR: Home, just home. I don't know if everybody would buy it—you know, would want it. People come here because they want that.

[00:57:53]

SR: Do you—? Is this how you cook at home, this kind of food? Or do you tire of it?

[00:58:00]

MBR: I cook this type of food at home, but I also cook other types of food. My daughter actually does a lot of cooking for me at home too. We cook food from other nationalities. Just all

types. I mean I grew up with a very, very—. Even though my mom cooked Creole food, we still ate food from other cultures. So we got recipes from other cultures and we tried them out, and if we liked them we still cook them today.

[00:58:37]

SR: Can you give me an example?

[00:58:39]

MBR: Okay. I got a recipe, an African recipe from Africa. It was a curry chicken, some type of curry chicken, curry coconut chicken. It was made with tomatoes, curry, coconut milk, and I cooked it and it was very good and we ate it over rice. The flavor, which was my first time ever eating something like this, was a spicy coconut-type flavor, and it was a red sauce, and we ate it over rice. I can't remember what I had with that, but it was very good. So that was an African dish that I got off the internet. Another dish—my daughter made some kind of French dish, and it's not the type of French cooking we do here, that Cajun. It's from France, but I can't remember what it was. But we would do—. Just last week my daughter made Hunan chicken, or something like that, a Chinese dish. So, stuff like that.

[01:00:12]

SR: You experiment.

[01:00:13]

MBR: Yeah, and I mean real experimenting, not your Americanized versions of these foods. We kind of get the traditional culture. So I have a friend who's Middle Eastern that I'm getting a recipe from, and I'm going to cook that moussaka, or something like that.

[01:00:33]

SR: That's good. Your kids—how many kids do you have?

[01:00:37]

MBR: Three.

[01:00:38]

SR: Do any of them work here?

[01:00:41]

MBR: My daughter does, but part-time.

[01:00:45]

SR: Is that the same daughter you're talking about cooking at home?

[01:00:49]

MBR: Yes.

[01:00:50]

SR: What's her name?

[01:00:51]

MBR: Teira. She's a full-time student at UNO. Actually she's graduating next month, in May.

[01:00:59]

SR: Congratulations.

[01:01:00]

MBR: Thank you. That's my second one out.

[01:01:03]

SR: Will she—? Do you see any of your kids as one day taking over this business? Or are they on to their own thing?

[01:01:12]

MBR: They want to do their own thing, but I do believe my youngest child may, in the future.

[01:01:19]

SR: And that's a boy or a girl?

[01:01:21]

MBR: Boy. But right now he'll tell you no, he doesn't want to work in a restaurant. But I kind of think he may, once he matures.

[01:01:33]

SR: What is the age range of your kids?

[01:01:36]

MBR: Twenty-five, twenty-three, and nineteen.

[01:01:40]

SR: So the youngest one is just out of school.

[01:01:44]

MBR: Yes, mm hmm.

[01:01:46]

SR: What is his name?

[01:01:48]

MBR: Noel.

[01:01:49]

SR: Thanks. I don't know of a lot of African-American-owned po-boy shops. Am I looking in the wrong place, or is that an accurate assessment?

[01:02:07]

MBR: I can't say that I know of any either. I know of one. I believe they—. They're not labeled a po-boy shop, but they're on Claiborne Avenue: Crump's. They were around before the hurricane. But I have to agree with you. I can remember coming up, even in middle school and high school; I remember one that was called Blake's Sandwich Shop. Then there was another one. I can't even remember the name, but I remember having some in the neighborhood. But today, no. I have to agree with you. I don't know of any.

[01:02:53]

SR: Any ideas why that is?

[01:02:56]

MBR: I think that maybe their kids had the same mindset that my children have today. A lot of these mom-and-pops probably did well, probably made a good amount of money, was able to send their children to college, and they might have gotten good careers and went on to just focusing on their career and just went into a different path. Then as the parents aged out the business shut down and it just didn't come back. I don't think—. When young people look at small, you know, businesses like this, they don't want to deal with the headaches. Then if you grew up in this and you look at your parents, how much time they had to dedicate to it and work it, you know, a lot of young people are like, "Why do this when I can just go get a job and work forty hours a week and get paid and just have a normal life?" I would think maybe that's why. And maybe the desire to just do something different.

[01:04:18]

SR: On that note—this is usually my last question. I have a couple more questions for you, but it makes sense to ask this now. What are the biggest challenges for you in this job, in this business, and what do you like about it the most?

[01:04:37]

MBR: I would say the biggest challenge is trying to stay afloat when business slows down, because every restaurant goes through that season where it gets slow and you have to try to pay your employees, stock the place, and stay open and be able to carry it when you're not making enough money to do that—and also pay the bills. So that is the biggest, biggest challenge of all: just staying afloat during those times. I would have to say the most rewarding thing about it is seeing customers happy with your product. I think when I have customers that come in and tell me that they drove from Baton Rouge to get a po-boy, or that they had to stop here this morning because they were feening these donuts, you know, it makes you feel good. Even when you want to give up, you just feel like you have something that people really enjoy, and my employees, my cook, they'll all—. Everybody in here, we love seeing people happy with their food. So at the end of the day that is what makes your day: when they're happy.

[01:06:17]

SR: Those donuts are really good. So, I assumed—. Even though it's the po-boys I associate this place with, I kind of assumed that the donuts came first. Because why would somebody decide to add a thing later on that required them to get up in the middle of the night?

[Laughs] Why did you add donuts?

[01:06:47]

MBR: Actually, because they didn't have a donut shop uptown. And the donut actually, we thought, was a silly idea. It was a joke at first. It was actually a joke, because we thought about—. In California they have Roscoe's Chicken and Waffles, so we made a joke: Freret Street Po'Boys and Donuts. It was a joke, but then we thought about it: this could really work. And we did it, not thinking about the hours or anything. It was just something that—. It just happened.

We went with it and it became very popular, and now we got people who know about us—especially people who didn't grow up eating po-boys. They think that when they come here they got to get the po-boy and they got to get a donut. You have to eat them together. They complement each other; they have to go together.

[01:08:06]

SR: That is really funny, because it is the chicken and waffle association. They're making that association.

[01:08:14]

MBR: Yes, and that's what it is, so people are—you know, they associate the donut with the po-boy. I've had somebody who came in here and asked for a donut and asked what kind of po-boy do I recommend with the donut, and I was like, "Any kind you want. It's all good with the donut, any po-boy you want." *[Laughs]*

[01:08:43]

SR: It is true that—. I mean I guess—. I don't even really know if it was a post-Katrina phenomenon, but there was a span of time when there weren't donuts at all in this area. There are now, but I remember feeling really relieved when—. I was at the playground with my son and somebody said, "Where can I get donuts?" And I started like, "Oh, you can't," and then I could refer them here. We do have more donuts now, but I'm guessing that's actually maybe even good that people associate this area with donuts now.

[01:09:20]

MBR: Yeah, I think it's very good. Because actually the donuts and that association—we were a new business, and everybody knows a new start-up is very difficult in the beginning and some of them don't last, so you have to have a product that's going to sustain you in order to last.

And those donuts did that because we were the only one up here. But we also have breakfast, too, but we were the only ones up here doing donuts when we opened.

[01:09:56]

SR: Had you made a donut before?

[01:09:59]

MBR: Me, myself? No. [*Laughs*]

[01:10:03]

SR: You just knew who to hire to get the job done.

[01:10:05]

MBR: Yes, yes, knew who to get to get the job done. We started out making them; I helped out a little. But just people in my family who worked in donut shops in the past kind of followed the recipe and knew how to get it done.

[01:10:25]

SR: Tell me just briefly what kind of donuts you have. Are they all pretty traditional?

[01:10:32]

MBR: Pretty traditional basic donuts. Nothing fancy. We got glazed vanilla, chocolate glazed, frosted glazed, cake donuts iced and un-iced, raspberry jelly-filled, and cream—Bavarian cream. And you can get it powdered or glazed. We also have apple fritter and honey buns, and that's it.

[01:10:59]

SR: You've mentioned your mom a lot as a person and a cooking inspiration. Is she still alive?

[01:11:07]

MBR: Yes, she is. She could tell you some stories too, about cooking and just anything else.

[01:11:13]

SR: I imagine you had some questions for her as you were developing recipes for this place.

[01:11:19]

MBR: Oh, yes. When we opened, I got the recipes from her for the gumbo, for the red beans and rice. She told me exactly how much seasoning I would need, how many onions to cut up, how many bell peppers, garlic—whatever I'm using. So I got on the phone and called her.

[01:11:43]

SR: So when you say she gave you the recipes, she didn't give you something handwritten? She gave you an oral recipe?

[01:11:48]

MBR: Yeah. She just said, "Okay, you're going to need this," and I wrote it. As she was telling me, I wrote it.

[01:11:53]

SR: Do you have your recipes written down now?

[01:11:58]

MBR: I got them written down, yeah.

[01:12:02]

SR: Is there anything—? I'm going to—. You've given me a lot of time, which I really appreciate, and I'm going to let you go. But is there anything that I haven't asked that you would like to say about po-boys or the business or the neighborhood?

[01:12:17]

MBR: Well, hmm. To wrap it all up, I would say—and I'm going to reverse the order. With the neighborhood, the neighborhood is thriving and alive and it's wonderful, and I'm hoping to be here for a very, very long time. As far as business, business is doing good. I'm reaching a larger audience, as I said, and I want to continue to do that, and I'm going to continue—. I will never change my product. I will never take shortcuts. We're going to continue cooking this food the way we cook it at home, from scratch, taking our time and doing it the way that we like it. And as far as po-boys, we take our time with that too, and I just think a po-boy is the best sandwich you can get in America. That's all I have to say about that. To me, it is the best.

[01:13:34]

SR: Thank you so much. I didn't ask your mom's name. I think I should have her name in here.

[01:13:40]

MBR: Her name is Merial, M-e-r-i-a-l. And I have to add I also got recipes from my mother-in-law, Terry, and they both cooked alike.

[01:13:58]

SR: There weren't any big battles?

[01:14:02]

MBR: No big battles. They both respected each other's flavor, but they were so much alike.

[01:14:07]

SR: And Terry, she also grew up locally and is also Creole—identifies as Creole?

[01:14:14]

MBR: Yes.

[01:14:15]

SR: Okay. Well, thank you so much for giving me your time and your story. I'm really happy that we're including this in this project.

[01:14:24]

MBR: So am I, and I really appreciate you asking about the background because you really would not have a real understanding of the food unless you understand the culture and the background of the person. So, great questions.

[01:14:41]

SR: Thank you. Thanks a lot.

[01:14:46]

END OF INTERVIEW