

SUNO-CAAAS Pontchartrain Park Pioneers Oral History Project
Interview with Mr. Edgar Poree: STORY DIGESTS

UNIT TWO: Coming to Purchase Home in Pontchartrain Park [00:02:06] -[00:06:42]

1. Working Around the Clock to Purchase [00:02:06]

EP: ...King's Simonize Shop [was]right around the corner from Mr. Dan's Grocery, two blocks from my house. I used to go to them, "Mrs. King, won't you let me do that?" They put red compound on a potato sack that was wet, it would film up like white--that's what you did the bumpers with. That's how I learn how to do the floors because it's the same process. So I picked up another three hours, I'm up at \$10 in that \$5 house, right? Then the wooden Venetian blind is 2 inches wide, it gathers dust. I just throw them over the line in the yard, take a bucket of water, let the sun dry. I got \$12.50 in my \$5 house. That's how I was able to put that money down to buy the house. I was working around the clock.

2. An Outsider in The Park [00:04:58]

One of these guys, they didn't refer to theirself as, "I live in Pontchartrain Park "-- "I live in the Park. The Park, P A R K, I live in the Park." [00:23:40] I said, "I live in Pontchartrain Park." I would never use "I live in the Park " because I keep it real, if you don't lose who you are and get caught up in the social stuff. I said, it ain't where you come from determines where you're going. Although you're living here, it was wonderful, you were still not really accepted in certain circles, okay? They were just some people who were in the high end of our community, who were in the social clubs that I've never belonged to. You were kind of on the outside.

I was trying to figure out why the garbage men were literally fighting over picking up the garbage in Pontchartrain Park. Why are they having like a raffle to get the Pontchartrain Park? I've been a rebel, a long time. Well, with the notes that they had on the mortgage, there wasn't much in the garbage can over the weekend. The pastor said, "You did not go there, Mr. Poree?" Yes, I did, I was bad, I always was a terror you hear me?

UNIT THREE Children and Family [00:06:42]-- [00:09:03]

3. Daughters and Son [00:06:42]

My oldest daughter was born in '61. And I lost a daughter, Dana. Back then, they just call it crib death, she lived 30 to 32 days. I was just rocking Dana in my arms, her little head just dropped to the side. I walked over to Dr. Breaux who lived across the street, her in my arms, and he said, "She's gone." And that was the most difficult time during my 54 years of marriage with my wife. But Lord, and when my son came I had time to do nothing but go to school. I was a PTA president for every school that my son attended. I said, I might as well make my time worthwhile, because I was gonna get a call from whatever teacher because he was just like his Pa. I was a character in school too.

UNIT FOUR "Movin' on Up" To Pontchartrain Park [00:09:03] - [00:12:42]

4. The Cadillac Houses of Pontchartrain Park [00:09:03]

Well, I saw the plans, you know, because the house wasn't built yet. Oh, man, I was just freaking out. This was the Cadillac houses of Pontchartrain Park. We had three bedrooms, ceramic tiled bath, you had a bath and a half, you have a 4x4 shower in the bathroom next to the bedroom. It had a built-in kitchen and it had central air conditioning. It was 1,685 square feet

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and it was \$25,700. Can you imagine? Get \$25,700 for a house? Oh, man, we were uptown, uptown.

5. Before Pontchartrain Park: No Built-In Kitchens [00:10:14]

Q: Now your houses in downtown, they didn't have built in kitchens? EP: What you mean? Bienville Street? No! The house on Bienville Street, the first three rooms had plaster in it, okay, and eventually that plaster would crack and a large chunk would fall out of it. You know what we would do? Mr. Johnson used to work in a factory where they pack china dishes with cellulose, so my daddy said, "What are you doing with that cellulose? Don't throw it away, just bring it here." That was insulation back in the 40s. And then my dad would go to Schwinn bicycle on St. Peter and Claiborne, and we get the box they shipped the bikes in. Guess what size the box was? Six by four by one. Well, if you open up a six by four by one, you got 14 square feet. That was our drywall. And that's how I learned how to wallpaper, the other thing I was doing when I was married.

UNIT 5: Life in Pontchartrain Park-- and Getting Out of the Classroom [00:12:42] - [00:20:51]

6. "Just the Beauty and Serenity of It" [00:12:42]

Q: Now when you first moved into the Park, what was it like? EP: Serene. Driving in there, and seeing kids playing. Just the beauty, the serenity of it. And you were close to everything. [Our home was at] 6219 Providence Place, right behind Southern. Doctor Alston was not only my friend, he was my mentor. He was heavyweight, that was my next door neighbor.

7. The Strategic Plan for Sales Tax Revenue [00:14:28]

Dr. Carl Dorsey was appointed the superintendent of all these Parish schools in 1966. He wanted to do a one cent sales tax to raise revenue for teachers. I was sharp in math, and I told my wife, I am out of the classroom, your man is no longer a servant. She always refers to me as the dreamer, she said, "What are you dreaming about?" I went over [to Dr. Alston] and got the statistics [on] the last sales tax passed for education. Did my research, and I put together a 72 page strategic plan for all these Parish schools. I called Dr. Dorsey and said, I have the plan that will get you the money.

[We] had a two-hour and 30-minute meeting. Dr. Edwin Stone was in there, he was associate superintendent of pupil placement. He say, "Carl, anybody would put that together ought not be in a classroom." [Dr. Dorsey] said, this is terrific young man, but, typical politician, he said we had to let the lawyers look at this. "We'll get back to you." Two weeks, don't hear anything. The third week, a letter comes to the school. The lady who typed them 72 pages said, "Edgar, they stole your work." And so we get the plan and we did a figure of 71.35. All of the political pundits [said] that's crazy. Guess what? The score was 71.37 Bop, bop, bop. Okay, so bam! The guy who steals my work gets employed. Bob Walls, \$25,000. I didn't get anything. My wife had tears in her eyes and she said, "All that you did and they didn't even mention your name."

8. Out of the Classroom [00:19:50]

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Well, it was Ed Stone who got me out of the classroom. He called me and said, "I'm embarrassed." He said, There's a anti poverty, ain't nothing guaranteed. They put a proposal in and I wrote myself in for \$14,000, and it got funded. In 1966, I was making \$4,400 teaching school. Bang. First thing I did, I bought that '66 Mustang for this beautiful lady, and I got a big red bow and tie it around and drove it to 6219 Providence Place. And she said, "Who's that for?" I say, "The dreamer has struck again."

UNIT 6 People and Life in Pontchartrain Park [00:20:51] - [00:30:32]

9. Real Pioneers [00:20:51]

Q: Can you identify some of the legends, people who were VIPs, from the neighborhood? EP: Well, you had Dutch and his family, your dad and your mom, Leon Fulton and Steven Johnson with the insurance business, and Sterling Henry and the doctor who built the house on Press Drive, Dr. Pratt. Dr. Pratt was class personified. He was genuine. He gave to his church, he gave to the neighborhood. He was a real Pioneer. And of course Mac Knox with all he did for young people in the Park. They were really the troopers.

10. The "Safety Thing": Neighbors as Extended Family [00:24:34]

You knew those persons within five blocks by name. You would converse with them and their children would be on the Park. You knew it was wholesome, and you knew that you could go off somewhere for hours and not bother about them being on the Park. Because it was that safety thing, man. You never have to bother about them after school because they had the extended family watching over them, your neighbors knew where you should have been at a certain time.

11. Fence Around the Golf Course? [00:25:15]

It was the golf course that was about to destroy the integrity of Pontchartrain Park. Somebody wanted to put a fence around the golf course. I was on the Park and Parkway Commission at the time. I won't call the guy's name, he was an uppity guy, he did this long tirade about protecting the children, getting hit in the head. I said, I lived in a neighborhood that had nothing but fences, and we ain't putting no damn fences out in Pontchartrain Park. I said, "You don't live here, brother. You ain't in the neighborhood." The community was galvanized and we prevented that fence from getting up there.

UNIT 7 Career Crossroads [00:30:32] - [00:34:07]

12. Entering the Corporate World [00:30:38]

Look, I knew that this place was well run, I spent time doing other things. I was at South Central Bell at that time, and I worked in the poverty program from '66 until to 1970, and they offered me a job in Dallas, Texas. The president of South Central Bell said, why you want to go to Dallas Texas? I said, it's \$6,500 more than what I'm making. And he said, the future is in New Orleans for you, the phone company is your future. And I say "Mr. Finch, the only thing I've seen at the phone company who look like me is the people who cook in the kitchen and mopped the floors." I'm packing my bags, okay, and he said, "Edgar, hold on." He calls the office, he says, "Edgar Poree is going to be a loan executive" and so, I entered into the corporate world.

UNIT 8 Protestant and Catholic Churches, Pontchartrain Park and Gentilly Woods

[00:34:07] - [00:39:15]

13. Churches and Bingo [00:34:30]

My wife was Catholic, she went to Saint Gabriel. I was Methodist, we were the ones who built the New Bethany Church. Let me tell you about Bethany. Protestants didn't gamble, but Catholics gamble, they had Bingo, right? My parishioners say they didn't gamble but every Thursday night they were over at St. Gabriel. So a little group of us, we say, well, why don't we have Bingo on Friday night at Bethany Church? I asked Reverend Kennedy, Would you let me buy the communion glasses with the money that we raised from the Bingo? After they taking communion, I want to say, "Those glasses that you drink God's blood out of was paid for by the Bingo people." He said Edgar, You gonna get me out of the church. Edgar was a bad boy, Dr. Robertson.

14. Blacks and Whites in Pontchartrain Park/Gentilly Woods [00:37:19]

Even though Gentilly Woods was still predominantly white, it was just you lived in Pontchartrain Park and you went to Gentilly Woods and you saw people and went Hi, if you recognize them, there was conversation. So unlike what Tureaud was concerned about.

UNIT 9 Hurricanes Betsy and Katrina [00:39:15] - [00:47:07]

15. Between Betsy and Katrina: Changes in His House [00:40:54]

Q: In the 1970's, did you start seeing a change in Pontchartrain Park? EP: Well, I changed my house five times. I kept asking to let me just let me [build] a little huge den. She said, Man, I'm sick and tired of you with all of your change and stuff. And we went to California to a wedding reception, we were dancing and I said, please let me build that. And I had already arranged with the contractor. We stayed another seven days, and when we got there it was already framed up and we had a den that was 35 by 22 with cathedral ceilings. It was off the chart.

16. Escaping Katrina [00:42:20]

I called my daughter and I said, "we leaving. " Her husband was in Kuwait, and she said, "Troy say that's gonna blow over." I said, "I'll tell you what, you can stay here, die. I'm coming to get my two grandchildren." Five o'clock that morning, I said you bring those grandchildren and we drove to Baton Rouge, it took us eight hours and thirty seven minutes. And when we looked on the computer [for] my house, it was a rooftop. We lived with my daughter in an apartment. And we eventually built a house in Prairieville.

17. Miss Gloria's Husband [00:43:58]

For a woman who didn't want to live in the country at all-- I went to get gas and when I went home and I said Gish, that was my pet name for my wife, the clerk asked the sheriff whether I was Baby's husband. She laughed, because that's where she played the lottery every day. Two weeks later, I got my grass cutting clothes on, there's two sheriffs checking out the credentials on the car. When I came out he says, Mighty fine car you're driving. I said, That's my wife car.

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Guess what he said---"Miss Gloria?" I said, for somebody who don't live in the country, she knows the sheriff and all the other goddamn people. And I started introducing myself as, I'm Miss Gloria's husband, instead of Edgar Poree.

18. Wendell Pierce's Efforts to Rebuild after Katrina [00:46:09]

It was a laudable effort, but you got to have financing, you know, you can have all of the plans in the world. It's unfortunate that we don't have the inside track that was done with the poverty program. And that's another story that we need to talk about another time, because that was the part of that infiltration of our neighborhood that destroyed our culture.

UNIT 10 Final Thoughts, Lessons, and a Family SUNO Story [00:47:07] - [00:58:42]

19. His Wife's Passing [00:47:07]

After 54 years and two months of not being sick, she sprained her foot on the first of February, 2014, and in April, she was sitting in the house and she said, my leg--it was twice the size. We rushed her to the hospital and she was diagnosed with stage four uterine cancer and died on the 28th of June. But, young brother, we lived the American Dream.

20. "What do you Despise?" [00:48:24]

Q: What are your most memorable moments in Pontchartrain Park? EP: Well, when my son was born on August, 4th 1970. Now ask me about what I despised. Q: What do you despise? EP: When Southern University did a disservice to Dr. Bashful by naming a street that didn't even have a damn building on one block. Instead, they should have taken the sixty four hundred block of Press Drive. I told the committee, before I die, we're gonna work on that, because that needs to be changed. You can say anything you want about Dr. Bashful, the reason this school is here today is because when he was fighting those animals downtown, they call him Uncle Tom.

21. "Uncle Toms"? [00:49:27]

I used to see the waiters, "How are you doing, Miss? "How you doing?" And I'd sit there and you know I'm black and proud, okay? I said, "Look at that Uncle Tom." And then I waited at the Royal Orleans (Hotel), and I went out the wrong door, and knocked the 12 plates that was on my arm, and these men that I was calling Uncle Tom-- I felt guilty, because you know what? They weren't Uncle Toms, they were Academy Award actors, when I saw them little white ladies taking that \$5 out and \$10 out and put it in their pocket.

22. How Blacks Came to Own Property in New Orleans [00:50:25]

Do you know who owned property in the City of New Orleans? It wasn't the bourgeois, it was the ones who's working in Antoine's, the porters. It was the brother cleaning up so-and-so's house, washing the dirty clothes and wearing second hand-me-downs, went home and told them what house was on sale at the sheriff's office. And when we integrated and we had a attache case, when we went to Antoine's, white folks didn't talk when they saw brothers with three piece suits. But they were saying it when he was mopping the floor. So I found out my lesson that it ain't Uncle Tom. It's the man who's getting the money.

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23. Current Connections to Pontchartrain Park and New Orleans [00:52:54]

Q: Are you still friends with any of the old liners in Pontchartrain Park, those who are still alive?

EP: Yeah, the man across the street, Al Turnbull, he's 96, knew every birthday for my grandchildren, he's still there. My neighbors in Prairieville think I already moved back to New Orleans now that my daughter and my grandkids are in college. I'm in my house maybe five days a month, my neighbors get my newspaper and my mail. My daughter said, Daddy, why are you still getting a paper in Baton Rouge, and you here? I said, Well, I'm not reading them.

24. Need to Share Stories of Success, Failure, and the Real Side of New Orleans
[00:55:11]

Look, I appreciate what you're doing, young Robertson, on behalf of your parents, who were really the kind of person that I talked about before our neighborhood was infiltrated. They were the strong ones who made the difference in our lives. I think what you're doing is a need.

We ought to invite people who dropped out of SUNO to come back so that they can tell the young people sitting in those chairs why they ought to pay much more attention. The A students, they going to make it anyhow. What we ought to bring back is the ones who fail in school, to tell them what it's really like out here to survive in today's world.

I would hope that we would have more folks sitting in our classrooms talking about the real side of New Orleans. They just did a piece on how the Times-Picayune had disparaging words for black people. But you know what they didn't talk about? How they robbed the poverty program, okay? I'm doing some podcasts right now with a stipulation in my will to release them all on my death, so my family cannot get sued because it's too much.

25. A Family Story Leads to SUNO **[00:56:19]**

Q: One closing question. What role did SUNO play and your family's life here? EP: Well my daughter went to St. Mary's Academy from seventh grade, she was third in her class. And the top ten got scholarships, okay? And they call number 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and didn't call her name. And the daddy was about to go from being intelligent to a strong nigga, excuse the expression. My wife said, leave it alone. And you know what we found out? [Her] parents can afford to send her to college and that's why she didn't get what she earned. She came to SUNO working full-time in the post office, had 22 hours and finished magna cum laude.

SUNO CAAAS
INTERVIEW WITH MR. STEPHEN JOHNSON: STORY DIGESTS

1. UNIT ONE: Personal Background and Coming to Pontchartrain Park
[00:01:45] - [00:16:34]

1. Coming to Pontchartrain Park [00:07:22]

It was in the news and we had a very efficient realtor, David Greenup, he was doing a magnificent job of inspiring folk to go there. He pursued it vigorously, and of course, he was successful in my mind because he lived there himself. Q: Are you familiar with the Urban League questionnaire? SJ: Back in the day? Yes, that's probably how I got introduced to it. It was something new, and Pontchartrain Park was one of the first for minorities. And we all were excited, but at the same time, we have to follow the procedure that was necessary to be a homeowner. We did have a VA loan which relieved us of the necessity to have more funding. Fortunately we were able to get in.

2 Negative Talk about Pontchartrain Park [00:11:27]

There was some negativity, that's the nature of the beast. I ignored that because I was more inclined to be accepted and have housing in that area. Q: The great attorney A.P. Tureaud, Mr. NAACP himself, advocated against the establishment of Pontchartrain Park because it was going to be segregated. SJ: Yes, I knew about A. P. Tureaud but I wasn't necessarily accepting the idea because I was young and vigorous then and had dreams of things that might come into fruition.

3: The House in Pontchartrain Park [00:13:31]

I was just ecstatic because I had achieved an objective, but I was also fearful of whether I was going to be successful at maintaining a home. We had to be about 22, and you have a house note that goes with owning property. So I had to move as best I could at my particular age and leverage. I lived in the same house at 5725 Campus Boulevard. We took the floor plan that was in place, originally the home was only about a thousand square feet, it had two bedrooms. [After] about 10 years, we enlarged the size of the house, we had three individual rooms for our children. We added on a master bedroom, we took up some of the yard that was behind the car port.

UNIT TWO: PEOPLE, RAISING CHILDREN, AND LIFE IN PONTCHARTRAIN PARK
[00:16:34] - [00:30: 55]

4. Life in Pontchartrain Park [00:19:28]

Remember at that time I was a young man and we were going to the park and play touch football, we'd go to the court, play ping-pong. Everyone started having a relationship. They didn't have a golf course at that time, that came later. The golf course wasn't for blacks per se, although the blacks started to get into it but not like the other courses around New Orleans. We (African Americans) had one of the first Carnival clubs in the City that would parade on Carnival day. The name was High-Low Bidders, everybody liked to play Whist and that's how that name came into play..

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5. Advantages and Disadvantages Raising Children in Pontchartrain Park

[00:22:32]

There were advantages because we had a better handle on their activities. Now as life goes on, you know, it doesn't always work out that way. But the opportunity was definitely there to rear children like children should have been reared. The disadvantage is the same disadvantage parents have right now. Making sure and hopeful that their children will stay on the right path.

6. Gentilly Woods and St. Gabriel [00:25:51]

I think maybe the best and worst part of the experience was to go through the white section to get to Pontchartrain Park. But it ceased to become a great problem because we did have a Catholic Church, St. Gabriel, and I and all my children were Catholic. We were going through on Press Drive and it led straight to Pontchartrain Park. Q: Did your children experience racism going through Gentilly Woods or going to the school or church? SJ: It is possible because that's the nature of the beast when you're growing up, your children experience things they don't necessarily share with you. But it couldn't have been too terrible because everybody seems to have survived.

7. Participation in Community Organization. [00:27:07]

Q: Were you a member of the Pontchartrain Park booster club? [Did] you participate in the effort to get the Park lights? SJ: Oh definitely. We had to write the request, and the city council to recognize us. Q: I can remember my parents participating in that effort, that was a major achievement. Were you a part of the Pontchartrain Park neighborhood association? SJ: Yes I was, we attempted to get the play areas up to speed at the basketball court for an example. They built a clubhouse on Press Drive, which was adjacent to the basketball court and of course, the kids just automatically went there.

8. The Importance of Pontchartrain Park [00:28:19]

I watched it grow up around me along with my children. We saw Pontchartrain Park after the fact and we knew it before the fact, and it was just a great thing to have. You would feel pride in the way the park was handled by the people who were responsible, the parents in particular. [00:20:35] The greatest legend was the fact that we could have a subdivision as a people, one that would be recognized throughout the country and the world for that matter. And it's still there. And we have a younger generation coming along and it's an opportunity to maybe help them to get their bearing and move on.

UNIT FOUR Hurricane Betsy, Moving from Pontchartrain Park, Hurricane Katrina [00:30:55] - [00:39:07]

9. Flood Insurance and Hurricane Betsy [00:35:38]

Q: Did Hurricane Betsy damage your home? SJ: Well, the flood more than anything else. And because I was in the insurance business, I was very cognizant of flood insurance. So we had it, you know, everyone didn't. That was my primary source of

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income. [00:37:20] Q: After Betsy, did the neighborhood change for the better? I heard my father say that the neighborhood actually changed for the better. SJ: I think so. Q: How was that? SJ: Well, because folks were able to spruce up their property and you know, do some of the things that they hadn't envisioned prior to.

10. Moving on from Pontchartrain Park [00:31:08]

Q: Did you experience a change to Pontchartrain Park? SJ: Well, first of all, when I was there, it didn't change. Now, there are some things that look different, but initially it was what it was supposed to be: a community. We moved by 1979 because we wanted a different level of property ownership, not that there was anything wrong with Pontchartrain Park's level, it was the thing that I wanted to do for my wife and my family.

UNIT FIVE: PONTCHARTRAIN PARK THEN AND NOW [00:39:07] - [00:41:45]

11. Passing the Word to a Younger Generation in Pontchartrain Park [00:32:35], [00:39:22]

I will always always remember the property that I purchased in Pontchartrain Park, it was about as well kept and as good as it could be. The people were closer together, you know, we were all on the same page so to speak. My observation is that some group needs to restore the pride and the dignity that came with it originally. We can pass the word on how we had to do things when we were young, [but] the younger generation coming up now should take advantage of the opportunity. If they get the taste of being successful at building and getting their family where they want to be, Pontchartrain Park is the ideal place.

UNIT ONE DIGEST: COMING TO PONTCHARTRAIN PARK 01:51- 09:38

1. How We Came to Pontchartrain Park

[00:03:30]

Well, we were looking for an established community that we could raise our children in. So he told us about the square that had just opened--it was from the Archdiocese, and once integration came about everyone had to go to St. Gabriel Catholic church, so they sold the Square that was designated for a black Catholic church. Rudy Barnes and Teddy Marchand bought the square and they subdivided it and built homes. We made him an offer that he couldn't refuse to buy a lot, and that's how we got the lot.

2. From Hurricane Betsy in the Lower Nine to Pontchartrain Park

[00:18:30]

Q: Now, you were not in Pontchartrain Park during Hurricane Betsy, you were still in the Lower Ninth Ward, which was devastated. EH: Oh yeah, it was wiped out. We had to tear out all the walls and rebuild. Hurricane Betsy was...'65. We started building '68 year, we moved in '69. [It was] the last section to have houses being sold. [00:08:34] We were just happy to have your own home, and space for the kids, because I had four by that time. Q: What was the floor plan Like? EH: It's two stories, and we had four bedrooms upstairs. Then, downstairs, we had the living room, dining room, den, kitchen, washroom, double garage. 3,082 square feet.

UNIT TWO DIGEST: Living in Pontchartrain Park 09:38-20:49

3. Home\ Mama--the Mother Transporter

[00:10:02]

EH: My neighbors, across the street, they welcomed us all and they had kids as well, so they played and we mixed with the neighborhood. I was home all day, so I was a home mama. Kids always ended up at my house since I had a pool table in the den, and a basketball goal in the yard. [00:12:30] With all the kids playing, we brought them out there for Mac Knox, he was the coach, that was a legend by itself. And by being home, I was out there with them every day and I helped coach too. [00:16:02] I met all of the parents, and by bringing children home I found out where all them little curves and corners were. The kids would tell me, "I live right there, Mrs. Henry, bring me here." I was the Mother Transporter.

4. The Ditch

[00:13:03]

They used to say about that little canal was the dividing line, The Ditch. My nephews would say

how they would cross over that line, and the white people would beat 'em up. But my children never experienced it.

5. Pontchartrain Park Association, Gentilly Woods, St. Gabriel Church

[00:17:32]

Q: As a part of the Pontchartrain Park Association, do you remember what your role was, any of your activities? Q: Yeah--Coach, Concession, Transporter, Uniforms-- you name it, I did it.

When [it] became Pontilly, my kids were growing and I wasn't active, like I was when they were all younger. Q: Now St. Gabriel Church, which was in Gentilly Woods, were **you a** member of

St. Gabriel Church? EH: Yeah, we became members of St. Gabriel Church. I'm still the Eucharistic Minister in the church.

UNIT THREE DIGEST: KATRINA AND AFTER 20:49-27:47

6. Impact of Hurricane Katrina

[00:21:09]

EH: It wiped out the bottom level and we left and we went to Houston. When we came back, the whole first floor was up to five feet of the first floor. So we tore it all out, all the walls, and bleached it and got it ready. So that was in September, we moved back to New Orleans in November and we moved back in my house in March. We were the only ones in Pontchartrain Park. And once my neighbors found out we were back, "Y'all back?" So a whole lot of them came back. [But] so many houses were gone. Let's see.... one, two, three, four--four empty lots still there.

7. Post-Katrina Rebuilding in Pontchartrain Park

[00:26:03]

Q: And are you aware of Wendell Pierce's post-Katrina efforts to provide people with new homes in Pontchartrain Park? EH: Yeah, he and my son went together with it, Troy. I thought they had a good idea. But so many things, red tape, and you know, I was the last to know. People come ask me. I said, "Well, I don't know, -- ask my son." The last I heard they don't have any affiliation with it anymore. Like I say, they don't tell Mama nothing, you know? "Oh Ma, you don't have to worry about that." As usual (laughs).

UNIT FOUR DIGEST:: Returning Children, Community Connections, and...the Casino 27:27-35:23

8. Returning Kids, and Tightly-Knit Community

[00:30:12]

EH: Living out here was has been very good and feels safe. You know your neighbor, they keep

an eye on me, I keep an eye on them. So we pretty much tightly-knit. Q: Now you're no longer an empty-nester. EH: Oh no, I got my son and his wife and his son. They moved back from Washington DC. So they here. I told them the house is theirs, I don't need it. Because we moved along with the time and the kids moved along. Now they're willing to come back, like Little Sterling came back home. Troy came back, too. He figured there was no other school for his son to go to but St. Aug, so he moved back home. Ruston always was here. Troy's at Stanford and Carnegie Mellon, Little Sterling, St. Augustine and Howard, and Ruston, St. Augustine and Xavier.

9. My Three Sons

[00:27:24]

Q: You have three children, all three are college graduates, very successful, professional men. One ran for mayor, twice. Ruston runs the pharmacy now. EH: He has two, one on the east Bank, one on the west, and the prospects of opening two more, I think. He has the marijuana contract for the city and he's waiting on that to open. Q: And do you attribute their success to having grown up in Pontchartrain Park? EH: Right, a whole lot. The influence of people and the neighbors and the park, their friends, the school. It was a big milestone for them.

10. Enjoying the Casino

[00:34:04]

I got a group that on Monday we play from 10 in the morning to 4:30 in the evening, poker. I'm 82, and they called me teenager, so you know how old they are, okay? I was young when I started with it, but it's been a good thing.

11. Remembering: Kids and Community

[00:34:47]

Well, I wasn't a Pioneer, but I was out here after that to start, and when they had the dedication for Mr. Mack, all them little children I remember, oh my God, they're big huge men, "Hey, Mrs. Henry!" And everywhere I go, I meet them and they remember. Well, I brought them enough home, and they were all in my house, because each one of them had their own set, each boy. That's it.

SUNO CAAAS INTERVIEW WITH MRS. JOSIE LEWIS: STORY DIGESTS

MRS. JOSIE LEWIS: STORY DIGESTS

UNIT ONE: Background and Coming to Pontchartrain Park [00:01:47] - [012:17]

1. Personal Background and Education [00:01:47]

I'm Josie Young Lewis. [Born] October the 11th, 1932 at Flint Goodrich Hospital in New Orleans. I went to McDonogh 24 School on Adams Street where Connie Hill was the principal. I went to Booker T. Washington for one year, Lawrence Crocker was the principal, and Lucien V. Alexis [was the principal at my high school] McDonogh 35. I went to Xavier University and I finished in 1954 in sociology with a minor in library science. I was a teacher librarian in St. Martin Parish for four years and that is where I met [my husband]. He worked as an orderly at Baptist Hospital, then he worked out at the Michoud facility.

2. Coming to Pontchartrain Park [00:04:45]

Initially, we lived in Breaux Bridge until '58 and then we moved to Rocheblave Street across from McDonogh 42. My daddy was a golfer, Clifford Young, he played out at the golf course there and we saw the park and we decided we wanted to live out here. And then in June 1960 we moved into Pontchartrain Park on [the corner of] Providence and Prentiss. Q: Was Mr. Lewis a veteran and did you use the VA Bill? JL: Yes. We had to make a small down payment and we paid our note to Crawford Homes. [We had a] living room and three bedrooms. We later converted one of the bedrooms into a dining room, and we added a carport and another small room, a walk-in closet in the back.

3. Rosa Keller and A.P. Tureaud [00:06:07]

Q: Are you familiar with Rosa Keller's work to bring Pontchartrain Park into fruition? JL: Yes, Rosa Keller belonged to the Friends of Amistad which is the group that I served as president. I knew they had played a part in it. Q: Were you likewise familiar with Alexander Pierre Tureaud's efforts to stop Pontchartrain Park from being a segregated community? JL: Not really, but I knew of A.P. Tureaud and I knew his children.

UNIT TWO: Life in Pontchartrain Park [00:12:17] - [00:21:10]

4. Neighbors and Friends in Pontchartrain Park [00:09:04]

John Roux may have lived over, he was one of my daddy's golf partners. I got to know [my neighbors], like your mom and dad, we lived next door to each other and Lillian Jones across the street and Floyd Wilson. The Dejoies lived down across by the golf course down there, they were my daddy's friends. Then we had Dr. Pratt, who was a Xavier graduate that I knew. Sybil and Dutch [Morial] lived down on Press Drive. There were a number of teachers living here, I felt comfortable around them.

5. The Thibodeaux Nursery School, and the Playground [00:12:22]

I sent Tony to the Thibodeaux Nursery School, which was excellent. Miss Thibodeaux was like a mother to the children, we all loved her. It was spacious and convenient and she had them perform, it helped bring them out, you know? Tony went to the

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. JOSIE LEWIS: STORY DIGESTS

playground, there were a lot of children and activities, there was always somewhere to go to play ball and I think Tony joined the football team. And at least once a year around the Fourth of July, we had a big celebration with all the niceties. Q: Your mother Mrs. Young would come spend time at your home a great deal. JL: She always had a group of children in the yard with different activities and she enjoyed it and they did too. Q: I was one of them.

6. The Center and the Association, Then and Now [00:19:30]

JL: I'm an avid bridge player, I had belonged to about three different bridge clubs. The Center was opened and I played bridge over there. The director and her assistant there, they are great at planning things, so on Mondays and Wednesdays, I go there. [00:24:00] Q: Were you a part of the Pontchartrain Park Association? JL: Well, I basically went to the meetings, you know? But now, I feel more a part of the group with Gretchen at the head and I do participate with them.

UNIT THREE Gentilly Woods, and Hurricane Betsy [00:21:10] - [00:27:44]

7. Gentilly Woods, St. Gabriel Church, and Living with Whites [00:22:00]

JL: I attended St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, which at first everybody was white but then they redid the church and then it finally got to be mostly black. As a youngster I lived in an all-white neighborhood. They found us because my grandfather's house was [already] there, and his brothers had lived around the corner on Palmer Avenue. We knew we were colored and there were limits with some people and others were open-hearted. We accepted things as they were. Q: And you didn't experience any racial animus from those in Gentilly Woods? JL: No.

8. Hurricane Betsy [00:25:15]

JL: It flooded and we left, I stayed with my sister for maybe a month until it was ready--we had to redo the floors. I had homeowners insurance. Q: I have heard that homes in Pontchartrain Park that were flooded in 1965 were modernized when they were repaired. You did the floors-- did you get central air conditioning, for example? JL: I didn't get central air until after Katrina.

UNIT FOUR Hurricane Katrina [00:27:44] - [00:30:35]

9. Leaving and Returning [00:28:10]

JL: I left before the storm. [We had water] up to the ceiling, I would say. I went to Georgia, a little place outside Alpharetta. I didn't come back for a year. I was always thinking about coming back home. Q: Did you have to tear down your home? JL: Oh, yes. I have a loose sketch of the new home [shows sketch]. Q: And that's the very same land? JL: Yes, it's turned to Providence whereas it faced Prentiss before.

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. MARGARET ADAMS: STORY DIGESTS

UNIT ONE: Personal Background and Coming to Pontchartrain Park

Stories:

1. Education and Profession [00:03:14]

I went to Holy Ghost Elementary School, Xavier Prep, Xavier University. Q: And LSU? MA: Yeah, New Orleans. Q: So LSUNO. Q: What did you major in at Xavier? MA: Vocal music Q: And what was your major at LSUNO? MA: Counseling. Q: And professionally, what did you do? MA: I taught vocal music for years until I got my masters, and I became a counselor. In the public schools.

2. Meeting Mr. Adams, and Marriage [00:03:29]

Q: Now, tell me if you remember this story because I could remember it, hearing it here in your home as a boy. Mr. Adams was known as 'Fleet of Foot.' And he ran track at Grambling. He was here, running a track meet and he saw you. Is that a figment of my imagination or did that happen? TA: I remember hearing this same story (laughter). MA: I don't remember that far back. I don't remember the year we got married. PA: I would say '54 because she conceived almost right away (I was born in '55).

3. Coming to Pontchartrain Park [00:10:01, 00:07:31]

I know I was living in Dillard at one of the Dillard Apartments. It was just a matter of, you know, advertisement. We moved to Pontchartrain Park early on I think, we were the first part of Pontchartrain Park. PA: They built this house in 1958, like January or February of '58. Q: Did Mr. Adams use his VA bill to purchase the home? MA: I'm sure he did. He took care of everything, took advantage of everything he could. Q: Were you the first family to move into the Prentiss Avenue block? Q: I think so, me and Delores. My next door neighbor and I moved into here together.

UNIT TWO: Pontchartrain Park--and Gentilly Woods

Stories:

4. Importance of the Playground [00:12:41]

MA: Now the playground was very important. We used to spend a lot of time at the playground, we had a lot of activities there with the kids. PA: Yeah I played softball and I ran track. TA: Yeah, I played football, ran track, baseball...it was year round.

5. A Wonderful Neighborhood [00:15:41]

MA: First of all, it was a wonderful neighborhood. I mean you didn't have to worry about anything. There was a good school, I could walk to church and everything. Shopping wasn't too far, just far enough to keep me from spending all my money. I have loved living in Pontchartrain Park. We were just like one big family in the neighborhood.

6. Gentilly Woods and St. Gabriel Church [00:17:31]

Q: Now adjacent to Pontchartrain Park was a neighborhood known as Gentilly Woods for many of the years that you lived here. Gentilly Woods was all white. [You attended] St. Gabriel's Catholic church, [in Gentilly Woods]. MA: Well, I went over there just for mass. I'd go to church and I didn't have any problems. Q: Did your children's experience any difficulties? TA: Yes. PA: Yes. Q: Mrs. Adams, do you remember the ditch? It has more of a greater significance for many of the younger people because those of us who had to go back and forth to Gentilly Woods knew that that ditch was the point of demarcation between Pontchartrain Park and Gentilly Woods. MA: Well, that was understood but there

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is no problem for me because I didn't want to live in Gentilly Woods anyway. Q: Do you know if Mr. Adams had any knowledge about the problems that your children had in Gentilly Woods? TA: Dr. Robertson, I'll say this: he was probably more aware than my mother but certainly both of them were aware of incidents either within Gentilly Woods or within St. Gabriel's School.

7. The Lady in White [00:20:52]

Q: [Clyde Robertson:] The story of the lady in white permeated throughout Pontchartrain Park for at least 10 years. It was a story of a woman who might have had a **breakdown, and** was found wandering the park one evening during the summer wearing a long flowing gown and her gray hair blowing in the wind. A young child saw the woman and ran to the park screaming about a lady in white. Which cleared the park. And what eventually happened was that the benign story of a woman wandering the golf course became a horror story. Every spring and summer there were at least two or three sightings of the lady in white who then took on the character of child-consuming, murdering fiend (laughter). The lady in white. MA: That's the first time I'm hearing anything about that (laughter).

UNIT THREE Katrina and After, Final Thoughts on Pontchartrain Park

Stories:

8. Leaving Pontchartrain Park--and Returning [00:24:00]

TA: Clyde, I just want to correct a couple things. They lived here in Pontchartrain Park until 1984 when they moved to Grambling and lived in Grambling for 16 years and then moved back. So at the time of Katrina my mother was actually living in Gentilly in a house that I bought for her right off of Franklin Avenue. For Katrina she was spending time between here and that house. She's been back in this house since 2000. Q: Were you happy Mrs. Adams to return back to your home here in Pontchartrain Park when you eventually returned? MA: This is home. There's no place like home, but there's no place like Pontchartrain Park either. Q: Have many of your neighbors returned? MA: Dolores is dead, huh? PA: Yeah. But she didn't come back after Katrina anyway. The Mitchell's didn't come back. The Merrick's didn't come back. The Kristoff's didn't come back. PA: Miss Yolanda didn't come back after the storm and she tore her house down. She's back now, they kept the property. TA: Mr. Williams came back. Mr. Truly came back, and the **Young's** came back.

9. Remembering Pontchartrain Park [00:30:48]

Q: At my age this is my neighborhood right here [her home]. When I was young, I used to be involved in St. Gabriel. I would be involved in Pontchartrain Park Community Center. But I'm satisfied with what's today. Thankful to the Lord to be here and I'll be thankful when He takes me away. The one thing I remember most about Pontchartrain Park is working with the youngsters out at the playground, that was important to me. Pontchartrain Park was a wonderful neighborhood to live in and raise children. We had everything we needed here. We had the church not far away. We had a playground, We had lovely neighbors and it was just wonderful living here. It really was.

UNIT ONE DIGEST: COMING TO PONTCHARTRAIN PARK 01:37 - 06:12

1. Moving into Pontchartrain Park

[00:05:01]

It took about almost two years before we moved in the house because they had to put the streets and the drainage and everything. They were prefab houses. **[00:08:01]** We had three bedrooms, a living room, a little dinette kitchen, and a little kitchenette. And one or two bathrooms. One bath. And of course the front yard, back yard, two side yards. Q: Why did Mr. Oubre choose that particular model? RO: Guess, that's what we could afford. Q: Speaking of affordability, do you remember how much your home cost? RO: About 11,000? **[00:35:13]** When we first moved, Southern wasn't up. And then finally, they begin to put the pavement. That's where I learned how to drive. I used to go over there, drive up and down.

UNIT TWO DIGEST: LIVING IN PONTCHARTRAIN PARK, 06:16 - 19:48

2. Community Parenting

[00:11:05]

It was really nice. Everybody was just like one big family, the whole block. If my child did something you could correct it. They did something, I could correct it. **[00:14:03]** The elderly people they correct them. It was to let them know what they were doing and why they did it. **[00:32:02]** Q: Each parent parented people in addition to their children. I can remember a lot of homemakers, ladies standing out as we would walk home from St. Gabriel. I never realized that then what they were doing but it was a gauntlet of parents from Gentilly Woods as I crossed the track (ditch) into Pontchartrain Park from Mendez all the way to Prentiss Avenue, there would be just ladies standing in the doorway or sitting and we speak to them all the way.

3. A Family Story

[00:17:31]

I used to help with the children, I wasn't working so I used to take the kids to the games. I had a station wagon, and I would just pile them all up in there and take them to the game. **[00:14:48]** I would always take them around the city, we would take them to the airport so they could sit by the window and watch the planes take off. We would take them out to dinner. I'll never forget, we took them to Dooky's. It was Percy, he wanted a steak and my father said, "Where did you all go?" "We went out to eat and I had a snake."

4. Experiences at St. Gabriel Church

[00:18:27]

Q: Did you have positive experiences at St. Gabriel? RO: We had negative. When we would go to Mass, we had a certain section, we'd have to sit and then we couldn't go to communion until everybody was finished and they would bring the communion to us. Q: Where did you go from there? RO: St. Paul. It was really nice because the kids went to school there. Q: Was that integrated or was that Black? RO: Black.

UNIT THREE DIGEST: MOVING AWAY, HURRICANE KATRINA AND AFTER

19:53 - 27:40

5. Moving from Pontchartrain Park

[00:19:53]

Q: When did you move from Pontchartrain Park? RO: 1977 or so, Because the kids was getting bigger and the house was small. They was going to college and we needed more room. Really at first, I didn't care for it at all. I wanted to stay in Pontchartrain Park. That was my first home and the kids was brought up there. That was all my memories there. Q: Now you moved in 1978. What did you do with your home? RO: One of my sons moved in. Then after he bought a house and moved out the other son moved in, and he's there now.

6. Neighborhood Impact of Hurricane Katrina

[00:24:23]

Q: Has the neighborhood changed [after Hurricane Katrina]? RO: Well, most of the people didn't come back and it's just empty lots. The street is terrible. When you go there you have to just crawl in your car, there's these big holes. Not too many people on the Block. A lot of empty lots.

7. Wendell Pierce's Post-Katrina Efforts to Rebuild Pontchartrain Park

[00:25:33]

Q: Are you aware of Wendell Pierce's post-Katrina efforts to provide people with new homes in Pontchartrain Park? RO: Yeah. I think they're nice. Because the houses the people needed, and he was helping them because that's the type of person he is. **[00:33:55]** Q: I applaud Wendell. He experienced some difficulties that I think were born out of, quite possibly, him not knowing the system and the system's desire not to see things come back the way that he had envisioned them. I think those houses that he did build successfully are tremendous additions. If he had been able to continue that, I think the park would look a little differently than it does.

UNIT FOUR DIGEST: CHILDREN AND SUCCESS STORIES 27:49 - 36:01

8. A Teenager's Inspiration

[00:27:56]

RO: When the kids was little teenagers, they went to parade and the police was nagging them about move back this that. And one of the Morris', he came back crying and he said, "That's why I'm going and get my education.. I want to be a lawyer because I'm tired of these police treating us like this." And he did. He became a lawyer.

9 Pontchartrain Park Successes

[00:29:23]

Q: Why do you think many of the young people who were with your children in Pontchartrain Park are successful today? RO: Because of the parents. Wendell's other brother, he worked for Obama, he didn't want to go to St Aug's so he went to Holy Cross. Yeah. Ron went to West Point. And then Dejoie went to the Naval Academy.

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UNIT I : GROWING UP IN A MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD [00:01:44] - [00:05:56]

I, Story 1: Childhood in a Mixed Neighborhood [00:02:03]

I have wonderful memories of my childhood on Miro Street. We had a huge backyard and it was a big house. It was very diverse. There were whites and blacks, there were grand homes and rentals and medium-sized homes. So it was a mix of what America is. I played with these children, we played circle games, jacks and jumped rope, and girls even played marbles. No difference because we were of different races. Our big backyard became the neighborhood playground and my mother not only allowed but encouraged it. And some days she fed everybody when she cooked red beans. She'd open the screen door in the back and call "Plates!" That means come get your plate, get your beans. And we go back outside and sit on the lawn, slapping away the mosquitoes while we ate our midday meal.

I, Story 2: Childhood in the Segregated South [00:05:00]

I played with these children with no regard that we were different, except we went to different schools. And then of course, high school-- I went to Xavier Prep and we went on the bus, three transfers. We rode in the back and our white friends rode the front of the bus. We could not go to public places together. There was a movie house within walking distance, but there was a white entrance and a black entrance. We had to pass the white entrance to get around the corner to the black entrance and we'd shyly wave to them who were standing in line. And the next day we'd get together and talk about the movie. It was so strange, but it was our reality. So we accepted it.

UNIT II: XAVIER, BOSTON UNIVERSITY, CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, AND MARTIN LUTHER KING [00:05:56] - [00:12:00]

3. A Black Student in the North, Early in the Civil Rights Movement [00:05:56]

I went to Xavier University for two years. [But] I wanted to know a northern city [where] you didn't have to think, Oh, can I go here? Are they gonna humiliate me? My last two years I attended Boston University. I could go wherever I wanted to go, to the museums and to live theater. And I just love the freedom of a northern city.

In those days, all of the black students in all of the universities in the Boston area, MIT and Harvard, and Boston College, and Boston University and several others, we all knew each other through sororities and fraternities and we socialized together. This was the 1950's, we were on the cusp of the Civil Rights Movement. And so we talked all the time about the possibilities, especially those of us who were from the segregated South. When the Brown decision came, we were thrilled and we wondered what this meant. How would change come? And all of the students who came from Southern cities, we love the freedoms of the North but we all wanted to go back South to be a part of the change.

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4. Martin Luther King [00:07:21]

Martin Luther King was a dear friend. He was working on his doctorate at Boston University and I was an undergraduate. He would preach in churches where the minister had to be out of town. The buzz in the dormitory was Martin speaking at such-and-such a church. Okay, we going. So he was our leader. We had no idea he would be on the world stage leading all of us. He hit the stage when he led the Montgomery Bus Boycott, he was speaking all over the country. When I found out he was coming to New Orleans, I wrote him a letter, I said, When you come, if you have time, come to dinner. " So I went to hear him," I went backstage and he said, "I am so sorry, I was going to tell you that I'll be free for dinner tomorrow, but the ministers have called me in for a meeting." And guess what happened at that meeting? The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was born in New Orleans at Reverend A.L. Davis's church with Martin Luther King as the leader. So I said, I don't want to use this word, but that trumps Sybil Morial. [laughter]

UNIT THREE : TEACHING, MARRIAGE, AND COMING TO PONTCHARTRAIN PARK
[00:12:00] - [00:23:43]

5. The Only Black Teacher in a Premier Public School [00:12:00]

I got a job teaching in Newton, Massachusetts, which was one of the premier excellent public school districts in the country. My advisor said, Sybil, you need to give this some thought. For you to teach in Newton that's great on any level, but you will be the only black teaching, and I don't know that there are many black students in that neighborhood. So I taught school and I went to graduate school in the evening and on Saturday. In 1955, I finished my Graduate Studies.

6. Marriage with Ernest (Dutch) Morial [00:13:29]

Ernest Morial and I were dating and we decided to marry. Mr. Morial attended law school before we got together. He finished Law School in 1954, at LSU, the first black. He was in Army intelligence, the spy group of the army. We married in Boston, and he went to Fort Howard in Baltimore. When his term was up, 1955, we returned to New Orleans. He had been practicing law with A.P. Tureaud who was the dean of black lawyers in Louisiana. And then he resumed his practice with A.P. Tureaud.

7. Coming to Pontchartrain Park [00:17:13]

There was no question that we would not buy a house in Pontchartrain Park. He got a VA loan, that's why so many young people were buying houses because many of them were veterans and they could get the GI loan, and my husband did. We were sold on raising our children there, we didn't consider any other place. The house was across the street from the park, from the golf course, and I could look out my windows and see my children playing over there. There were many children their age to play with. The parents, the homeowners, took care of their property, you know? They kept the grass cut, they planted plants, and they kept everything clean and they were so proud to own a home, as Dutch and I were.

UNIT IV: PONTCHARTRAIN PARK AS A SEGREGATED BLACK COMMUNITY, CHANTILLY WOODS AS WHITE [00:23:43] [00:30:23]

8. Choice of a Segregated Community [00:23:43]

Friends of my parents knew we grew up in a mixed neighborhood, and they said, Do you want your children to grow up in an all-black neighborhood? Don't you want them to have a more diverse experience? We were all young families, homeowners, many of them were veterans, and I thought it was healthy and that outweighed my concern about them being separated from white people who they would have to get along with eventually. I thought living in a segregated neighborhood might be healthy for the development of their self-esteem.

9. Choice of School in an Integrated White Community [00:20:01]

I was glad that they did go to the Catholic integrated school, Saint Gabriel, in the white neighborhood, Gentilly Woods. To have that experience even though some of it was negative. There was a ditch that separated Gentilly Woods from Pontchartrain Park, and when you got over the ditch you were safe. Years later, [my children] told the stories--Jacques about how he had to run home because the same boy would chase him and call him the N word. I said, Well, why didn't you tell me? He said, Well, I handled it. Look, what were you going to do? So they learn to handle that adversity without coming to us.

10. A Lifelong White Friend in Gentilly Woods [00:28:06]

I had one friend, early on, Clare Katner, who had a lot of children at St. Gabriel. She invited our family to dinner. She said, I just want to kind of prep you, I'm not responsible for what my neighbors say or do. She said the neighbor down the street told her children, Now you be nice to those little colored children but don't play with them. And [Clare] said, How can she teach that negative thing to our own children? She was Christian enough and brave enough to invite all of us to dinner. She did what her conscience told her. And so we were lifelong friends.

UNIT V: RECREATION IN PONTCHARTRAIN PARK v. DUTCH MORIAL'S CIVIL RIGHTS INVOLVEMENT [00:30:23] - [00:35:37]

11. Dutch Morial in the Civil Rights Movement [00:34:09]

Dutch, my husband, was so busy during the Civil Rights Movement, he was president of the NAACP and he was a practicing attorney. And because he was with A.P. Tureaud, he was involved in much of the legislative change when Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley and the team from the NAACP legal defense fund came down, strategizing how to get the state to conform to national mandate to desegregate the schools. He was gone all the time and of course, I was home. We've talked about it now because [Marc's] son is a really great basketball player in New Jersey where they live. He's a freshman in college but Marc went to every single game. He said, I'll arrange my schedule, because I remember dad was too busy to

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make all of my games.

UNIT VI: CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISM AND THE LOUISIANA LEAGUE OF GOOD GOVERNMENT (LLOGG) [00:35:37] - [00:49:27]

12. Sources of Activism for Pontchartrain Park Leaders [00:35:37]

Q: Mr. Morial made history by becoming the first African American elected to the State House of Representative since Reconstruction. There was Dr. Adams, the podiatrist, who was a major Civil Rights stalwart. Dr. Mitchell, the optometrist, was a Civil Rights stalwart. What was it about Pontchartrain Park, do you think, that gave rise to these activists? SM: I think they were all professional people who were aware of what was happening, not only in the country, but what was happening in our state, and in our city. Many young black women and men were involved in some small way because this was a life-changer for them and their families.

13. LLOGG--The Louisiana League of Good Government [00:37:02]

I belonged to a women's group. There were eight of us, and we would have rummage sales and give it to the orphanage, we were do-gooders. And then I couldn't wait for my husband to come home because he was in the courts, to tell me the real skinny on what was going on. And I was home with two toddlers. And I said, Well, I want to do something, so I went to my seven friends and said, You know, we could really make a contribution. I think that's what accelerated the Civil Rights Movement, everyone was seeing what was happening all over the country and this motivated many of them to become involved. Q: What year did you create LLOGG, the Louisiana League of Good Government? SM: 1963, right in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement. We were not thirty yet, had little children and this is what we say: Well, we get a babysitter to go to a party or to go out to dinner. We could get a babysitter once a week to go do this.

14. LLOGG and Voter Registration [00:39:12]

I had a white friend from Gentilly Woods who belonged to the League of Women Voters and they had just gotten a grant to do voter registration. So I said, I can be a part of the voter registration drive. No. They couldn't take me because it was a state law that said white and black people could not meet together or eat together. So we got together at my house and talked about what we would do. We educated ourselves to what the registration process was, the intent was to keep as many black people off the rolls. To become registered voter back then you had to pass a citizenship test, a literacy test, you had to figure your age in years months, weeks and days. It was an intimidating experience to get the right to vote. But we were loyal to our areas and we did that for several years. We were educating ourselves so we could in turn educate others. We educated ourselves to what the registration process was, the intent was to keep as many black people off the rolls. To become registered voter back then you had to pass a citizenship test, a literacy test, you had to figure your age in years months, weeks and days. It was an intimidating experience to get the right to vote. But we were loyal to our areas and we did that for several years.

15. LLOGG and Voter Education [00:42:16]

Then we had a brilliant idea of having a Meet the Candidates session. We set it up to have it in a labor union hall. I said, What's the point, there were no black candidates, suppose they don't come? Dutch and Moon [Landrieu] knew each other during the early years, I said Moon this is what my organization did, you think they'll come? He said, Sybil, I don't know, but I'll be there. Almost everybody turned out, curious about these young women who had the nerve to have this big Meet the Candidates session in a big union hall. That really gave us the exposure that we were serious. And we were young women who had children and jobs. So, our organization thrived all through the years.

16: LLOGG After Katrina: College Scholarships [00:44:17]

And guess what happened? Katrina came. And all of our members dispersed, left to go to other cities. I said, do you think we can bring this together? We need to find young live wires because this should not die. We had gotten a big grant from the city to do more voter registration and voter education, and that money was sitting in the bank, I think it was \$20,000. One of our past presidents was a successful businesswoman, she said, Well, it's been eight years since since Katrina, I'm going to get our interest on that and make it grow. And we ended up getting close to thirty thousand dollars. We decided to do two scholarships, one at Dillard and one at Xavier. And the only restriction we had on it was that it would go to a woman. We thought with twenty thousand dollars we would only spend interest, could do maybe \$5,000 if the market was good. So all was not lost. Some of our original members are gone but they left a great legacy.

UNIT VII: HURRICANE BETSY, LEAVING PONTCHARTRAIN PARK , “THE LADY IN WHITE” MYTH, AND FINAL REFLECTIONS ON PONTCHARTRAIN PARK [00:49:27] - [01:00:53]

17. Hurricane Betsy, and Leaving Pontchartrain Park [00:52:52] , [00:49:27]

Q: You lived through Betsy in Pontchartrain Park, how did Betsy impact upon you and the neighborhood? SM: The whole neighborhood flooded out. We had about 10 inches of water in our house. We had to get a boat to go to the flooded street to see what Betsy had done. We restored the house enough to be able to live there. Happily. Because my children had friends because they loved it so much. Because it was beautiful and peaceful. We remained in Pontchartrain Park until 1972. We left because we had a fifth child, and we didn't have any room. I was saddened to leave Pontchartrain Park because I still had two young girls and I would have loved for them to grow up in that very healthy and nourishing neighborhood.

18. The Lady in White [00:55:42]

Q: Supposedly there was a lady somewhere on the other side of the park near the golf course. She would be seen at dusk, with a white flowing gown and white hair blowing in the wind, and she would frighten children. For years, just the mentioning of the Lady in White in the spring and

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summer would clear the Park. SM: You know there was a tale like that in the Seventh Ward where if you didn't come in right at dark, that the lady was going to get you. Well, soon as a street light went on I could see kids running all over to make it home before it got dark

19. Lasting Memories--An Idyllic Place [00:58:52]

Q: Can you recall at this moment your lasting memories about Pontchartrain Park? SM: I think I've shared all of that. Just young families with children were able to do it because of the GI Bill. Proud of their homes, proud of the neighborhood because there were people just like they were who kept their property up and who were happy that the children could play outside with little fear that anything would happen to them. It was an idyllic place to raise children. And

20. All Black Community as an Asset [00:58:52]

The fact that it was all black turned out to be an asset because it raised self-esteem. They did not get the taunting that you're not as good as the rest of them. Even though I loved that I grew up in a very diverse neighborhood, I think that Pontchartrain Park was very healthy for my children.

UNIT VIII: HURRICANE KATRINA, AND AFTER [01:01:01 - [01:08:40]

21. Hurricane Katrina, and Restoring Her Home in the Seventh Ward [01:01:16]

Oh, it was horrible. All of my children were flooded. I was flooded. Monique was flooded, Julie had just come back to New Orleans, she flooded and Jacques's roof was almost ripped off. We all evacuated to my daughter Cheri's house in Baton Rouge, seven of us and a big dog. I was there five years, I decided, these people need to get back to their routine, your house had become a hotel and so I rented a house. I had just retired from Xavier University, two months before Katrina. So I had no reason to come back here to get my house back together. [But] I did want to restore it. This is a family homestead that has so many happy memories. All five of my children, the older ones during the teen years, the younger ones most of their lives.

I was thinking how I could recover. And I did. I was coming every week to meet with the contractor. But then a month into the restoration, fire took with the water hadn't. The water took the first floor and mildew crawled up the walls. The fire took the second floor and everything in it. So I was just intent on getting the house back together. I do not regret having a big mortgage. I do not regret restoring it because every holiday they come, you know, even Fourth of July, I'll have something. We eat outside, it's wonderful. I have my hair done in Pontchartrain Park. That's once a week and I have such happy reminiscences each time I go. I got a good look at what used to be my house. And as all the memories come back, it's still a wonderful neighborhood.

[01:08:40]

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SUNO CAAAS

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. VELEZ WHITE: STORY DIGESTS

UNIT ONE: Personal Background and Coming to Pontchartrain Park [00:01:50]-[00:09:34]

1. Husband and Family [00:03:05]

VW: [I was] married to Phil White June 12, 1948, and he died January 26, 1968. He was in the Navy. He served in Korea and Vietnam and in the World War. He wasn't a career man, but he was at Xavier and they had the Korean War and they had the Vietnam War and they called him back for that. Transferred him to San Diego and I lived in San Diego with him. I had Philip and my daughter and then we came back. Q: Now, how many children did you all have? VW: I have five, four boys and a girl. They were all born while he was in the service.

2. Coming to Pontchartrain Park [00:05:40]

VW: Joe Bradford was the guy who enticed [my husband] to come and look at the house, on Providence Place. We moved December the 1st 1962. Q: Did Mr. White use his VA Bill to purchase the home? VW: Yes, yes he did. Q: Can you describe your floor plan when you moved into your home? VW: A kitchen, living room, and three bedrooms and one bath. Front yard, back yard. Q: When you moved into Pontchartrain Park, what was your profession? VW: I was teaching at Holy Ghost, 2nd grade. Q: And your husband? VW: Teaching at Hoffman, fourth grade, and working at the post office at night.

UNIT TWO: Living in Pontchartrain Park [00:09:34] - [00:13:47]

3. Home and Playground [00:09:34] [00:16:14]

Q: What were some of the positive aspects of living in the park? VW: Well, the positive aspect was the children each had a room to themselves. They wasn't all crowded in one room. And the neighborhood was nice. I was happy. I had our own place. We were a neighborhood, it was like family, family oriented, you know. [00:16:14] Q: Let's talk about the recreation component of Pontchartrain Park. You mentioned that Philip and Leonce played on the playground. VW: Right. Leonce played it all, he was on the All-Star team for the Lakeshore District. Philip didn't play like Leonce played but he used to be on the park all the time.

4. Recalling Tragedies [00:17:16]

Q: Did you know any children who might have died swimming the lagoons? VW: Yeah, that little guy, he used to live on Prentiss, Edwards was his last name, lived right across from Joe Jackson, he drowned. And another little guy on the track, the Johnson boy, Barnett Johnson, and the train hit him. And there was another little guy, lived out with Miss Barnes. Her grandson died sometime like that too, think it had something to do with the train.

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. VELEZ WHITE: STORY DIGESTS

UNIT THREE: Gentilly Woods and St. Gabriel Church

[00:13:47] - [00:20:22]

5. Mistreatment at St. Gabriel [00:13:48] [00:19:55]

VW: When I first moved out here I went to Holy Ghost but then I changed to St. Gabriel. I had to sit in the back of the church. I just accepted it. There wasn't much you could do then or I didn't have the courage to do anything more. I just wanted to go to church and that was the only one they had so I had to go there.

6. Disparities at St. Gabriel School [00:15:27]

VW: Gregory and Leonce went to St. Gabriel school and they weren't treated the way they were supposed to be treated. They were altar boys and they weren't treated like the white boys were. Q: So at Saint Gabriel School and Church, there were disparities with how they were treated? VW: Yes, disparities with the children. That's why St. Gabriel's [school] closed, because there weren't too many of us coming.

UNIT FOUR: Hurricanes Betsy and Katrina

[00:20:22] - [00:31:29]

7. Hurricane Betsy [00:20:13]

VW: Well, I remember that water came in the house and that we had to go to my mother's to stay. I lost some stuff, not like it was for Katrina. We had water in the house but we didn't have it seven feet. We just had it to the baseboard. I had to re-sheet rock, I got a SBA loan.

8. Displacement after Hurricane Katrina [00:24:13]

VW: Myself and my dad, he was like 100 and we left with Miss Jones and went to Houston. I went to Georgia, and then my daughter-in-law was transferred to Nashville and I lived in Nashville for 6 months. And then I went back to Georgia with them, then I came home and lived in Algiers with my sister and then I got a trailer and I stayed in a trailer for about a year, in front of my house. And then I got my house built and I moved in my house in 2009. And that's where I am now.

9. Neighborhood before and after Katrina [00:21:54]

VW: Started to change before Katrina, for the worst, not for the better. The Section Eight people came and a lady live next door to me she moved out saying because it was getting to be the ghetto. Still family oriented after Betsy, everybody came back. But everything's tear down now. I got a house next door to me that grows grass taller than you, and squatters in one of those brand new houses. Q: **Was** that one of the homes from Wendell Pierce? VW: Yeah. First they had it up for sale and Greenup had it, they would come and check on it. But all the signs are gone now. Nobody's in the house. Q: And that's the same Greenup family that helped bring Pontchartrain Park into fruition. VW: Right, the same family, that's his son. Q: So, what do you think about Mr. Pierce's attempts at providing

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. VELEZ WHITE: STORY DIGESTS

people with new homes in Pontchartrain Park? VW: I'm sorry it didn't work out for him, but it was a good idea.

10. Her community now [00:26:17]

Q: Are any of your old neighbors still on the block? VW: I have four of them still came back. and my immediate part, four of them back. Q: Have you resumed your membership in the Pontchartrain Park Association, are you a part of the Pontchartrain Park Elders Center? VW: Yeah, I can play bingo every Monday (laughter). I belong to the St. Gabriel's Trumpeteers. St. Gabriel's, it's all mostly black now, I'm comfortable there.

UNIT FIVE: Final Reflections [00:31:29] - [00:33:55]

11. Final Reflections--Before and After [00:31:38]

VW: When I moved to Pontchartrain Park I was happy, the children were happy, I was happy that I had my own place. The people are not as friendly [now] as they used to be. Everybody fighting. And you're afraid now to go out because at five o'clock, I don't leave out any more. I'm content to be to be where I am. And life just goes on, you just go with the flow, you know?

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. VELMA SLACK: STORY DIGESTS

UNIT ONE: Personal Background and Coming to Pontchartrain Park [00:01:47] - [00:12:52]

1. Personal Background [00:01:52]

My full name is Velma Lee Wilson Slack, I was born April the 28th 1931 in Franklinton, Louisiana. After I graduated from high school, I came to New Orleans to attend Dillard University. My husband was born in New Orleans. We are Pentecostal and he played an electric guitar at church, he came out there for a Revival meeting and I met him then two years before I finished high school. I graduated from high school in 1948, and I married in 1951.

2. Coming to Pontchartrain Park [00:05:59]

Someone told my husband there was a house for sale in the 4200 block of Mithra Street. We knew that there was an area where colored people were buying homes, nice homes, so we were interested in it. So he went and looked into buying the house. My husband took care of all of that. [He] was not in the service but our loan was a VA loan, I don't even remember how we got it. We moved to Pontchartrain Park in 1963. I must have been about 32 years old. I had five children when I moved into my home, one born since then.

3. The House Plan [00:11:29]

When you walked in the front door there was a living room and just beyond that was the kitchen. And then up the hall, there was a bathroom to the right and I guess three bedrooms. That was what it was, and we were so glad to own our own home, so we weren't too choosy. [00:30:48] My husband added on to our house, my house is twice as large as it was when we bought it. It's a four-bedroom house with three full baths. So we would have never left if Katrina had not come.

UNIT TWO: Living in Pontchartrain Park: Neighbors [00:12:51] - [00:18:28]

4. Recalling all the families on her block [00:13:01]

There were no empty houses. Mr. Dicks lived on the corner, there was a Mr. and Mrs. James, across the street live next door to him. And the Motens lived next door to Mr. and Mrs. James. Then the Bradfords lived next door to the Moten's but Miss Teresa and her husband, Mr. George, lived next door to the Bradfords. Then on our side on the corner, it was the Collins', next door to them was Mr. Octave Smith, next door to them we live there, and then the Coleman's lived next door to us, and Mr. and Mrs. Turner lived on the corner. So I knew everybody in my block. Once a week, Miss Coleman and them had breakfast, coffee or something, if you wanted to come by before you went to work. So we got to know everybody in your block.

UNIT THREE: Living in Pontchartrain Park: Children [00:15:16] - [00:28:00]

5. Children on the Block [00:15:16]

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. VELMA SLACK: STORY DIGESTS

I know the Moulton's had children the same age, the Collins', then Mr. Smith and Mrs. Smith had one son. The Bradford's had children the same age. The Coleman's had children the same age. And Miss Teresa, I don't know if they were her children or nieces and nephews but she had children that lived there that went along with my children. They played ball in the street in the afternoon. I don't think they played in an organized Pontchartrain Park setup, just in the street and after a while they would come in and make their own Kool-Aid and hot dogs. [00:24:30] Q: In the street, do you remember them playing a game called cool cans? VS: Yes, they would stack them up, I remember them playing that. Q: The cool cans was a game that was played all over Pontchartrain Park. Nearly every block had a cool cans set up in the street and that is unique because cool cans is related to the British game known as Cricket.

6. Walking to School [00:16:23]

When we lived on Gibson Street, they were near the St. Bernard project that had a name that people were bad. So I would drive the children to Philip School and then go to work. But when I moved to Pontchartrain Park, then I felt comfortable with my children walking to school just a few blocks up the street.

7. "They didn't like for me to come to their games" [00:22:09]

Rosario went to Kennedy because he wanted to play ball. He didn't like for me to come to his games. He was a receiver and when he'd catch the ball everybody fell on him, and I would holler, 'Get up off my child!' And he said he was embarrassed. Same thing with Kenneth with basketball when he was at Ben Franklin, he was the only black one on the team and we would just holler, you know--they didn't like for me to come to their games.

8. "No problems" w Gentilly Woods [00:25:00]

Q: Did you all go to St. Gabriel's Church? VS: No, we were Pentecostal Q: Did your children have any incidents with the people in Gentilly Woods? VS: I don't think they did because if they had to go somewhere, they very seldom walked out front. I worked at the time and then on the weekends, you know, that was church, so we never had any problems.

UNIT FOUR: Hurricane Betsy and Hurricane Katrina [00:28:00] - [00:40:52]

9. Hurricane Betsy [00:28:01]

We didn't have any problem with Betsy. There was water on the corner of Mithra and Press, but we didn't have any water inside the house. It wasn't to where anybody had to move out, our area was pretty good.

10. Katrina-- Evacuation, and Damage [00:31:28]

Q: Did you evacuate for Hurricane Katrina? VS: Yes. I was not going to. But my daughter lived in Florida and they had so much stuff on the news about it, so she got a room in Jackson Mississippi, that was the closest she could find, and she told me if we didn't go, they were not going to give her her money back. That's the only reason we left.

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. VELMA SLACK: STORY DIGESTS

11. Ruined furniture and clothes; moving away [00:33:16]

The house itself is pretty sound, but the inside, all the walls, and all the furniture was ruined, all the clothes, all my fur coats, we had to get rid of everything in there. As soon as they told us we could come home, we came and our neighbors was just like us-- nowhere to stay. We ended up buying a house in Covington, in North Park Subdivision, in 2007. The children saw us as being old and they wanted us to live in a gated community, so we bought that house.

12. No help rebuilding rental property, collapse of husband's health [00:36:48]

We had rental property but they wouldn't give us anything to help with the rental property. My husband, he would wake me up at night talking about how, I mean, "it's just like, I never worked. I don't have anything." And he worried about that until he had a stroke, so there I was with these two rental houses and Pontchartrain Park house and a husband. I was really challenged, you know? Then he had a heart attack, he was having seizures from all those aspirins that he had been taking, and he had glaucoma and he went blind. So now he's in a wheelchair. I didn't want to put him in a nursing home, so I just take care of him. I went through a lot with my husband being challenged.

UNIT FIVE: SINCE KATRINA [00:40:52] - [00:54:52]

13. Neighborhood has really changed [00:40:57]

Q: I have a son, Theron, the youngest one, that lives in Maine. He's home right now, but he just comes to help me some with his dad, he has an itchiness to leave. Mr. Dix is there but I believe his wife is deceased. The James family didn't come back after the hurricane. The Moultons didn't come back. And Gretchen lives in the Bradford House. The Colemans lived next door to me, the Smiths are gone, and Collins people are gone. The houses are not the caliber of houses that we had, the neighborhood is not kept up like we did. So it's really changed. Q: So in your opinion, the neighborhood has changed for the worse. VS: Yes, that's what I think. I've found that the crime in New Orleans is different than when my children lived here. I don't think the crime is real bad in Pontchartrain Park, it is just bad in New Orleans. So we are more involved in the house in Covington, where I'm living. Security drives up and down all the time, that's what I'm accustomed to now.

14. "I'm never going to sell this house" [00:44:35]

You know, I'm never going to sell this house. My daughter went back to Philip school and told her classmates that we were moving to Pontchartrain Park, Louisiana. Since we have another house, there's no reason to really get rid of it. As my husband gets stabilized, I want an iron gate and the driveway needs to be replaced, a few things I want done. But the children will have to sell it after both of us are gone. I'm never going to sell it, because that's the first house we bought.

15. Fondest Memories of Pontchartrain Park [00:50:04]

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. VELMA SLACK: STORY DIGESTS

Well, when the children could just get dressed and walk to school, they didn't have to wait for brothers and sisters because I felt nobody was going to bother them. And I was right because I never had anybody attack my daughters nor my sons. When they lived near the St. Bernard project I had to take them and they had to stay at school until I got out of school to go get them. Being affiliated with the church, sometimes the Ladies Auxiliary would do things at my house, luncheons and meetings. I was proud of the way my house looked, and we just had a kind of family relationship in the whole block. It's all different for me now. All of my children are grown and nobody really lives in Louisiana. The children were little and grew up, and now I don't even have baby pictures, you know. Everything is so different.

SUNO CAAAS

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. YOLANDA HENRY: STORY DIGESTS

Unit One: COMING TO PONTCHARTRAIN PARK

01:48 - 08:02

1. From California to Pontchartrain Park

[00:02:42]

YH: That was all taken care of by my husband, Clarence Henry Jr. He came down to New Orleans from California before I did to get a house for his family. At that time we had three children, and he came first. He was from New Orleans, in the Ninth Ward. His dad was President of Local 1419, Longshoreman's Union. When I came back to New Orleans, I was almost 25 years old. We came back in '57, and we moved in Pontchartrain Park in April of 1958. And I was expecting another child. And he was born in July of 1958.

2. Obtaining a Home in Pontchartrain Park

[00:06:40]

YH: He did not include me in that at all. All I knew was, I was waiting for my house. Lived on Treasure Street, across the street from Dillard University. As a matter of fact, Judge Israel Augustine's parents were my next-door neighbors. I stayed a housewife until my baby, which I had in 1958, until he went to school, the first grade. So I did not look for a job or anything until he was in school.

UNIT TWO: LIVING IN PONTCHARTRAIN PARK

08:01 - 19:26

3. Her Home and Neighborhood

[00:08:01]

YH: I was home, not out in the public like most people. I was a housewife at home with my children. I enjoyed my home, I enjoyed getting my yard together. Even though I had four children, I handled it all. Three boys and one girl. I lived in Pontchartrain Park from 1958 until Katrina in 2005. We had three bedrooms, one bathroom, living room, and a kitchen. I lived on Prentiss Avenue, and my house was in the last block. We had a nice group of people on our block. The children got along fine. We didn't have to run out for the kids to stop fussing. We didn't have that problem. The one thing I liked about that area where my house was because, every time I walked out my front door, I didn't have to look in somebody else's front door. I loved looking out onto that golf course, and that's where I still am today.

SUNO CAAAS

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. YOLANDA HENRY: STORY DIGESTS

4. Social and Pleasure Clubs

[00:17:10]

YH: [My husband] did belong to a social & pleasure club, The Vikings. They already had Original Illinois, Bunch, and Studs. But this was like a relatively new club. And then the wives and significant others of the club members, they formed a club I joined, and as a matter of fact, Leah Chase, Chef Leah Chase, was a member of the club. Her husband was a Viking.

UNIT THREE: PONTCHARTRAIN PARK AND GENTILLY WOODS

19:28 - 25:59

5. Desegregation in St. Gabriel Church, Gentilly Woods

[00:20:04]

YH: We went to St. Gabriel's Church which was in Gentilly Woods, and had no problem there-- go right to church and right back home. So there was no interaction except--well, my oldest son, he never was accepted in St. Gabriel School. They always claimed they didn't have a space. At that time, you know, the whites, they didn't want to do it, [De]Segregation--they just took little bitty ones, I guess they figured they'd have more control over it.

6. "I've always had to entwine with white people"

[00:23:12]

Q: What was your experience at the church? Was it gratifying? YH: It was nothing special, to me. Having grown up in Cincinnati Ohio and Los Angeles, California, it's like that's how it should be. People just go and come, without incidents. I've always had to entwine with white people. Because I've been going to school with whites since I was in the third grade.

7. Section 8 Residents in Pontchartrain Park

[00:25:14]

Q: And did you perceive when Section 8 was open to the park, any type of problems from Section 8 residents?. YH: I couldn't tell you who was a Section 8, I don't even know if there's a Section 8 on my block.

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. YOLANDA HENRY: STORY DIGESTS

UNIT FOUR: HURRICANE BETSY (1965) and HURRICANE KATRINA (2005)

25:59 - 37:00

8. Hurricane Betsy

[00:27:19]

YH: When Hurricane Betsy struck, well, before it struck, we bundled up and went to my mother-in-law's house. She was also in the Ninth Ward but her house was up off the ground, you had to walk up like five or six steps to get on her porch. That next morning I put my feet on the floor in water, what it was, her house had four furnaces and the water had come up through the four furnaces. And then we came back, my house was totally dry, my house was totally dry, not a drop of water, and we rode a skiff up to the door.

9. Hurricane Katrina

[00:25:58]

YH: Well, Katrina--I stayed in Pontchartrain Park until the mayor say, evacuate. I was the only one left in the house because my oldest son was in Africa, my other son was already in Washington, DC. My daughter and my youngest son was here in New Orleans. My daughter and her husband picked me up, and she picked her daddy up from his house and we met another family who Cherylyn consider her a sister, so we like tailgated out of the city. It took us, look like six hours to get from New Orleans to Baton Rouge. YH: Everything that was there you could still have that smell, I can still remember that smell. Driving back, it was like a window curtain or something. Soon as you're on this side coming from Texas, and soon as you cross through this curtain, that smell hit you. YH: My old house had to be torn down, completely torn down. Q: And were are you able to salvage anything from your home? YH: No furniture, no clothes. No utensils, no apparatus, pots or pans and stuff like that. I mean, I got a few little whatnots, just a very few. All the photos gone, neither college degrees, I had my high school diploma-- that's gone.

10. Coming Back to Pontchartrain Park--11 Years Later

[00:31:10]

YH: [After Katrina,] I was in [Houston] Texas eleven and a half years, and I loved it.

[00:34:31] The reason I'm back is my children felt that at my age I didn't need to be over there by myself. Houston is 365 miles from here. [00:35:31] Q: So how has the neighborhood changed since Hurricane Katrina? YH: Well, I don't see a change because I don't go around the neighborhood. But on my particular block it's changed because I don't even see the neighbors. Now, we have three houses in the street-- the Taylor's, the Roux's, the William's. And my house. And the Mitchell's The original

SUNO CAAAS

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. YOLANDA HENRY: STORY DIGESTS

Mitchell's, Dr. Mitchell is deceased, but his wife is living further east but their son, one of his sons, is living in their house.

UNIT FIVE: PONTCHARTRAIN PARK PRE- AND POST-KATRINA

36:48 - 47:08

11. Wendell Pierce's Post-Katrina Efforts

[00:36:53]

Q: Are you aware of Wendell Pierce's Post-Katrina efforts to provide people with new homes in Pontchartrain Park? YH: He is a very good friend of one of my nephews, Troy Henry, who is very well known in the city, ran for mayor a couple of times. He and Wendell Pierce offered it. But that's all I know about Wendell Pierce. I can tell you where his house is, but that's it.

12. Still Friends from Earliest Years of Pontchartrain Park

[00:37:43]

Q: Are you still friends with anyone and your earliest years of Pontchartrain Park's history? YH: The Adams's, Mrs. Margaret Adams. Since she still there in her house which is in my block, with her daughter, and her grandson. Also, the Roux's, the original Roux's, both are deceased, but their daughter and son is living in their house. The Taylor's, Mrs. Taylor is still living, her husband is deceased and she's in her house with her daughter. Everybody else is gone. And the houses are either sold or being rented, I couldn't tell you.

13. Working at SUNO and Hyatt Regency, Pre-Katrina

[00:42:52]

Q: Did your living in Pontchartrain Park persuade you to work at SUNO, Southern University at New Orleans? YH: We went to school for secretarial training. It was a funded program for disadvantaged, even though I was not disadvantaged. Everybody in the program was like single mothers with no husbands, or very low income. Well, anyway, I got into that program, and they set up for job interviews, since I lived in the Park, and I got the job. 00:40:57 I started working at SUNO as a secretary in June of 1966. I left in the 70s, the year the Hyatt Regency opened in New Orleans, working at the Hyatt Regency. I was a supervisor in housekeeping, I had three floors, 54 rooms on a floor. And I had like 15 maids, and each of those maids had to do 15 rooms. And that was really a lot for one person to cover. So they cut it to two floors.

SUNO CAAAS

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. YOLANDA HENRY: STORY DIGESTS

14. Her Pre-Katrina Home in Pontchartrain Park

[00:45:10]

YH: After we split and were separated and everything, I continued working and so I added a den onto my house. Then I also took out all that tile and put in hardwood floors and Terrazzo Tile in my kitchen and my bathroom and in the den, it was very nice. But guess what? Katrina wiped it all away. After Katrina, there was nothing but the piece of land, because the house had to be torn down completely.

15. Her New Home in Pontchartrain Park

[00:35:04]

Moving back, I'm in a new house, the same address but a newly built house. **[00:44:18]** And I enjoy my house, it has a porch, which it didn't have before, so I can sit on my porch and look out to the golf course. I enjoy that. My oldest son, he and his wife will be living with me. He'll be retiring from his job and he's coming back in November.