

About the Author



New Orleans is my birthplace and home of choice. My early years were spent in the Lower Garden District, in what were the St. Thomas Projects and nearby neighborhoods, where I learned a love of urban New Orleans – the ability to walk to the store, school, and movie theater, or to hop on the streetcar and/or bus for more. I was also grateful for the companionship of neighbors especially in the evening after the busyness of the day yielded to being outside in the cooler air and visiting.

We had little at the time, and I was grateful for community resources, such as Kingsley House offered and still does today.

We had family who lived in other parts of the city, such as elders who lived a couple of blocks off of St. Charles, where we used to spend Mardi Gras each year. The beauty of the trees and the beautiful architecture thrilled me as we walked or rode the streetcar in the Garden District, Uptown, to Audubon Park, and Canal Street. As a carpenter, my dad had built or repaired many houses in those areas as well as the rest of the city, so when we got a car he would orient me to the many neighborhoods and my appreciation of the city, its architecture, and its culture deepened. My uncles were in the merchant marines, so they'd take me to their ships docked at the wharf, where the river got in my blood.

When we moved to Metairie, we were about eight blocks from the lake and that body of water became the center of many activities, only to be treasured more when I pursued my undergraduate degree at the University of New Orleans on the lakefront. During my teens and college, I learned about the areas of Bucktown, West End, Lakeview, City Park, Gentilly, and the French Quarter, where I often went to study and enjoy after classes. I also volunteered as an informal tour guide for international visitors, and thus had a reason to learn more about the city myself. These personal experiences, plus visiting friends, relatives, and community resources in other parts of the area gave me a love of greater New Orleans in its entirety, rather than one localized neighborhood. It is this love of the whole that brought me back after work took me away for a number of years.

After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, each time I heard out-of-state friends, news media, congressmen, and citizens around the world ask, "Why do people live in New Orleans?" I felt a need for a resource to specifically answer their question. That is the reason I wrote *Why People Live in New Orleans*.

My vita is posted on my web site: www.christineallenewy.com

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