

Community Archive Center Oral History Project Transcript
Isadore Wallace, Interview date: 2/17/2022

dindria: [00:04](#) Hello, Isadore.

Isadore: [00:06](#) Hello.

dindria: [00:07](#) Will you please say your name?

Isadore: [00:11](#) Isadore Wallace.

dindria: [00:13](#) And spell it.

Isadore: [00:14](#) I s a d o r e W a l l a c e .

dindria: [00:20](#) And please give today's date.

Isadore: [00:22](#) February 17, 2022.

dindria: [00:27](#) And today's location?

Isadore: [00:30](#) Tacoma Public Library. Main Branch. Digital Media Lab.

dindria: [00:34](#) Alright. The first prompt, ask you, what name of places people, or things do you call home

Isadore: [00:50](#) Name places, people, and things I call home. Honestly, where I am is where I am now, is home to me, Tacoma because this is where I'm at the, at the point where I got a lot of clarification on my life and things started transitioning for the best. I started, you know, learning more so about myself, my capabilities, and, you know, my strong points and, my weaknesses as well. Like, I knew more of my weaknesses than I knew my strong suits. And being here is where I actually first learned more of my strong suits.

dindria: [01:40](#) How did you move to Tacoma and how did that change your life?

Isadore: [01:45](#) I moved to Tacoma initially from Everett. That's one of the first locations that I arrived to, um, when I first got to Washington. And, you know, kind of like got my feet on the ground in a sense. Um, because that's where family, well, like most familiar family, shall I say, more of my age group was, that I could relate to. My aunt lives in Burien where she did live in Burien at the time, but, you know, I just felt like I needed to be around more relatable people and my cousins were of my age group. So I decided to move to Everett, just to be around closer family members.

dindria: [02:37](#) When did you come to Tacoma?

- Isadore: [02:39](#) I moved to Tacoma in, uh, 2017. And it was due to, new job opportunity, as a matter of fact, uh, security. And I got the opportunity, uh, after over a little bit of time they finally, hired me. Had already been hired, but I started a little bit later, at the Emerald Queen Casino, if I can say that. I worked there for like a year and a half. Uh, learned a lot. Once again, you know, like everything else, it was like trial and error. You learned your strong suits and you learn your weaknesses so you can actually be able to apply those things and be aware of those things in other different circumstances and situations. And it taught me a lot.
- dindria: [03:29](#) Can I ask you, and you can say no, if you want, what are those strong suits that you learned when you came to Tacoma?
- Isadore: [03:38](#) Well, my strong suits I learned from when I came to Tacoma was for one, um, a independent mindset. More positive and driven, motivated, determined all those things because it was to the point to where I had left my family that, you know, with my children and for instance, I left those, behind to better myself because in a situation I was in prior, I wasn't benefiting anyone. I wasn't benefiting myself. So I definitely couldn't benefit anybody else. And when I moved to Washington in general, from Everett to Tacoma, being in Tacoma just, it, it taught me a lot about myself. It taught me that my capabilities as far as like I can do things that I wasn't aware of that I could do. I, you know, I got job, opportunities that allowed me to, get into different fields that I was never familiar with. I was never, you know, taught about, being in the south. I worked in aerospace industry, as a lab tech. I worked, different security fields, like, different positions of security. Like, I pretty much worked in every field of security that you could probably name <laugh>.
- dindria: [05:26](#) Right on. We're moving on to prompt number two, which is who are you and where do you come from? And you're leading right into that. So I love that these questions are moving us. What places have you lived besides Tacoma? You mentioned the South.
- Isadore: [05:41](#) Yeah, so born and raised in Louisiana. Also a foster child. So, my story doesn't, it's so much reside in Louisiana, just it's like between Louisiana and Mississippi, because that's where my family was stationed at. I had a lot of family in Mississippi. Um, I had a lot of family in, Louisiana. It was like on my mom's side. Then my dad's side, like both were familiar with the Mississippi area because their lineage kind of like lies in Mississippi and Louisiana. So, it was, it, um, it was very coming for us to visit Mississippi family and sometimes the Mississippi family would come to Louisiana depending on the events that was going on.

I've traveled a lot of places in the south, um, and it was more so in my adulthood than my childhood because I didn't really do too much in my childhood.

Isadore: [06:47](#) In my adulthood I traveled a lot of places and that's when I started learning more so about myself and, you know, what I want outta life and, and what I deserve and don't deserve. And that all took place after my divorce. I was married for like three and a half years. It seemed longer because it was so toxic <laugh>, to be honest with you. But it was really a learning process, a learning experience for me. And it, it taught me a lot about myself. I had neglected myself for so long due to, trying to be, I guess say a leader or, a forefront for, you know, for other people. You know, just, just thinking about other people being considerate cause that's the type of person I am. Very considerate, very caring person. And that doesn't always work out in your favor.

Isadore: [07:47](#) And it's not to say I don't have flaws because I'm not perfect, you know, you make mistakes, you learn from that and you just keep going. And, and, you know, I can't say that I want someone, whoever hears this to, listen to my story and, understand my story. What I want from the listener, whoever hears this, is to have some consideration and care for my story because that's what it's about, you know? It's ups and downs. It's like life is, and, you know, throughout the trials and tribulations that I went through in every location that I've traveled, it's only taught me about myself, like the good and the bad.

dindria: [08:42](#) What are some of the other places besides Louisiana and Mississippi that you have been to when you were an adult?

Isadore: [08:48](#) I have traveled to New Mexico. I've actually lived in New Mexico. Have brothers there, Annapolis, Maryland., I've traveled to Texas, um, New York. I have traveled to where else I've traveled to. Oh, Tennessee. I've also traveled to Oklahoma. Yeah.

dindria: [09:23](#) Right on. It sounds like you know a lot about the United States. Yeah. We should have you write a book.

Isadore: [09:27](#) I'm pretty well travel in a sense. Yes.

dindria: [09:30](#) You could write that travel book, right. <laugh>. If you don't mind, describe your family and or the folks that you've lived with.

- Isadore: [09:42](#) My family. If I can go one at a time with each of my family, because I have a big family <laugh>. My oldest brother, I'll start with him. Well, no, I'll start with my dad. I'll start with my dad. My dad, he died when I was 16. A very stern, firm man. He's, he's, he was old school, loving, caring, he was very, um, open even though he was disciplinary. He was very open to the sense in, in a sense of he never, um, not once allowed the opportunity to pass to where he didn't show his emotion and his affection towards kids. And he wouldn't hesitate to say he's proud of us. And, you know, he would embrace us as, as hard and stern as he was. He was a balance of, you know, both. And that's where I get it from.
- Isadore: [10:53](#) Uh, my mom, um, <laugh>, she's pretty of a, she's the one that's holds everything together. But she's also the one that, you know, invokes the fun into every situation. <laugh>. Yeah. She, in puts the fun into every situation and, you know, everyone has their flaws. She's my stepmom, but, you know, she showed us love even though, you know, her upbringing wasn't the best. So the way that she brought us up, you know, she only did what she was taught. And that doesn't always work out, you know, in everyone's favor. But at the same time, it teaches us lessons is, and, and it strengthens us in those places where we need to be strengthened.
- Isadore: [11:51](#) My oldest brother, <laugh>, getting back to him, my oldest brother, we were very close when we were younger, but we always clashed. He's a Leo, I'm Aquarius. And I never understood his reactions and responses to things until recently. I actually had the opportunity to hear his story. I've never heard my oldest brother's story before. And it was very traumatic, his upbringing before, you know, as just a very young child that was forced to be an adult very early in life. And, you know, to hear his story, it allowed me the opportunity to see my brother for not just my brother, but a human, you know, it allowed me to see him not just as a man, but as a man who's been through some things, you know? And I, we've always had a rocky relationship and, and we still were close.
- Isadore: [13:10](#) But at the same time though, it was like hearing him tell me that and hearing it from somebody else's perspective. Also because my aunt informed me of what happened also because me being the third youngest child, I don't really know the history of our family like that. But to hear his story, it was, it was eye-opening. And it was also humbling because I always looked at my older brother, like, oh he has an attitude. He this, he's ungrateful, he's that. But not knowing that he's been through some things to force him to be this way that developed him to be this way, you know? And my next to the oldest brother, like, I don't really know his

story. Like we were close when we were younger, but he left home when he was like 14, 15. Yeah. He left home at a very young age, you know, he was getting in trouble, at school and, and all these type of things get in trouble with law enforcement and stuff like that.

Isadore: [14:10](#)

But listening to my brother only just made me realize I've been so consumed with myself in trying to, you know, work through my trauma and, and build myself back up, or even start the process to, you know, just build myself. Not even build myself up again, but just build myself because I've never been built before. I've been broken down, but I've never been built, you know, and it's like, it made me realize that each one of us has a story, an individual story. And to compact it into one would be, injustice. You know? It wouldn't be, it wouldn't do us a justice to compact our story into one, because the individuality of each one of us and the separate storylines, you know, they have their own story. But that's what it made me realize with my oldest brother, hearing what happened to him. And my, third oldest brother, he's very eccentric. Uh, he's Aquarius too. But he's one of those, um, he has, I guess you could say, mental disability, but he understands, and he comprehends, and he communicates. And, but the thing is, is like his actions, you know, he does irrational things. Um, and he was placed in, government facility, since he was like 16, 17, and he's 39 now.

Isadore: [16:08](#)

So he's been confined to the government, to the state, um, for some time now. I talk to him every day. I talk to most of my brothers except my second youngest, oldest. Um, I have a good relationship with my brothers and with my siblings in general. My sisters, speaking of my sister. So after my third oldest brother, it's me, then it's my sister who comes along, maybe not even a year apart. So when I'm 38 now, she's going to turn 38 in January, then I'll be 38 along with her until my birthday comes in January on 21st, cause of hers on the 6th of January. Yeah, it's, it's like that, it's, uh, <laugh>. It's a funny, it is a funny dynamic <laugh>, seriously. Very unusual, but at the same time, I, I think it's come more common than I realize. Then you have, my other sisters, they're twins. They're identical twins. Um, <laugh>, they're Scorpios. They're young. They have children and stuff like that. Um, and the thing about my sisters is I love them dearly, but the thing I try to implore with all my siblings is they focus so much on the past

Isadore: [17:58](#)

And that's something I tried to, get them to understand. But like I said, listening to my brother's story kind of made me reevaluate a lot of things, you know what I'm saying? And at the same time, it's like some things aren't meant to be resolved at the time where you think it is. Some things aren't meant to be resolved by the

methods that you use for one situation. You know, you, you can't use this method for this because it, the outcome is gonna be different and the, the circumstances situation changes. So your method is gonna be outdated or is not gonna be useful in, you know, every situation now with my sisters is very complicated because it's a lot of trauma there. Also, it's trauma within my family. But at the same time, it's like I just want all of my siblings to have the joy and the clarity and just the resolve and just, you know, the feeling that I have because I worked through my trauma and, you know, I'm not a hundred percent, but to know where I came from and to know where I am today.

Isadore: [19:39](#) I can't say it's a blessing. I can only say that it was written before I was <laugh>, you know, and to understand it and acknowledge it, know that, I don't take that for you know, I don't discredit that or take that light and moving on to my, other sibling. My other sibling, I didn't meet him till I was like 10 years old, maybe 11.

Isadore: [20:08](#) And he was taller than me, so I didn't know how old he was. I thought he was like older than me. But come to find out, he was actually younger than me, but we've been close since that day. Like when I was going through my divorce situation, him and my other cousin, well my cousin was there, but most of all my little brother was there. This, he's taller than I am. <laugh>, he's like my oldest brother height. You'll think that he's the oldest. But no, he's the youngest <laugh>. But he, you know, just him being there. And at the time, I wasn't in the mindset to think or even appreciate that he was there. But I tell him all the time, like I could not have made it through that situation without the people I had support, I had very strong support and, you know, it was just one of them situations where you had to go through it, you had to go through it.

Isadore: [21:12](#) It's no way around it, you know. And with my younger brother, he's a very solid individual. He moves with his heart and he also looks up to my older brother just as well as, you know, most of us do. Like when my older brother and my next oldest brother, you know, they've always been around each other. Like when my oldest brother left home and my other oldest brother left home, it wasn't that long before they actually reconnected because they been around each other since day one. Like when they, when we were taken and put in foster care, it was me, my third oldest brother and my sister that has a similar birthday as me. Then it was those two, my oldest brother and next oldest brother. And the twins, we didn't find out about them either until I was like 14.

Isadore: [22:11](#) Yeah, I was like 14. They were still babies. So no, I'm sorry. I was like 12 or 13 when I found out about them. They were still babies. I remember the day that we were supposed to go and get

them and something happened that delayed it. So we had ended up having to go where my mom had to end up going a little bit later. And when they came, I remember like the day they came, they came in like we had a picnic table, like right there at our house on the outside. And they just sat on the table and it was both of them. Like, they looked so much alike and they were so cute. But at the same time though, like me being the baby, I'm like, where did these people come from? <laugh>. I'm like, where did these people come from?

Isadore: [22:54](#) They're not supposed to be here. This is my spot. No, no <laugh>. And I remember that because I was fascinated to know about him being there, but at the same time I was thinking like, that means I'm not the baby anymore. But at the same time, I was still playing on position as a baby. Like you, could not tell me I wasn't a baby of the family, regardless. I don't care who came along. And it was up until that point when I met my baby brother, then I was able to meet my baby sister, cuz those two, you know, lived in the same house. So they were, they was, they came along later together.

Isadore: [23:37](#) And he's a Virgo, by the way. And my other sister, she's a counselor. She was born in July. So when I connected with her, it was a really just unbelievable feeling, to be honest with you, to know that I got another sister and I remember I was just eager to meet her <laugh>. And like when we, when my little, my younger brother had took me to actually, to see my mom. We had went to her house, but wasn't nobody there. And I was really wanting to see my sister, but my sister was somewhere else, so I missed her somehow. And I remember when I did meet her, she had went through a traumatic experience, so I didn't know how to connect with her, you know, how do you connect with somebody? And I felt like even though I didn't know her, I felt like I failed her, you know, being her brother, even though I was a baby, that's how I always was.

Isadore: [24:46](#) Like I took on responsibility of other people, problems that I wasn't supposed to take on at a young age. But now that I've gotten older, and that was my, that was like me throughout my life, you know, previous until I got to the point to where I stopped running from everything and started focusing and started putting the energy into resolving and you know, working through it. And that's when I realized that's what I was doing all these years, just avoiding my problems and trying to focus on somebody else's and not realizing I wasn't fixing their problems. I was only aiding. That's all I was doing because I hadn't even worked on myself yet. So how can I help somebody else? And I hadn't worked on me yet, and that's what I had to learn, you

know, as I got older. But, yeah, my baby sister, that's another one.

Isadore: [25:47](#) Then, and that was all on my mom's side. Now you got four more <laugh>, my stepsisters and brother, which I call, you know, I don't say stepsisters and brother, but, you know, the oldest, she was born, that was when my stepmom's first child, she was like 27. I remember she was 27, that's when her and my dad got married. It was her first house. She was pregnant at the, at the, at the wedding. They had the wedding outside, our house on the, carport. And you know, we had like a lot of family members came and things like that. It was beautiful. I still remember it, <laugh> and just to see my mom and dad, you know, they look so happy. They had a relationship that me and my wife have now. And it kind of reminds me of that. It is so beautiful. It's the dynamic is nothing like anybody else's. Like, we have an understanding to the point to where we can joke around with each other,

Isadore: [27:07](#) But nobody else gets it. <laugh>. We could be in the same room like we are going talk crap about each other, but it's going to be in such a fun feel way until like it is, you know, it you can't help but laugh at it. Like, I love my wife. She's, she, I learned a lot from her, but I'm sorry, moving on to my other siblings. Cause I have other siblings too, you know, alleged siblings, I guess you can say. I don't know, <laugh>. I have another sister. She lives in Texas. I knew her when I was like 16, like around the time my dad died, she was there. So I consider her to be my sister because that's how my dad left it. And that's how I operate. Like, I'm not going to change it up just because he's not here, you know, if this was you when he was here, this is you after he's gone. He didn't say anything different. So why should I <laugh>? You know? I think that's, I think that's all of my siblings though.

dindria: [28:26](#) I'm gonna skip the next question. How did you grow up? Describe your childhood because you did, basically a liturgy of your family. And I think that covers it. We're going to, prompt number three, what is your past and what are your dreams? And I think the issue is, is trying to say how has your past informed your dreams? But I know that before you had said something about you are your past,

dindria: [28:53](#) And your dreams are to come. So if you could speak more on that. Like how does your past lead to your dreams, or what do you hope for in your future?

Isadore: [29:05](#) I'm a big believer of your past are the makers of who you are. And not only am I a believer, but I'm living proof because after

doing my research, not knowing nothing, like anything of my family, being, doing this research has taught me that...

Isadore: [29:37](#) As much as I want to, refute that my past affects me today, I can't, there's no way I can, like, there's no way I can like, because I know what I went through and I know that everything I went through could have been resolved if I knew the information I knew today. Like, if I knew about my family that I know today, I wouldn't have went through that. Like, I got confirmation that my dad was my actual dad by doing the family research on ancestry. I got confirmation because I found his family on my results match. And that's all due to the fact. And I can kind of like, you know, stem back to my, to my upbringing because this is a part of that. After hearing so long growing up, that's not your dad. That's not your dad. Oh, he's not your dad.

Isadore: [30:41](#) From people that I actually respected and valued their opinions, like your opinion affect me. You know, when you say something like that, that affects me, that affects any child. So that kind of like got embedded in my, in my mind to where, oh, this ain't my dad, I need to look for my dad. You know? And, it got to that point to where I went on a search and when in my search I found my answers and I found answers, I didn't even know I needed. The same thing when I talked to my brother and my auntie about, you know, that situation, it taught me that I may not know I need this, but I'll know when I get it that I needed it <laugh> because the effects that it took and you know, the feeling that it gave me, you know, when you hear something new, it overwhelms you, especially when it's new information.

Isadore: [31:39](#) It's something you never heard before. And you wonder like, why haven't I known this before? Why nobody told me this? Or like, wow, you know, you just, you get that feeling of, of just surprise, you know? But at the same time, it's also intriguing because it is new information. And me, that's how I am. Like, when I hear something new, I'm very surprised and I'm intrigued by it, and I want to know more. Like, I wanna know where this came from. Like if, if this is where it is, it has to be more to this, you know. But doing my family history, it showed me I can't move forward until I see what it was behind me. You know? I can't move forward until I acknowledge the people that were before me. You know, I can't move forward until I acknowledge the trauma and the situations behind me. Because that allowed me the opportunity and the clarity to not only move forward, but when I move forward, I can stand still or I can keep going. You know, you can move forward. But if you can't move forward any further than you already move, what's the point of even moving? <laugh>, you know, You haven't, you haven't reached your destination yet, so why stop?

- dindria: [33:06](#) Ooh, I wanna say “preach” at this moment. <laugh>.
- dindria: [33:10](#) I don't know if, the listener's gonna understand that <laugh>. That's okay. We're gonna, just let it be <laugh>. What do you hope for in your future? And you said that you want people to hear consideration and care in your story. What do you want listeners to learn from your story, but what are your hopes for the future first.
- Isadore: [33:30](#) My hopes for the future to be a better person. To be a leader. A example, to be a better me. I don't want to be the same person I am today, tomorrow. I don't want to be the same person I am tomorrow, next week. I don't want to do that. I want to get better as I go. And this is something that I try to do on a daily basis, consistently throughout the day.
- Isadore: [34:02](#) Because to know that old ways are outdated and old behavior patterns are no longer useful and the detrimental effect that they took on my life. You know, when you come out of the darkness and you go into the light, you don't wanna go back into the darkness because you can see everything. You know, there's a time and a place for each one. But if you've been in the dark long enough and you can't find what you looking for, but then you go into the light and you see everything that you need and what you looking for, why would I wanna go back into the darkness? <laugh>, it may have everything that I need, but I can't see it. <laugh>,
- dindria: [34:42](#) What do you want listeners to learn from your story?
- Isadore: [34:46](#) I want listeners to learn that even though I didn't go into detail of my hardships, just know they were there and just know the person that I am and everything I went through, it didn't stop me, but it paused me. And within that pause, it gave me the opportunity to be better, to be better to learn. So I didn't so much as get stopped, I just got paused and I acknowledge that.
- Isadore: [35:35](#) And another thing, acceptance. You know, I've never been one to accept anything. You mean when I heard a question for this question for that, it's nothing wrong with being inquisitive, but at the same time, you have to be accepting because you keep asking questions, you gonna get the answers. And they're not gonna always be the answers that you want. They're not gonna be always the right answers either, because now you asking questions and the answers are coming from a source because it's the way you asking a question. You know, the person's asking a question. It's the way the, it's the approach, it's the address, you know, the way you address it, the way you address is how you

gonna get it delivered to you. <laugh>, like plain it simple, the way you address it, how you gonna get it delivered to you?

Isadore: [36:35](#) Like if you don't put any energy into it, to where it's like, I'm gonna ride on faith, you know, I'm gonna let this happen. I'm gonna let this beat, this hurts me to the core, but I know it's temporary. You know, some people, and I had to learn this also, you cannot operate off of temporary emotions. You cannot make long-term decisions off of temporary feelings because when you do, you're only setting yourself up for failure because circumstances change, people change, outcomes change, and your response and your reaction depending on the outcome. So take away from this, I was never stopped. I was just paused. But at the same time, moving forward, it taught me to accept, it taught me to accept this happened. I can't deny it. I'm this, I can't deny it. I'm that, I can't deny it. But what I also can say is I made it. I made it to know where I came from.

Isadore: [37:52](#) I don't have to have a dollar to my name, but to know where I came from, to know where I am now, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, this is the most peaceful I've ever been. Like, every time someone who knows me, hears my voice, sees me or anything, the energy tells itself the energy is going to speak before I even come. Like, you going to know that I was there. You going to know when I am there. Because the person that I used to be is not who I am. It used to be I avoided people at all costs. I was very, very antisocial. But it all stemmed from trauma. It all stemmed from pain. I gave up on humanity. I closed myself all from the world. I didn't learn to open up until I met my wife. And that was completely, that was unexpected that I fought against that from day one.

Isadore: [39:04](#) But the more I fought against it, the more it just, I got drawn to it. <laugh>, I got drawn to it. And to have somebody that is accepting and understanding of, this is who he is, he's not going to be a talker. He's not going to be a people person. You know, he's very antisocial because the way I was at work is the same way I was in the everyday life, you know, especially when a consumed environment and it's dark at the casino, like walking in a circle, you know? No, I don't have too much to talk about. I came to be professional and that's how I have been at every job is about professional, very by the book. So that's why I'm perfect for security. But my thing is now that, you know, with each stage in life you move, you're supposed to move up, you're supposed to do something different.

Isadore: [40:01](#) Now I'm at a point to where I'm burnt out with security that I don't wanna do a security anymore. I wanna do something different because I know that my strong suit is, is more than

what security can actually show me, or, what it is for, you know, my capabilities are more than for security. You know, it's, I have more strengths than security can actually allow me to show. You know? So therefore, I wanna do something different that I haven't done something that's gonna challenge me. I wanna grow and be something, you know, whatever it is I'm supposed to do. And I don't know exactly, but I do know I don't wanna repeat the same thing. I've already done. Some people say if it's not broke, don't fix it. The thing is just cause you don't see it's not broken, that doesn't mean it's not broke <laugh>, you know,

- dindria: [40:59](#) Maybe they're seeing it from the darkness
- Isadore: [41:00](#) Instead of the Yes. Exactly. Exactly. They're missing those little chips.
- dindria: [41:07](#) Alright. Thank you so much for sharing your story. I know that there's more to it because you are a unique complex individual and I would love to do a series on you <laugh>, but we gonna leave it right here.
- Isadore: [41:23](#) <laugh> Okay.
- dindria: [41:24](#) And I think that I have learned so much from you, just from you speaking your truth about where you're coming from and who you are, who you want to be. We're gonna end with kind of like a summary question. And this summary question's like our tag question for the social media. So it's gonna be what does Tacoma mean to you? And I'm gonna ask it again. And then after that you have to say hashtag tell your story. And then I take a photograph.
- Isadore: [41:54](#) Oh, you want me to say hashtag tell your story or you want me to tell you what it means?
- dindria: [41:58](#) Both. Like, what does Tacoma mean to you? And then say hashtag tell your story at the end and act like I didn't just coach you.
- Isadore: [42:10](#) Okay. <laugh>, I got you. <laugh>,
- dindria: [42:17](#) What does Tacoma mean to you?
- Isadore: [42:19](#) Tacoma means it's new beginning. Hashtag tell your story.
- dindria: [42:25](#) <laugh> the end. <laugh>.