

## The Peale, Baltimore

*Out of the Blocks* Storytelling Series

Recorded by Aaron Henkin; Photographs and Music by Wendel Patrick

Produced for the *Out of the Blocks* website, created by the Peale, <https://ootb.thepeale.org/>

*Out of the Blocks* is supported by PRX and produced with grant funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Cohen Opportunity Fund, The Hoffberger Foundation, Patricia and Mark Joseph, The Shelter Foundation, The Kenneth S Battye Charitable Trust, The Sana and Andy Brooks Family Fund, The Muse Web Foundation, and the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios



Rosie Bowen ([00:00](#)):

Rosie Bowen, Rose's Bakery, 2101 East Monument Street. When I was in school, my parents or my dad used to come pick me up every day at three o'clock and he'd bring me here. So it was the choice of doing my homework or washing dishes. So of course, a kid, you're going to do the dishes instead of homework.

James Bowens ([00:22](#)):

She's a wonderful kid, she's 37 years old now, and her mother taught her well and I taught her the best to my knowledge. And she's carrying on very good. She's got two different bloods. Her mother was Polish and her father Indian.

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Rosie Bowen ([00:42](#)):

I'm a part of the Lumbee community here in Baltimore through my father's side. Through my mother's side, she was of Polish descent that grew up in Fells Point. He used to go into the bar that my grandmother had down on Broadway and drink. And he was in love with my grandmother, but of course she was older than him. So my grandmother loves him so much that she offered her daughter.

James Bowens ([01:09](#)):

Sure. James Bowens and the name of my shop is Rosie's Bakery. I wanted to do something I had never done, and I didn't even know how to bake a biscuit, but when I got into it, I just began to love it, and it's a good living.

Speaker 3 ([01:31](#)):

Can I ask your age?

James Bowens ([01:33](#)):

81. When I was a young man, my daddy was a farmer. I worked the farm till I was 19 years old. Then I came into Baltimore, and I've done all kinds of little different things. One of the best jobs I ever had, I had a six or eight month job in Washington, DC at the White House of working. We painted up all the things there one time.

Speaker 3 ([02:06](#)):

Who was the president at the time?

James Bowens ([02:08](#)):

Tricky Dick Nixon. He was sitting on the sun porch one day, drinking Scotch. Drinking and praying. He was in all the deep trouble about to be impeached in all that Watergate. And Mr. Henry Kissinger come by and said, "Mr. President, you got yourself in the very fine mess this morning." He said, "If you was a good Jew, you'd be down here praying and drinking with me." I'll never forget that, that's for sure.