Jake Jacobs grew up in Philadelphia in the late 1950s and 1960s. Through his story, we learned of what life was like growing up African American in Philly, of his favorite eating places—some which remain open as Jim’s Steak Hoagies. We learn about how he learned to cook by “osmosis” by taking in the rhymes and rhythm coming from the kitchen as his mother, grandmothers and aunts cook. He attributes sensory memory as what guides him cooking. It’s this same memory that allows him to tell about his grandmothers’ potato salad and chicken and dumplings; in the process he speaks how they were both daughters of enslaved people. Musician at heart, athletic as a youth. In 1972 he arrived to El Paso to attend the University of Texas at El Paso on a scholarship to play for the university’s world renown track team, whose athletes participated in the Olympics. A platter of his grandmother’s shrimp, his weakness, played a significant role in his coming to El Paso. The people and food of El Paso, he says, changed his “metabolism.” He met people, became friends with and shared many meals them, from different ethnic background all equally color blind. He describes the changing foodscape of El Paso. In the 1970s, he ate his first “authentic” tacos in Juárez, and fed his love for shrimp at The Big Fisherman’s restaurant. Soul food he found at Bill Parks Barbeque. Players from the track team, the baseball team, the football team would pull their economic resources to
occasionally eat at Cattlemen’s where they would have a chile pepper eating contests. What makes food delectable is the feel of its texture on his mouth. He speaks of experiences working as a truck driver for the Association of Milk Products. Now El Zarape offers delectable Mexican food which since his first taco has become part of his core foods.

Length of interview __53:50________

Length of Transcript