

**Brenda Placide**  
**Brenda's Dine-In & Take-Out – New Iberia, LA**

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Date: February 9, 2011  
Location: Brenda's Place – New Iberia, LA  
Interviewer: Sara Roahen, Southern Foodways Alliance  
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs  
Length: 51 minutes  
Project: Lunch Houses of Acadiana – Louisiana

**[Begin Brenda Placide Interview]**

**00:00:01**

**Sara Roahen:** This is Sara Roahen for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It’s Wednesday, February 9, 2011. I’m in New Iberia, Louisiana at Brenda’s Place—?

**00:00:12**

**Brenda Placide:** Brenda’s Dine-In and Take-Out. Yes, Miss Sara is here visiting with me at Brenda’s Dine-In & Take-Out, straight from Mama’s kitchen.

**00:00:21**

**SR:** Could you tell me—for the record, could you pronounce your name for me and tell me your birth date?

**00:00:27**

**BP:** My birthday is March 30, 1947. And what else you asked me?

**00:00:33**

**SR:** Your name?

**00:00:35**

**BP:** My name is Brenda Placide.

**00:00:37**

**SR:** Thank you. Miss Brenda, could you describe to me your profession?

**00:00:41**

**BP:** Culinary cook. I love to cook. And this is one of my best, best enjoyment—is cooking. My cooking, I put a lot of love into it so that's why it's so special.

**00:00:54**

**SR:** Can you tell me a little bit about the history of this restaurant, when you opened it, and how you came to open it?

**00:01:01**

**BP:** Well to tell you the truth, my brother—I have one brother and he was working at Morton Salt and they were looking for some good plate lunches. So my brother asked me, he said, *Would you be interested in cooking for the guys at Morton Salt?* I said, *Okay.* Believe it or not I started with about 10 plate lunches and it's wind(ed) up to 50, and then it wind(ed) up to 100. Then the word got out that Miss Brenda was cooking, but I was cooking out of my kitchen at home. Then it got so big and I had most of the business with no license. So by that time people started reporting to the Board of Health. So I spoke to my mother and I said, *Mama, I think I'm going to open me a little restaurant.*

**00:01:45**

And these words she told me: she said, *Well if you open up a restaurant for the love of money you're going to have a short haul. But if you open it up for the love of the food you're*

*going to have a long haul.* She was telling me the truth. I've been here 23 years by the blessing of God and my mother teaching me how to cook at a young age.

**00:02:07**

So that's why I was so successful in Brenda's Dine-In & Take-Out, straight from Mama's kitchen.

**00:02:15**

**SR:** What year was that then that you opened?

**00:02:16**

**BP:** That was in about—hmm I've been here 23 years, so that would have been like in '89, '90.

Somewhere around there.

**00:02:24**

**SR:** So are you saying Morton Salt?

**00:02:25**

**BP:** Morton Salt.

**00:02:26**

**SR:** Oh, I didn't realize that that was in New Iberia.

**00:02:29**

**BP:** Yes.

**00:02:31**

**SR:** It still is?

**00:02:31**

**BP:** Still is; still going strong. But that’s how I started cooking.

**00:02:36**

**SR:** Did you have a profession before that?

**00:02:38**

**BP:** No, most of the time my—most of my work was at the nursing home, cooking in the kitchen at the nursing home and working at Bayou Oak Catering Service. I always did be affiliated with food.

**00:02:51**

**SR:** Oh okay, so there was a little bit of a precedent for that. Bayou Oak?

**00:02:56**

**BP:** Uh-hm.

**00:02:59**

**SR:** And so the restaurant always existed in this spot?

**00:03:05**

**BP:** Always did. For the 23 years that I've been opened it's been right here. Hopefully one day I can get a larger restaurant because you could—it's amazing how many lunches I get out. I have a very small kitchen but I turn out some plate lunches in that kitchen a day.

**00:03:21**

**SR:** About how many? Do you know?

**00:03:23**

**BP:** Roughly I say I would turn out about maybe about 70--80 plate lunches to 100 a day, out of that little bitty kitchen.

**00:03:31**

**SR:** And how many seats do you have in here?

**00:03:32**

**BP:** You could—I could sit about 25 people, but mostly my orders is to take out.

**00:03:37**

**SR:** People drop by?

**00:03:40**

**BP:** Yeah, and they order their food. Most of the companies order their food and come pick it up for their workers and they take it to-go. That's why it's dine-in or take-out. But the majority of the orders are take-out.

**00:03:49**

**SR:** Can you tell me a little bit about the food, what some of your specialties are?

**00:03:55**

**BP:** My specialty, they love my red beans and sausage. They loved my fried chicken. And one thing they love—Miss Sara has to taste my bread pudding because this recipe is the recipe that my mother gave me years ago. So this is the recipe—mostly my recipes come straight from my mother's.

**00:04:12**

**SR:** Really? Did she ever have a business or was she—?

**00:04:16**

**BP:** No, never did, but my mother worked in a lot of people's kitchens cooking. And at a young age—a lot of time when she had to go do housework or cooking, she would take me at a young age. So I just--it just stayed with me.

**00:04:30**

**SR:** Right. Can you tell me a little bit about the bread pudding, or is it a secret?

**00:04:34**

**BP:** No, ma'am. My mother used to make that for us when we were young. And it's just old stale fresh bread—French bread. And you take it and you soak it in—the key to it is not evaporated, but you got to use the canned milk. That's the key to the bread pudding. You see, and you put your other ingredients—your egg, your pineapple, banana, whatever you want to put in it. But the key to it is French bread. Not sliced bread; French bread.

**00:05:05**

**SR:** And do you soak it overnight, or you just soak it—?

**00:05:08**

**BP:** No, ma'am. When you get it—when I get here in the morning I soak it in that Carnation milk, the canned milk. It doesn't have to be Carnation because there's so many varieties of canned milk now. So you just soak it and let it get soft and then you put your eggs in it, and then you put your sugar, a little vanilla, pineapple, whatever you want to put—bananas. People put raisins; different things in there. But my customers don't like all that so I just make it nice and plain for them.

**00:05:30**

**SR:** You don't put anything but bread?



**00:05:32**

**BP:** Bread, sugar, eggs, vanilla, cinnamon, a little nutmeg, and that's my bread pudding.

**00:05:38**

**SR:** And does that come with a lunch or is that separate?

**00:05:41**

**BP:** It comes with the lunch.

**00:05:42**

**SR:** I've noticed that in this area lot of times a dessert comes with a lunch.

**00:05:46**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am. I put dessert with my lunches. Now a lot of people don't serve dessert but every day I have a dessert.

**00:05:54**

**SR:** What are some of the other ones?

**00:05:55**

**BP:** Peach cobbler. They love my peach cobbler.

**00:06:02**

**SR:** I’m getting hungry. And so you mentioned fried chicken.

**00:06:05**

**BP:** Fried chicken. Southern fried chicken.

**00:06:06**

**SR:** Can you get that every day or is that just a certain day?

**00:06:09**

**BP:** No, just on Mondays and Thursdays—my fried chicken. That’s what she—the lady just asked for fried chicken but I only do it on Mondays and Thursdays.

**00:06:19**

**SR:** Do you have a wet batter for that?

**00:06:21**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am.

**00:06:24**

**SR:** And your red beans—when do you do those?

**00:06:27**

**BP:** On Mondays and Thursdays. They love my red beans; they almost better than Popeye’s.

**00:06:34**

**SR:** Do you have a secret ingredient for that?

**00:06:36**

**BP:** Yes, I sure do.

**00:06:38**

**SR:** Not sharing?

**00:06:38**

**BP:** I’m not sharing that. That’s one of my big sellers, red beans. They love my red beans.

**00:06:44**

**SR:** How about today—can you tell us about the menu today?

**00:06:46**

**BP:** Today we have baked chicken, smothered pork chops, pork roasts, baked spaghetti. They love the baked spaghettis. And we have smothered okra. Now the okra, a lot of people don’t put up okra, but when okra season comes around—that’s like in the summertime—I put up like 200 bushels of okra. I have an okra cutter and like I say, this is straight from Mama’s kitchen. This little place here, this type of food, people from all over the world come here to eat because this food is like straight from Mama’s and your grandmother, your auntie, like back in the olden

days. You could go to different restaurants but you can't find this particular type of food. So that's why the food is so special.

**00:07:26**

**SR:** So you don't buy your frozen okra? You put it up yourself?

**00:07:29**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am.

**00:07:30**

**SR:** What do you mean, an okra cutter?

**00:07:32**

**BP:** It's a little cutter that cuts the okra up for you. Long (ago) you had to cut it by hand, but now I was blessed with an okra cutter so it don't take but a half an hour—maybe 20 minutes—to cut a bushel of okra.

**00:07:45**

**SR:** I've never seen one of those. Do you have that here?

**00:07:46**

**BP:** No, it's at home.

**00:07:49**

**SR:** What does it look like?

**00:07:50**

**BP:** It's a little machine like this [*Gestures toward a computer printer*].

**00:07:54**

**SR:** Oh okay, like a printer?

**00:07:55**

**BP:** Like a printer, and it has some blades and you put like maybe five okra on them blades and just press down and it goes in a five gallon bucket.

**00:08:04**

**SR:** I see.

**00:08:06**

**BP:** So that's why—and okra is very—they loved smothered okra. Not like the frozen okra; it has too much slime. You can't get that slime out. But you know my okra, I cut the okra, I precook them in the oven, and then I vacuum-seal them and put them in the freezer.

**00:08:23**

**SR:** I see. So they're precooked, so they're just ready to—it doesn't take long to cook it then?

**00:08:28**

**BP:** Uh-hm. Because I cook all the slime out of them before I vacuum-seal them.

**00:08:32**

**SR:** Where do you have this big freezer?

**00:08:33**

**BP:** At my house. At my house. I have a special freezer because my son has a restaurant in Arlington—Damian’s Cajun Soul Café. So what I do, I put so many bushels of okra because I supply him with okra. You see, so that’s why this is kind of special. This type of food is very, very special.

**00:08:56**

**SR:** So your son’s restaurant—you were telling me that that’s in Texas?

**00:08:58**

**BP:** Yes, in Arlington, Texas, right off of Abraham.

**00:09:04**

**SR:** Okay, and Damian—that’s his name?

**00:09:06**

**BP:** It's Damian's Cajun Soul Café. He'd been in business for about two years now.

**00:09:12**

**SR:** And it's the same kind of food that—?

**00:09:13**

**BP:** Yeah, my menu and his menu—believe it or not is the same thing. What I cook today, he has it today.

**00:09:20**

**SR:** Oh, did he used to work here?

**00:09:21**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am, he used to work here and then he moved to Arlington. And then in 2008 I went out there for about six months and got him started, and I came back and right back in my business again. My daughter was running my business while I was in Dallas, you see, helping him get started. But now he got it off the ground and he did took out and rolled with it and so he's doing fine. And I'm back here.

**00:09:44**

**SR:** That's great. So okra is a big part of the food culture in this area?

**00:09:49**

**BP:** Uh-hm, yes, ma'am.

**00:09:51**

**SR:** Do you make an okra gumbo?

**00:09:51**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am.

**00:09:53**

**SR:** Just during the summer, or do you make it all year-round?

**00:09:56**

**BP:** I make it all year-round.

**00:09:57**

**SR:** What day is that?

**00:09:58**

**BP:** Mostly on Friday. Let me tell you a little secret about the okra gumbo. I had the German Food Channel that had called—no, Canada; it was Canada; the guy’s name was Bob. It was about three of them that came and they wanted the recipe for the gumbo because every year they have a gumbo cook-off on Main Street out here. So when he called me, I said, *Look, I don’t give my recipes out.* So he said, *Miss Brenda, you wouldn’t give me your recipe?* I said, *No, I can't*



*give you my recipe. He said, Well this is the Canada Food Channel. He say, And I would like for you to show me how you make your gumbo. I said, Okay.*

**00:10:41**

They came down and I showed them how to do the gumbo. I cooked—the roux and everything was on-site because they was going to put it on the TV station that they have—the Food Channel. So I showed them how to make the gumbo because they was entering the gumbo cook-off.

**00:10:57**

They entered the gumbo cook-off and they came out first. That was a blessing. But ain't nobody know—*Well how (did) they know how to cook gumbo? They're from Canada.* Well, Miss Brenda had showed them how to do the gumbo cook-off.

**00:11:09**

**SR:** What year was that, do you know?

**00:11:13**

**BP:** That was in 2009. That was 2009. [*Phone Rings*]

**00:11:19**

**SR:** So you told them all your secrets?

**00:11:21**

**BP:** All my secrets. They treated me with so much love I had to give them my recipe, and the key to the gumbo is the roux.

**00:11:29**

**SR:** So you use a roux in your okra gumbo?

**00:11:31**

**BP:** Yeah, and they--they stood up and watched me make the gumbo. You just put a very little roux in the gumbo because the okra thickens it up automatically. But they came out first. Boy, a lot of them was upset because they know that the Canad(ians) don’t know nothing about gumbo, but after they called me. Well they had called around and somebody said, *Miss Brenda have the best gumbo there is*. So they called me for the recipe. So I said, *Uh-um*. But then after that I gave them the recipe—after they came I was going to cut back because they put the mic on you. My daughter said, *Mama, you’re giving them all your recipe?* I said, *Taeleab, they showed me so much love it was unreal*. I had--I couldn’t do nothing but give them the recipe. But they couldn’t hurt, because when Tommy Lee Jones was here, the celebrity, that’s what he wanted was gumbo.

**00:12:20**

**SR:** Tommy Lee Jones?

**00:12:20**

**BP:** That’s what he wanted was gumbo.

**00:12:23**

**SR:** That's what I want. That's making me hungry.

**00:12:26**

**BP:** So will y'all be in the area tomorrow?

**00:12:28**

**SR:** No, but I'll come back.

**00:12:29**

**BP:** Come back. Okay Miss Sara, please do.

**00:12:32**

**SR:** How dark do you get your roux? What color is it?

**00:12:35**

**BP:** It's brown, not too dark, light-brown. And you don't want your gumbo too thick.

**00:12:44**

**SR:** So your gumbo is a little bit thin?

**00:12:46**

**BP:** Yeah, I don't like it thick.

**00:12:47**

**SR:** And what else is in there besides the roux and the okra?

**00:12:49**

**BP:** The roux; you put shrimps, you put crabmeat; I put sausage in mine, and I put chicken in mine.

**00:12:57**

**SR:** What kind of sausage?

**00:12:59**

**BP:** Richard's smoked sausage.

**00:13:02**

**SR:** You mentioned your daughter. What's her name?

**00:13:06**

**BP:** Taeleab.

**00:13:06**

**SR:** Taeleab. How do you spell that?

**00:13:08**

**BP:** T-a-e-l-e-a-b.

**00:13:11**

**SR:** It's a pretty name. What's the name of your grandson?

**00:13:14**

**BP:** Typann.

**00:13:15**

**SR:** Okay, how do you spell that?

**00:13:18**

**BP:** T-a-y-p-a-n. **[Interviewer's note: it's spelled Typann.]**

**00:13:20**

**SR:** Okay, and he's—I asked because he's working in the back with you too?

**00:13:23**

**BP:** Yeah, uh-hm.

**00:13:24**

**SR:** So this is a real family place?

**00:13:25**

**BP:** Yeah, Taeleab usually be here every day but she's sick right now so she's out.

**00:13:31**

**SR:** Okay, and there's one other person working back there with you now.

**00:13:35**

**BP:** Ernest Michael; that's like my adopted son. He's family and kin.

**00:13:39**

**SR:** Ernest Michael. Is Michael his last name?

**00:13:42**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am.

**00:13:44**

**SR:** Okay, great. So what is your favorite thing to cook here?

**00:13:50**

**BP:** My favorite thing to cook here would be my smothered cabbage. That's awesome. They love the smothered cabbage.

**00:14:01**

**SR:** Why is that your favorite?

**00:14:02**

**BP:** Because it's a different dish, you know. The cabbage, the smothered cabbage—not steamed cabbage; smothered cabbage.

**00:14:14**

**SR:** Can you kind of take me through the process of making that without giving me any secrets? For the record people would love to know.

**00:14:19**

**BP:** Well the smothered cabbage, okay. You take that cabbage and you take—by leaves, you wash it. After you wash it, you put it in a colander and let it drain. You put you a very little bit of grease in your pot. I use Magelite pots to cook in. And you drop your cabbage leaves up in there with a little bit of grease. Then you drop your seasoning in it and then you put your top on it and let it steam for about maybe a half an hour. Then you come back and put your salt meat or your ham on the top of your cabbage, cover it back and let it steam, and as it steams it's going to be cooking down. And that's why you call it smothered cabbage—not steamed; you're smothering it now.

**00:15:04**

**SR:** So you're not stirring?

**00:15:07**

**BP:** You don’t have to stir it. Put it on a medium fire. And just let it--let it smother with the top on it.

**00:15:15**

**SR:** And do you cut that cabbage or is it just whole leaves?

**00:15:19**

**BP:** Uh-uh, you break it up. You take it and you break it up or you could cut it.

**00:15:23**

**SR:** And you’re talking green cabbage, right?

**00:15:24**

**BP:** Uh-hm.

**00:15:26**

**SR:** And what kind of grease do you use?

**00:15:27**

**BP:** I use peanut oil when I cook.



**00:15:31**

**SR:** For everything?

**00:15:32**

**BP:** Everything. Peanut for frying; everything—peanut oil.

**00:15:37**

**SR:** So you’re talking about smothering. Are you putting water in there or is it only—?

**00:15:42**

**BP:** It makes its own water. Cabbage makes its own water. You see, and you already have water as you—. There’s still a little water left in the leaves so it makes it all—and then you’re covering it so it’s smothering down and makes its own water.

**00:15:58**

**SR:** When you say that you add your seasoning on top of the cabbage—

**00:16:02**

**BP:** Uh-huh, yeah, my bell pepper, my celery, little basil; you see and you just let it cook down.

**00:16:09**

**SR:** It’s—

**00:16:11**

**BP:** And after you cook it you put you a little sugar, a little garlic powder in it. You always put a little pinch of sugar—

**00:16:16**

**SR:** With cabbage?

**00:16:17**

**BP:** —in your cabbage.

**00:16:19**

**SR:** Do you want to get something to drink?

**00:16:21**

**BP:** Let me get something to drink.

**00:16:22**

**SR:** Yeah, we'll pause it.

**00:16:25**

Okay, I'm back here with Miss Brenda. We took a little break so that she could handle her lunch rush. I ate lunch. It was unbelievably good, and we—can you just tell me what we were just talking about, that you can't stretch the food?

**00:16:44**

**BP:** You can't. For number one, when you're in business and you're cooking you have to have a lot of love. It's not about the dollars. A lot of people that's in business cooking, they stretch the food. It's all about how many dollars they can make. But with me it's different; my thing is satisfying my customer and make sure that they love and enjoy the food. I don't take no shortcuts. So that's the difference in my type of food.

**00:17:10**

**SR:** Well there were a lot of people who were eating in here, ordering in here, who were telling me how good you are at that.

**00:17:17**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am. I put a lot of love into that food. I take my time. You cannot rush your food; you have to take your time.

**00:17:24**

**SR:** I have never tasted smothered okra like that. Can you tell me a little bit about making that?

**00:17:28**

**BP:** The okra is from grandmother's mother—(from a) time when they used to get there and smother the okra mostly on Sunday for a Sunday meal. So the okra that I'm preparing, it comes from my mother who taught me how to cook the okra. Well, really watching it because when she was cooking she made sure you had to stand right there and watch everything she do.

**00:17:52**

**SR:** Well it's very cooked-down and it's very dark.

**00:17:57**

**BP:** Well what I do is I take my okra; after I cut it I put it in a pan--in a pot, a Magelite pot, and I put it in the oven. I smother it down. So that's the difference; it gets all the slime out. Then I put a little southern tomato in it and season it, and I take some baked chicken cut up in it, and that's basically my seasoning—what I use.

**00:18:25**

**SR:** What does that mean, southern tomato?

**00:18:26**

**BP:** It's some southern tomato, Mexican-style southern tomato.

**00:18:33**

**SR:** Right, so from canned tomato?

**00:18:34**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am.

**00:18:34**

**SR:** Like Rotel?

**00:18:35**

**BP:** Yeah, Rotel. That's what I use in my okra.

**00:18:37**

**SR:** That was really unbelievable. I'd like to ask you your mother's name?

**00:18:42**

**BP:** My mother's name was Gustavia B. David. They used to call her Gussie or Tavia. That's the lady that taught me everything I know today.

**00:18:53**

**SR:** That's her picture up there at the top?

**00:18:53**

**BP:** Yes, it is, uh-hm.

**00:18:54**

**SR:** Gustavia B. David?

**00:18:57**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am.

**00:18:59**

**SR:** And she's not alive anymore?

**00:19:01**

**BP:** No, ma'am.

**00:19:03**

**SR:** Well I'm sure she was very proud of you.

**00:19:06**

**BP:** I know she is because like she said, if I was in it for the love of the money I would have had a short haul. But I was in love with cooking. I want my customers to be happy and satisfied.

**00:19:18**

**SR:** Well I'd like to ask you then a little bit about your family history—how long your family was in this area?

**00:19:24**

**BP:** Well really we were originally from New Iberia, born and raised here. My mother was from Parks, and then as a young girl she moved to New Iberia. And this is the only home I ever knew, was New Iberia.

**00:19:38**

**SR:** Was your father’s family from this area?

**00:19:40**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am. My father is deceased too but he was from New Iberia.

**00:19:44**

**SR:** And what was his name?

**00:19:45**

**BP:** Early Paggy. Davis.

**00:19:49**

**SR:** Could you spell that?

**00:19:49**

**BP:** E-a-r-l-y—P-a-g-g-y—Davis—D-a-v-i-s. Early Paggy Davis.

**00:19:55**

**SR:** So his first name was Early?

**00:19:56**

**BP:** Uh-hm, and the reason why they called him Paggy: because he had a peg leg.

**00:20:02**

**SR:** Oh really?

**00:20:02**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am.

**00:20:02**

**SR:** Do you know how many generations your family is in this area?

**00:20:07**

**BP:** My mother, me, my grandson; so it's like three generations because that's my grandson. You see, it's like three generations.

**00:20:20**

**SR:** And what did your father do for a living?

**00:20:23**

**BP:** My father—well my father, he worked at the sugar mill, at the sugar crop mill making sugar, and he had two titles. He used to work for a guy named George Rogers. He used to make tombs. My father used to make tombs and that's what he did for a living.

**00:20:49**



**SR:** So he worked at the mill and he made tombs?

**00:20:53**

**BP:** Tombs, working for a guy named George Rogers.

**00:20:55**

**SR:** Which mill did he work at?

**00:20:57**

**BP:** At the Sugarcane Coop mill off *[Unintelligible]* Road.

**00:21:02**

**SR:** In New Iberia?

**00:21:02**

**BP:** Yes, New Iberia, yeah.

**00:21:05**

**SR:** Did he bring sugar home?

**00:21:06**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am, brown sugar. They didn't make white sugar. They made brown sugar.

**00:21:09**

**SR:** And did you like that?

**00:21:12**

**BP:** The brown sugar? Well it was basically good for cooking, like making gingerbread and oatmeal cookies—it was good for that. It wasn't good for like making cakes because it's brown sugar, you see.

**00:21:23**

**SR:** So it would color whatever you—?

**00:21:26**

**BP:** Yeah, it was brown. It wasn't white sugar. They didn't make that here at that time. Now—they make it now, but back in the day they didn't make it. It was just brown sugar.

**00:21:35**

**SR:** And how many siblings did you have, or do you have?

**00:21:36**

**BP:** We have three girls and one boy. My mother used to say she had three queens and one king.

**00:21:46**

**SR:** And you were saying that your mother worked—she cooked in other people's houses.

**00:21:52**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am.

**00:21:54**

**SR:** Was the food that she would make at work different from the food that she would make at home?

**00:21:58**

**BP:** No, ma'am; the same thing. What she makes at home, that's what she went out and did a living on, cooking for different people.

**00:22:04**

**SR:** What were some of your favorite things that she would make?

**00:22:07**

**BP:** The favorite thing my mother would make that I loved so much back in the days was smothered chicken. Okra and potato salad. That was a Sunday dinner, smothered chicken.

**00:22:22**

**SR:** Do you make that here?

**00:22:24**

**BP:** I do chicken stew here and baked chicken.

**00:22:29**

**SR:** What’s the difference between a chicken stew and a smothered chicken?

**00:22:31**

**BP:** A smothered chicken is just onions smothered in it. Chicken stew is a brown gravy similar to a gumbo, you see, except it’s a little thicker. A smothered chicken is way better.

**00:22:44**

**SR:** So I know we’ve kind of been over this. But people who don’t live in this area don’t understand that word *smother*.

**00:22:50**

**BP:** They don’t?

**00:22:53**

**SR:** No. And I just ate a smothered pork chop for lunch, and with smothered okra. Now, can you just describe a little bit what that means when you smother?

**00:23:06**

**BP:** Okay. The smothered pork chop, you take it and put a little grease in the pot and you brown it. Then you take your onions; you come and take your pork chop out. And with the brown that’s

left in the pot from smothering the pork chop you put you some onions in it, onion and a little water. And if it's still watery you put you just a little dab of roux. And after you get through putting that little roux, you come back and you drop your pork chops in there and let them smother down.

**00:23:32**

**SR:** Covered or uncovered?

**00:23:33**

**BP:** Covered; you got to cover your pots.

**00:23:35**

**SR:** And in the oven or on the stove?

**00:23:36**

**BP:** On the stove. You fry them pork chops individually one at a time. You put them in there and you turn them over, you brown them on one side and you brown them on the other side.

**00:23:46**

**SR:** Oh, so even if you have a big pot, you don't do multiple pork chops at once?

**00:23:50**

**BP:** Uh-uh. No, ma'am.

**00:23:51**

**SR:** That's what I've been doing wrong at home.

**00:23:55**

**BP:** You take—it takes a lot of time. You put love into it. You might get a little aggravated if you're not a cook, but you take your pork chops; you brown them on one side. You turn them over and brown them again. After you brown your pork chops, the pot is brown. It's like it's burnt but that's your gravy. You put your onions in it, you see, and you take your onion and you stir it up. Then you want you a little--little thick gravy; you put you a little teaspoon of roux. And add you some water, maybe about—all depending how many pork chops. For you at home, you might be smothering four pork chops, take you about I would say about a half a cup of water; pour that in that pot and let your onions smother down. Then you come and you drop your pork chops and let them cook maybe about 15--20 minutes. All depends on how thick your pork chops are.

**00:24:47**

**SR:** So how many pork chops did you cook for today?

**00:24:48**

**BP:** Hmm, we had 25.

**00:24:53**

**SR:** So all individually seared, browned?

**00:24:56**

**BP:** Uh-hm, all of them browned. That's the key to your smothered pork chops. Try it and you're going to tell me about it.

**00:25:02**

**SR:** That's part of my problem. I think that I've been browning them too many at one time, and then they kind of steam.

**00:25:08**

**BP:** They take a lot—yeah; they take a lot of time. But you can't put them on top of each other. They have to be flat at the bottom of the pot.

**00:25:18**

**SR:** Okay, well thank you for that. And you can pretty much smother any kind of food, huh?

**00:25:22**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am. See like smothered chicken, you do it the same way. Cut your chicken up. Put it in a pot, brown individual pieces at a time. After you brown your chicken, your leg quarters, whatever you want, you take your chicken and put it on the side. And then you come with your seasoning, your onion and your bell pepper. Put you a little water in it because your pot is going to be brown. That old dark in that pot, that's your gravy.

**00:25:46**

**SR:** So it's okay if it's real dark?

**00:25:48**

**BP:** Yeah, that's your gravy.

**00:25:49**

**SR:** So if smothered chicken was your favorite dish that your mother made, why don't you make that here?

**00:25:56**

**BP:** Too much time consuming. You know how many pieces of chicken you got to turn over? A lot of pieces; so that's why I don't do it in here.

**00:26:03**

**SR:** So it's more time-consuming than the pork chops?

**00:26:06**

**BP:** Yes indeed.

**00:26:09**



**SR:** All right. Well that makes sense. And it sounded like—was your mom a baker, too? She was making cookies?

**00:26:14**

**BP:** Yes; she was a good baker. Oh yes indeed. And guess what? Everything my mother did was from scratch and she never really measured. Now you—if you ask me about measuring something, I don’t measure. It’s just up here. [*Gestures toward her head.*]

**00:26:28**

**SR:** Even when you’re baking things?

**00:26:30**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am.

**00:26:33**

**SR:** And where did she learn to cook?

**00:26:34**

**BP:** From her mother; my grandmother was a great cook.

**00:26:37**

**SR:** Did she do it as a profession or just to keep the family going?

**00:26:41**

**BP:** No, she had 10 children.

**00:26:45**

**SR:** I can't imagine cooking for 10 children.

**00:26:48**

**BP:** Ten children. Excuse me a minute and let me get—.

[Pause.]

**00:26:54**

**SR:** Okay, so your grandson Typann was listening and videotaping a little bit on his iPhone, and I asked him if he had any questions for you. He said he has a couple; I'd love to know what those might be.

**00:27:05**

**Typann:** Miss Brenda, would you explain to her, out of your desserts, which is the biggest seller?

**00:27:14**

**BP:** Peach cobbler.

**00:27:16**

**Typann:** And out of your family members, who makes the best peach cobbler that resides in Louisiana?

**00:27:21**

**BP:** Well I invented it but he mastered it, so he makes--he makes the best peach cobbler there is.

**[Laughs]**

**00:27:26**

**SR:** And what’s your secret?

**00:27:26**

**Typann:** No secret; it’s just a lot of time put into it.

**00:27:33**

**SR:** How did you improve upon what your grandmother was doing?

**00:27:37**

**Typann:** Well I paid attention very closely. If I don’t pay attention, you know, she installs it in my head. So I pay attention very, very closely and I just perfected and tweaked some of the recipes, and I just add a little bit of my own ingredients and it just comes out to be what it is.

**00:27:56**

**SR:** Do you work here full-time, or regularly, or just when your mom is here?

**00:28:00**

**Typann:** Usually I will work here, but being that my mom is sick right now I'm here full-time. But whenever--whenever she needs help and she can't rely on anybody else, she calls me and I'm helping.

**00:28:14**

**SR:** How long have you been watching your grandmother cook?

**00:28:17**

**Typann:** Oh ever since I was small; ever since I was about six years-old. I started working the register and then I took orders and then I just gradually went up.

**00:28:27**

**SR:** And why do you think you like it so much in here?

**00:28:29**

**Typann:** I mean it's something like home. When you--when you're in a place for a while it kind of becomes your home. So other than being at home, this is my other home.

**00:28:45**

**SR:** And it seems like this is a real sort of gathering place—even just when they're placing orders—for the community. You know the community pretty well from being in here, I guess?

**00:28:56**

**Typann:** Yes, ma'am, and the community knows me very well.

**00:29:01**

**BP:** Oh they love some Typann.

**00:29:04**

**SR:** Well they've probably been knowing him since he was real small.

**00:29:05**

**BP:** Yeah, because we been here—Typann was a baby. We been here 23 years and he's 20 years—21 now. And he started real young in here. Believe it or not, the family—like my little niece, she started about five years-old working the register. And that's how I start them off. The younger ones work in the register, you see. Now Typann started in here working the register and graduated to the kitchen cooking. The reason why Typann's peach cobbler is better than mine is because he take his time. You see, remember I tell you: put love into it, and he's created his own little master with the peach cobbler, which is very good the way he do it, you know.

**00:29:47**

**SR:** So you're not feeling protective of yours? You're letting him create?

**00:29:49**

**BP:** Yeah, he created; he created. He take a little bit of what I taught him and on his own and go with it. And it comes out—like I said, (his) peach cobbler come out better than mine. I don't have a problem with that.

**00:30:07**

**SR:** That's really neat. It must be—well, I don't want to put words into your mouth, but I saw you smiling when he was talking. It must be rewarding to see your family—.

**00:30:14**

**BP:** It is because—well he was in college, so he sitting out this semester. So he's going back; he's going to UL in Lafayette. But he was in Dallas helping my son at his restaurant and he pay close attention. So he came back with some of my son's recipes and used (them) in here. Especially with the fried chicken, you see.

**00:30:37**

**SR:** So you're all learning from each other?

**00:30:39**

**BP:** Yeah, we learn from each other. I learn from my son and my son learned from me and Typann learned from my son and then he come here and pass it on down. And he say, *Wait*,

*Granny. Let me show you some of Uncle Damian’s recipes. I said, Okay, show me, and it works out fine.*

**00:30:53**

**SR:** What is Typann going to school for?

**00:30:57**

**BP:** Engineering--engineering; he wants to be an engineer.

**00:31:01**

**SR:** He’s got a detailed eye?

**00:31:03**

**BP:** Huh?

**00:31:04**

**SR:** He must have an eye for detail?

**00:31:05**

**BP:** Uh-hm, uh-hm, he wanted to be an engineer.

**00:31:09**

**SR:** I wanted to ask you about boudin.

**00:31:15**

**BP:** Okay, the boudin—I used to make boudin. Okay, that’s a lot of time-consuming and putting them boudin in them cases and whatnot. But it’s a good seller. They love boudin. Now the best boudin here is the--is the boucherie. They love the boucherie boudin.

**00:31:36**

**SR:** Hmm?

**00:31:36**

**BP:** That’s the best one, the boucherie.

**00:31:39**

**SR:** Legnon’s?

**00:31:39**

**BP:** What you call that, Legnon’s?

**00:31:43**

**SR:** Legnon’s.

**00:31:44**

**BP:** Yeah, but it have another name.



**00:31:48**

**SR:** We did an oral history interview with them. But did you used to make boudin here in the restaurant?

**00:31:55**

**BP:** Uh-hm, I did it for—I do a lot of catering.

**00:31:57**

**SR:** You still do?

**00:31:58**

**BP:** Yeah, I have a wedding Saturday. And they wanted the boudin so I used to make the little miniature boudin for them.

**00:32:04**

**SR:** How do you make miniature?

**00:32:05**

**BP:** Well you cut the cases off short. Instead of long, you know, like this [*Gestures*], you tie it off like about like this [*Gestures*].

**00:32:12**

**SR:** Oh, like maybe three inches?

**BP:** Uh-hm, and you tie it off. So that’s what I used—I do that for weddings, but they don’t require it, and now you can buy it from the boucherie—the little miniature ones, so you don’t have to do all that hard work.

**00:32:25**

**SR:** And do you like boudin yourself?

**00:32:29**

**BP:** I love it. I love the boucherie one. They the best.

**00:32:33**

**SR:** When you made it, did you use liver?

**00:32:35**

**BP:** I used pork roast and the hog head. You buy the hog head, boil it and de-bone it. Then you take the pork roast and boil it, de-bone it, and grind it up. Then you cook it on the side, and that’s how I did it.

**00:32:54**

**SR:** What do you mean you cook it on the side?

**00:32:56**

**BP:** You cook it in a pot. After you de-boned it, with your onion, your bell pepper, onion tops, and you cook it—and then after that you cook your rice on the side. You mix it, and then you have a stuffer and you put it in there and you put it in the casings.

**00:33:12**

**SR:** Did you eat boudin growing up?

**00:33:14**

**BP:** Yes, ma'am. Homemade. My father used to raise hogs and every holiday they would kill a hog. And they would make the red boudin and the white boudin and make hog crackling and smother the backbone, which they call a neck bone now.

**00:33:38**

**SR:** That's what a neck bone is—is the backbone?

**00:33:39**

**BP:** The backbone of a hog. He used to raise hogs.

**00:33:42**

**SR:** Why do they call that the neck bone?

**00:33:43**

**BP:** I don't know but they call it the—the backbone is the neck bone.

**00:33:49**

**SR:** And so he would—like for what kinds of holidays would they do this?

**00:33:54**

**BP:** Christmas, Easter, they would always butcher a hog. That's way back in the days. You know at that time they was growing chicken in the yard. My grandfather was a farmer. You see, and he was raising cows; he was raising hog. They had cotton in the field they picked. They had okra to pick, watermelon to pick. My grandfather was a farmer. And what my mother used to do, my mother's mother used to live in Breaux Bridge, so for--for the summer, my mother would send us out there and they would make us work. [*Laughs*]

**00:34:31**

**SR:** Make (you) work on the farm?

**00:34:33**

**BP:** So that's how I learned a lot of things.

**00:34:37**

**SR:** And so then your daddy would do a boucherie for the holidays?

**00:34:40**

**BP:** At home, you see. At that time you could raise hogs, chickens, in the city limit, so my daddy had hogs he was raising and chickens. [*Phone Rings*] You see, so for every holiday he would butcher a hog.

**00:34:51**

**SR:** Did you look forward to that?

**00:34:53**

**BP:** Uh-hm, for that red boudin. We don't make red boudin now. But back in the days he used to make red boudin and white boudin. And he used to cook it in that big black iron skillet, a big iron pot with the fire underneath it.

**00:35:07**

**SR:** Outside?

**00:35:08**

**BP:** Outside.

**00:35:10**

**SR:** Can you tell me for the record, for people who don't know, what the red boudin is?

**00:35:13**

**BP:** It's the blood from the hog. You see they, get that blood. When they kill a hog they get a pan and they catch that blood. You see, and they cook it with the rest of the—like the white boudin—they cook that blood, you see, so it makes it red so that's why they call it red boudin, because of the blood from the hog.

**00:35:35**

**SR:** And how does that taste different from the white boudin?

**00:35:37**

**BP:** It does; it tastes different. That blood tastes different. It's funny, huh?

**00:35:42**

**SR:** Yeah. It didn't make you squirmy that it had blood in it?

**00:35:46**

**BP:** Uh-um, uh-um.

**00:35:48**

**SR:** Is there anywhere that you get that these days?

**00:35:50**

**BP:** No, ma'am. I don't think—

**00:35:53**

**SR:** When was the last time you had that?

**00:35:54**

**BP:** Oh it's been so long. I don't think they make the red boudin. They might; maybe a little—a few boucherie(s), they might make the red boudin, but I don't think Legnon's makes the red boudin. It's just the white. But that's why, because when you kill that hog, they get—my grand--my daddy used to get a pan and they cut the hog and they--they drain all the blood out the hog and that's what they would make the red boudin with.

**00:36:18**

**SR:** So that is a lot of work. You would basically spend the holidays working?

**00:36:23**

**BP:** Working. That's a lot of work when you kill a hog.

**00:36:27**

**SR:** That's a full day's work, isn't it?

**00:36:28**

**BP:** It is.

**00:36:31**

**SR:** So you weren't spending a lot of time opening presents and watching TV?

**00:36:34**

**BP:** Uh-um. Why you think I work in here like I do? This is how you do it, Miss Brenda. I clean, cook; I do it all because that's how I was brought up. My mother, she taught us how to work and cleanliness. My mother taught me that.

**00:36:52**

**SR:** What time do you open in the morning?

**00:36:54**

**BP:** At 6:30 and I close at 2:00.

**00:36:57**

**SR:** And so what time are you in here?

**00:36:58**

**BP:** From about 6:30 to 2 o'clock and we close. We only open up five days a week. But when I first opened up I was opened up seven days a week because I used to open up at night. You know we used to open up at night but now we only do it five days a week.

**00:37:15**



**SR:** Could you tell me a little bit about this neighborhood? Is this the neighborhood you live in, or how did you pick it?

**00:37:21**

**BP:** Well, like I told you, I was selling lunches out of my house. And the lady that had opened up a restaurant here, she wasn't successful. So she closed it down. And it was just sitting here. And one of my friends called me and told me that, you know, that Miss Hazel done closed her restaurant down. She said, *Why don't you try?* And so then I called her and I asked her if she'd be interested in renting it? And she told me she would lease it to me my first three lease--the first three years, and I did great. From the day I opened up this place I've been blessed.

**00:38:01**

**SR:** It's a big jump from doing things out of your house to doing things in a restaurant?

**00:38:06**

**BP:** Uh-hm. It's much more convenient, and like I said, my kitchen is not that big but I have a lot of room and I have commercial stoves and freezers, you know. It's much more convenient.

**00:38:19**

**SR:** But it's not a real commercial area right around here, is it? It's mostly residential.

**00:38:24**

**BP:** Well you know what? It used to be. This just used to be old Leo's. All the famous singers used to come to Leo's Rendezvous. Right next door was Dr. Henderson's building. That was a dentist. Across the street was another club called Five, Four--.

**00:38:40**

**SR:** Five, Four?

**00:38:41**

**BP:** Ballroom, uh-hm. And down the street used to be a club called Faces. Used to call it Bird Land, and then a young lady took over. She bought Faces; that was a club. And right next to it is another club. So it used to be--used to be very much commercial. But a lot of the old people done died, you see, so that's why—and nobody to take over.

**00:39:09**

**SR:** But did that affect your business at all that it became less commercial?

**00:39:11**

**BP:** No, ma'am. Uh-um. People from all over the world come here.

**00:39:17**

**SR:** You know, before we started recording you were telling me that before Hurricane Katrina in 2005, you had more visitors from New Orleans?

**00:39:26**

**BP:** Uh-hm.

**00:39:28**

**SR:** And why do you think that that has stopped?

**00:39:31**

**BP:** Well I guess what it is—well New Orleans is rebuilding now so a lot of tourists gradually started coming back and visit New Orleans you see, so that had a lot to do with the hurricane and a lot of the buildings were tore down and they had to rebuild. It took a long time for New Orleans to come back up.

**00:39:52**

**SR:** So you think those people who used to come aren't in New Orleans anymore?

**00:39:56**

**BP:** Well they wasn't—it was tourists that was visiting New Orleans that I used to get, you see.

**00:40:04**

**SR:** Is there a big difference between how tourists eat in your restaurant, and what they eat, and what the locals eat?

**00:40:11**

**BP:** Well you know what it is? The locals (are) used to this type of food but the tourists, they -- they're not used to this type of food. So they be excited and they love the food. They—I have people come from Canada, from Europe, all over the world, come to eat this food. They go online and they see the pork chop, the cabbage, the fried chicken, the gumbo, and they drive a long distance to come here to eat this type of food.

**00:40:38**

**SR:** And do they end up liking the same things that the locals like?

**00:40:41**

**BP:** Uh-hm, they like the same thing. Nothing different. They're very much satisfied with the food. And this is my pastor right here. He has to say a few words. Pastor Randle?

**Pastor Randle:** Ma'am?

**00:40:54**

**BP:** You have to say a few words.

**00:40:55**

**SR:** If you could.

**00:40:59**

**Pastor Randle:** Concerning? Is it concerning this establishment?

**00:41:01**

**SR:** It is.

**00:41:03**

**Pastor Randle:** Oh my goodness.

**00:41:02**

**SR:** I'm doing an oral history interview with Miss Brenda about herself and about the restaurant and the food, and could you introduce yourself?

**00:41:10**

**Pastor Randle:** Yes, my name is Allan Randle. I'm the Pastor of the Lighthouse Missionary Baptist Church located in Franklin, Louisiana and--and here in New Iberia. And I am pleased to say that Miss Brenda is one of my parishioners. And one of--in whom I'm well pleased in that her loyalty to what she does and not only her loyalty but her expertise is something that has caught--caught my attention.

**00:41:37**

I ate here yesterday and I'm back on today because I can't get enough of Miss Brenda's fine food. So again, I'm just pleased to know her, pleased to have her as one of my parishioners in my church, and always pleased to be a guest at this diner. She does a wonderful job.

**00:41:54**

**SR:** What did you eat yesterday?

**00:41:55**

**Pastor Randle:** Yesterday I had the rice with the--some gravy with white beans, and I had some mustard greens. And the lemonade was superb as always, very sweet, the way I like it, and I had the turkey wings yesterday.

**00:42:13**

**SR:** Ah, Miss Brenda remembers and you might not, but—

**00:42:15**

**Pastor Randle:** Oh yes. Yes, now I’m--I’m a regular on Wednesdays usually because I’m here for prayer during this time of the day. But she has one of my favorites. She has the okra normally on Wednesday and the baked chicken and always a fresh crisp salad. So that’s why I’m here today. And I’m not alone; I travel with my deacon, and he also—. We were discussing what we would eat today and he said, *I want something light*. I said, *Well I need something, you know, to carry me through the day*. And I said, *Well, let’s go to Miss Brenda [Laughs] because I know what she has on—*.

**00:42:49**

**SR:** What would be light here?

**00:42:52**

**Pastor Randle:** Well probably the salad. *[Laughs]* Probably the salad, but when--when I want to eat well, eat nutritiously, I come here to the diner—. Wven though it’s soul food it’s the best food and it leaves you happy when you--when you leave here.

**00:43:12**

**SR:** Well thank you.

**00:43:14**

**Pastor Randle:** You’re welcome.

**00:43:14**

**SR:** We could do a commercial with that endorsement.

**00:43:16**

**Pastor Randle:** *[Laughs]* Wow.

**00:43:17**

**SR:** It was a pleasure meeting you. Thank you so much.

**00:43:19**

**Pastor Randle:** Well a pleasure meeting you as well.

**00:43:20**

**SR:** Thank you, I’m Sara.

**00:43:20**

**Pastor Randle:** Sara, pleasure to meet you; Allan Randle.

**00:43:23**

**SR:** Yeah, nice to meet you.

**00:43:25**

**Pastor Randle:** Okay, all right.

**00:43:25**

**SR:** Thanks.

**00:43:25**

**Pastor Randle:** You’re welcome.

**00:43:27**

**SR:** Look at that endorsement.

**00:43:29**

**BP:** He came in today. It’s a blessing, huh?



**00:43:30**

**SR:** Yeah, it is. I'll try to get a photo of you together before he leaves. Why don't we do it now?  
Is that okay?

**00:43:39**

**BP:** Pastor? Do you mind taking a photo with me because this going to be on—.

**00:43:48**

**SR:** All right. While Miss Brenda gets her Pastor's order going, we're back with Typann. And you were telling me I needed to ask her about—?

**00:43:55**

**Typann:** The chicken-fried chicken.

**00:43:56**

**SR:** The chicken-fried chicken. What is chicken-fried chicken?

**00:43:59**

**Typann:** Basically what chicken fried chicken is, it's a de-boned chicken breast, butterflied—meaning cut in half—and just dipped in batter twice. So when you fry it, it's fluffy, but at the same time you still have the seasoning and the flavor is just unique. And then you throw--you put gravy on it; you pour not too much gravy to where you drown the chicken, but just a little bit to

where you can have the taste of the chicken and the taste of the gravy. And that's basically the chicken-fried chicken.

**00:44:36**

**SR:** And is that a brown gravy or white gravy?

**00:44:39**

**Typann:** Well how I learned to cook it by my Uncle Damian, he does it with white or brown gravy.

**00:44:46**

**SR:** And you learned that from your uncle in Dallas?

**00:44:48**

**BP: Typann:** Yes, ma'am. I learned a lot--I learned a lot from him. Not to say I didn't learn a lot from my grandmother, but when I went to Dallas I learned more from him because he's worked offshore and more other places, so he has a lot more experience with a whole bunch of other cooking styles.

**00:45:06**

**SR:** But your grandmother was saying that their menus are pretty similar.

**00:45:11**

**Typann:** Yeah, the menus are very similar. Like on Tuesdays my grandmother might do meatloaf. Well my Uncle Damian doesn't do meatloaf. He does Salisbury steak. And basically what Salisbury steak is, it's just--it's the same thing as meatloaf except for how it's cooked. Meatloaf is cooked in the oven and Salisbury steak is cooked in a gravy.

**00:45:35**

**SR:** So cooked in a gravy on the stove?

**00:45:39**

**Typann:** Yeah. The meatloaf is baked in the oven but the Salisbury steak is cooked on the stove in the gravy.

**00:45:45**

**SR:** I see. Do you cook at home?

**00:45:49**

**Typann:** I do a lot of baking at home. I don't do too much cooking. I--I'm a sweets fanatic. I just have a major sweet tooth and I like to experiment with a lot of sweets. I don't do too much cooking at home. My mama does a lot of cooking. I just do the baking.

**00:46:05**

**SR:** What kind of things do you like to bake?

**00:46:07**

**Typann:** I love to bake sweet potato pies from scratch. I also love to bake cakes and peach cobbler.

**00:46:16**

**SR:** So your grandmother was telling me that you’re studying to be an engineer?

**00:46:19**

**Typann:** Yes, ma'am. I like to--I like to mess with sound engineering and also mechanical engineering.

**00:46:27**

**SR:** So you’re not going to be a professional chef?

**00:46:29**

**Typann:** No, ma'am. I don’t think I could be a chef as a career because it takes the fun out of it for me. When I’m at home and in the comfort of my own home, I’m free to do whatever I like. But like if I change the career path, it’s just not going to be the same; I’m not going to have the same passion for it.

**00:46:51**

**SR:** Does it surprise you to see that your grandmother is having a good time?

**00:46:54**

**Typann:** I mean it doesn't surprise me because my grandmother loves to cook. And I mean if you love something so much, you should pursue a career in it because you'll never get tired of doing something that you love to do and that's something that they also taught me. So I love--I love math and I also love to do a lot of other things. That's why I'm pursuing a career in engineering instead of being a chef.

**00:47:21**

**SR:** Are there other members of your family in your generation who work here?

**00:47:24**

**Typann:** I have a little cousin named Damian Junior. He never worked in this diner but he works with his father at his café. And I must say he bakes an excellent pound cake. He can cook too but he chooses not to cook. His pound cake is phenomenal.

**00:47:48**

**SR:** How old is he?

**00:47:49**

**Typann:** He's just 16. He makes 17 in June.

**00:47:52**

**SR:** How did he learn that pound cake? From his dad?

**00:47:54**

**Typann:** Yes, ma'am. He learned a lot from his dad. I also learned a lot from his dad. Like on Sundays when I was living out there with them, we would work on Sundays—me and him—because he was in school. So whenever we would work on Sundays it'll be like just a family thing. We'll have a good time but at the same time we'll accomplish a lot of work, you know, and then he'll show us little pieces of recipes at a time, just so we could fully get them. And that's--that's how my Uncle Damian does. But at the same time you get a lot of work done, so I mean he's a businessman first and a family man second.

**00:48:34**

**SR:** Well I'm going to have to check out that restaurant someday.

**00:48:38**

**Typann:** Excellent. I mean it has great reviews. A lot of the customers that come in, they--they really like it and they also come back, and they also come back and say, *Mr. Damian, we love the way you cook*. He tells them the same thing every time because I know my Uncle Damian. Like, *Well, my mother owns a restaurant and we cook some of the similar things*, and he learned how to cook from her. So if you ask him about that, that's most likely what he going to say.

**00:49:11**

**SR:** Well thank you.

**00:49:14**

**Typann:** Oh you're very welcome.

**00:49:14**

**SR:** It's so fun to talk to multiple generations in here and customers and—. Thank you. I'm going to pause this.

**00:49:23**

Okay, well we took another break to get some customers served and we'll just wrap this up because your day is busy. **[Laughs]** I don't have to tell you that. Maybe can you tell me what you like most about your job?

**00:49:38**

**BP:** The most I like about my job is catering to my customers. I try to satisfy them, make them happy. I put a lot of love into the food and I--like I say, I just hope they be satisfied with it. That's my job. If my customers are satisfied I'm satisfied. I'm okay.

**00:49:58**

**SR:** And the future of the restaurant—it seems like you have younger generations working here, so it's not going anywhere?

**00:50:06**

**BP:** Uh-um. Family is the best help.

**00:50:11**

**SR:** My last question is—I guess you called this *Mama's cooking*. Do you call this Cajun cooking?

**00:50:19**

**BP:** It's Cajun. It's a little Creole, little Cajun—mix all that together and it comes out just right.

**00:50:28**

**SR:** Well Miss Brenda, thank you for your time. I know you've been super busy today but I've had a great time meeting everyone and eating your food.

**00:50:33**

**BP:** Thank you so much for interviewing me, and I hope that in the near future that God could bless me with a larger kitchen and I could cater to more people. Thank you so much.

**00:50:43**

**SR:** Thank you.

**00:50:46**

**[End Brenda Placide Interview]**