

GINGER & HARVEY GAUTHIER
Joyce's Supermarket – Saint Martinville, LA

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Interviewer: Sara Roahen, Southern Foodways Alliance

Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs

Length: 1 hour, 29 minutes

Project: Southern Boudin Trail - Louisiana

[Begin Ginger & Harvey Gauthier Interview]

00:00:00

Sara Roahen: This is Sara Roahen for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It's Wednesday, August 20, 2008. I'm in Saint Martinville, Louisiana, with the Gauthier siblings. And could I get you both to introduce yourself and say your birth date?

00:00:15

Ginger Gauthier: I'm Ginger Gauthier, and my birth date is September 27, 1969.

00:00:22

Harvey Gauthier: Harvey Gauthier, March 17, 1976.

00:00:27

SR: All right. We were talking earlier and we had to start over, but we were talking about your family history and you had an idea of where to start with that.

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HG: Yeah, Ginger is going to start.

00:00:37

SR: Okay.

00:00:37

GG: Actually, it starts with my grandparents, my mother's parents, Artie and Tick (given name Reginald) Buck. They—

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HG: Ricohoc, Louisiana.

00:00:48

GG: Yeah, Ricohoc, Louisiana which is very near Patterson and between Centerville and Patterson—Franklin and Patterson. They—my grandfather had his own tugboat, and eventually my grandmother decided to open a café, and she did very well with it. They served hamburgers and, you know—

00:01:14

HG: Sold gas.

00:01:15

GG: —sold gas, boiled crawfish and actually, you know my—my uncle, who passed away a few years ago, continued on with that café. But from there, that's where my dad met my mom and they married. And of course my dad was from Saint Martinville, so they ended up moving back here. And eventually my—you know my dad was working at the sugar mill, and they decided to open a little convenience store right next door to the house. And actually, my dad and one other man—was it Mr. Lavergne?

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HG: No, it was Chiclet Thibodeaux.

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GG: That actually built the building.

00:01:53

HG: Well no, the first building was a little pavilion that was attached to a house and they—they moved it to the road. The first little part was actually attached to the house, and him and Mr. Chiclet Thibodeaux moved it to the road and kind of converted it just into a little mom and pop with—with a refrigerator for a cooler and some milk and candy and whatnot—and gas.

00:02:17

GG: Yeah, eventually they had gas and they pretty much—the local sugarcane farmers and—people because we were in the country, they you know—they supported the little store and eventually it grew. And actually that was in 1969, the year I was born. I have two older siblings and—but once that got going—

00:02:38

HG: They added onto that building and turned it into more of like—not modern by any—any—any means, but into a little bit bigger store, you know, with more items and—and more stuff. He even sold clothes and—and bullets and whatnot, you know. And what year did they move into Port Street?

00:03:02

GG: Um, it must have been—

00:03:03

HG: Like [nineteen]'74.

00:03:06

GG: —about—about four or five years—because I remember I was kindergarten at Trinity School. Yeah. It would probably be about five years.

00:03:12

HG: And that store used to be long to Millard Sagura.

00:03:16

GG: Yeah, they rented from Millard Sagura, and Daddy quit his job at the sugar mill.

00:03:20

HG: Yep.

00:03:22

GG: And they made a go of it there on Port Street, and they did great.

00:03:30

HG: They couldn't handle the business in the small store to start with. Only like thirty by thirty, if that, you know. Small building.

00:03:39

GG: And I remember—I've got to tell this story. **[Laughs]** I remember as a child, they would get such a large order of items in on their truck, but the back room we would climb over sacks and we thought it was so much fun. You see, Harvey is eight years behind me, and I have another brother fourteen years behind me, but the two older siblings and I are each two years apart. And I can remember it was so much fun. We thought it was a blast, and my mom and dad were just like full of stress. **[Laughs]**

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HG: Well actually, I've heard that they used to leave groceries outside on the sidewalk because there was no room to put it in the store.

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GG: Yes, that's how—

00:04:18

HG: And like they would slowly just bring it in throughout the course of the day, and if it rained or something it was just a bad time. And actually their first employee was my mother-in-law.

00:04:26

GG: And I remember—yeah. **[Laughs]** It was interesting.

00:04:30

HG: Yeah, their very first employee.

00:04:32

SR: What was her name—what is her name?

00:04:33

HG: Paula Serrette. She was Paula City at the time; yeah.

00:04:39

SR: So let me just go back. So when the store was in the—you said in the country. Was it near the sugar mill?

00:04:48

HG: Oh yeah, within five miles, I guess.

00:04:48

GG: Yeah, within five miles.

00:04:49

HG: But there was all farmland around us, which it still is.

00:04:51

GG: Yeah, it still is.

00:04:55

HG: It's on that Cemetery Highway, Highway 347, and the store is still there.

00:04:58

SR: It is?

00:04:59

HG: Yeah. If you wanted a picture of the store, you could do that.

00:05:03

SR: Yeah, that would be good. And so when they—I'm not familiar with Port Street. Is that right downtown here?

00:05:06

HG: You know where the church is?

00:05:07

SR: Uh-huh.

00:05:10

HG: It's the street that runs on the right side of the church, if you're facing the church.

00:05:12

SR: Oh, okay. And what's there now?

00:05:16

HG: Nothing, I think. It's been a little casino.

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GG: It's a little casino thing now, yeah.

00:05:23

HG: Yeah, but I think after we moved out, that was pretty much the last—

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GG: That was pretty much it.

00:05:28

HG: Yeah.

00:05:30

GG: Yeah, it was actually nothing for a while, if I remember.

00:05:33

HG: We stayed there like three or four years, I think.

00:05:33

GG: Yeah, they stayed—

00:05:37

HG: The year I was born—in [nineteen] '76—they came here and this was originally a Winn
Dixie.

00:05:40

GG: Well. Originally, it was Jenny's Supermarket.

00:05:46

HG: Well before that it was Food Star, yeah, originally. Yeah.

00:05:49

GG: And then Winn Dixie came here, and then they built the shopping center next door where Winn Dixie moved to, and that's when this shopping center came up for sale, and my mom and dad decided to take the plunge.

00:06:00

HG: Yeah.

00:06:00

SR: They weren't nervous about moving next to an existing store?

00:06:04

HG: It was one of the best moves they ever did.

00:06:06

GG: Yeah.

00:06:08

HG: Uh-hmm, yeah.

00:06:09

SR: I'm sorry. I don't—is the Winn Dixie still there?

00:06:12

R: No.

00:06:14

SR: I didn't think so; I didn't notice anything. So they put them out of business, huh?

00:06:16

HG: We were a very tough competitor, I would say. *[Laughs]* Well my dad was, yeah.

00:06:21

GG: Yeah. Yeah, Mom and Dad worked very hard, yeah.

00:06:29

SR: It sounds like it. And they had how many kids, total?

00:06:31

GG: There are five of us, yeah.

00:06:35

SR: At what point would y'all start working?

00:06:37

HG: When you could walk. [*Laughs*] You might not have been working, but you were here, you know.

00:06:43

GG: I can remember as a child we'd play in the store. We'd nap in—we'd nap on—you know, in the summertime we'd nap on a fifty-pound sack of rice. We lived right—we actually lived right behind the store back here. There were rent houses, and my mom and dad rented the second house right behind the store and—but we stayed here all the time. We—you know, and our friends would come here too. We had actually a little—underneath this counter in the meat department there's—

00:07:12

HG: A little clubhouse. [*Laughs*]

00:07:15

GG: —there's an access from the back over here and we called it our X-Bar-X, you know, because we had our clubhouse under there.

00:07:21

SR: You called it what?

00:07:22

GG: X-Bar-X, that was the name of our clubhouse.

00:07:25

HG: And you still see that written places, like I'm doing repairs or something and pull a wall off or a panel off of the wall and—.

00:07:33

GG: That's before he—.

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HG: Yeah, I don't even remember that. I just know the stories.

00:07:37

GG: Yeah, he was a baby, you know, so the three of us were, you know. I was eight, so my brother would have been ten, and my sister would have been twelve; and we had friends that we would, you know, hang out and we kind—it's embarrassing.

00:07:48

HG: It's funny. I—I love these stories.

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GG: Actually, they did some repairs under there, and y'all found some old Dr. Pepper cans and—

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HG: Uh-hmm, and toys and stuff.

00:08:00

SR: Really?

00:08:01

HG: Yeah, I still—still find stuff.

00:08:02

GG: And then we would get to—when we were in the way—when we were cutting up too much, that's when we'd have to stop, you know, and we really did the job. **[Laughs]** But—but I can remember when I was thirteen or fourteen, it being just so busy in the store and my mom saying get on a register and check out. And like, okay. **[Laughs]** You know, and I did it. And back then you know you had to calculate the tax and I'd—okay this is the amount. What do I have to do?

00:08:35

HG: 'I just had \$2.00...'

00:08:37

GG: Charge them \$2.00, you know. How much is this? Because, you know, everything was manual. There was no scanning and everything was priced, you know, (with) the ink stamper—and we didn't even have the—when the—when the pricing guns when the little sticker came out—

00:08:54

HG: That was like high technology.

00:08:54

GG: —that was phenomenal.

00:08:58

HG: We were one of the first stores to have scanning, though. Like we've always kind of embraced new technologies, but we still had that small town feel, you know.

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GG: Like, yeah, we still do—we still don't have—we still have two phone lines separated.

[Laughs]

00:09:18

HG: Yeah, and it's stuff like that. Like we'll have the most state-of-the-art meat processing equipment, and we don't even have a phone that you can transfer. No, you have to call another number to reach the back of the store. **[Laughs]**

00:09:30

SR: That happened to me when I called. **[Laughs]**

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HG: Yeah, people ask about that all the time.

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GG: “Why you can't connect me?” “Because we can't. Can I help you?” “But just connect me.”
“I'm sorry, I can't. Let me—just ask me the question.”

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SR: Priorities.

00:09:46

GG: Yeah. And I mean we just put in a brand new—the finest scanning system. I mean it's—
our register system up front—

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HG: Top of the line.

00:09:55

GG: —top of the line. We just got it started August tenth—no July tenth was the first day we—
we got it up and running and it's like—but you know, there's other things that we just—. And
there's—and I think that's good because you know my dad had to do something right, you know.
My mom and dad did something right in the beginning, and my dad kept it going, you know, and
they're doing—he's doing something right, so you know it's not always good to change
everything, I guess. [*Laughs*]

00:10:27

HG: Yeah, I think you should maybe change as little as possible, if it's working, you know.

00:10:31

SR: Yeah. What about the—your slogan on your sign? That's what brought me in here the first time. Who is responsible for that?

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HG: Mom and dad were riding back from somewhere and they saw it on the lumberyard that was closed down. And it just kind of stuck in my dad's head and—

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GG: And it just so happened Harvey was, you know, born that year and—

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HG: Yeah.

00:11:00

GG: —and actually the baby is supposed to represent him.

00:11:02

SR: Can you tell me for the record what it is—the slogan?

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HG: Yeah, it's "Where prices are born and not raised."

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SR: Can you say that one more time in case they caught the woman—?

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HG: “Where prices are born and not raised.” Yeah.

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SR: It’s very catchy.

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GG: It is—it is.

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HG: We hear about that a lot, yeah.

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GG: My dad was very good with—with slogans and names. If you noticed the—the meat specials, you know, they all have catchy names.

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HG: Doctor Boogey and Sugar Daddy and Tax Plan and—

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GG: The Tax Plan.

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SR: What are some of those?

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HG: Well, it's just bulk packs with, you know, a variety of meat and grocery items that we have for a set price, you know. Somebody can just walk up and say, "I'd like the Cajun Survival Special," and it'll have like so much meat and so much rice and potatoes, you know.

00:11:55

GG: Yeah. Pork—a little bit of pork, a little bit of beef, a little bit of poultry, you know, and then we—you know, it helps fill the freezer for a couple weeks, you know.

00:12:02

HG: Yeah, they can come in and shop in five minutes.

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GG: It's easy. It's convenient, you know. And actually, Dr. Boogey, we often have is a buy one get one free, you know, so you get two specials for the price of one, and it gives you enough of a variety to, you know—.

00:12:19

HG: It gives us something to compete with the chains, you know, because you can't go to Wal-Mart, you know, or to Super One or anything for this kind of stuff, you know. So it gives us a—a niche, you know.

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GG: And actually, the four-to-eight-pound specials, as well, you know, the single price is one and the more you buy, the little bit cheaper it is, you know. Four pounds or less you get—four pounds or more you get it a—a little bit cheaper and eight pounds or more you get it a little bit cheaper, and my dad came up with that concept himself, so. And the—and the bulk meat specials, as well, so it makes us unique among other stores. And it's convenient for someone who is looking, you know, to do a quick shopping and get fresh—freshly daily cut meat and fill up their freezer for the week.

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SR: Well do—when you were growing up and it was on—well both in the country and on Port Street, did you sell fresh meat then?

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GG: Yes, yes. Actually, my dad—Daddy learned—he had to learn to cut meat. He—he—

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HG: Yeah, he had no experience.

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GG: —had absolutely no experience in the grocery business.

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HG: A friend of his had a little experience from two chains that he had worked for. And he was shrimping or crabbing at the time, so he would go do his—his shrimping or crabbing or whatever he was up to at that time, and at night he would come into the store and show my dad how to cut, you know, pork chops or, you know, chucks or whatever it is. And they actually started with a handsaw and a clever, you know, just—no meat saw. I don't think we got a meat saw until we came here, you know. We done been through about thirty of them.

00:14:02

SR: That's a lot of work.

00:14:07

GG: Because we used to get the whole sides of beef, and they'd break it down.

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HG: Yeah. When I was a kid—

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GG: Now it's a lot different. You know the processing plants actually, we—we buy the—

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HG: It's called primals—boxed primals—and it's the—it's just instead of being broken down into four quarters, it's broken out into, say, like sixteen different sections. So you know, if you don't need all the rumps and you just need some chucks or whatnot, you can order what you want before you get the whole animal, you know.

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GG: Yeah, I can remember like standing in—by the back door watching because they'd bring in the whole sides of beef and hang them on that hook and weigh them and then bring them into the cooler and then—

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HG: Yeah, they used to break them down onsite.

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GG: —and slam them on those tables and break them down and—.

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HG: They had a saw that would hang from the ceiling like a giant chainsaw, you know, for meat processing. And they'd bring in the—the quarters and then they would break them down outside, which is just cutting into the smaller pieces, you know, to hang it in this cooler and then [*Phone Rings*]—.

00:15:10

SR: I can pause if you need to. Okay, we're back. So you were talking about how you got in whole sides of beef and—and pork too?

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HG: Well pork had—as far as I know, pork had come in boxed longer than beef.

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GG: Yeah, uh-hmm.

00:15:26

HG: So I think maybe when they moved here, they were handling boxed pork.

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GG: But at the time we would—I can remember we'd—you know, people would bring you know, like say if they slaughtered a hog or—they would clean it and bring it, and we'd cut it for them. We don't do that anymore, though, you know. Of course it's changed—regulations change—but they'd bring in a deer...

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HG: Yeah, often.

00:15:52

GG: Often they would do that. We make sausage.

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HG: We have cattle just for—really my dad's side hobby.

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GG: Yeah, he has longhorn cattle.

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HG: And we kill calves, the little—just to give to our friends and family, you know, and just to kind of keep in touch with doing all of that and knowing how to do it and—and they'll try to show other people, you know, what it takes, because that's really a lost thing. Not many people know—would even know where to start.

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GG: Yeah, it's true. Yeah.

00:16:27

SR: And so do you—you raise the animals or your dad does or the family does?

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HG: We all do kind of—me and my dad and my brother.

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SR: And then do you slaughter your own animals?

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HG: Not for the store.

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SR: For yourself?

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GG: Yeah. Every now and then, if his herd is getting too big, which happens often because they're very happy cows [*Laughs*]; he keeps them happy. When he—when he sees that he's getting too many, you know, he'll—he'll slaughter one or two, and it's personal.

00:17:00

HG: Friends and family.

00:17:00

GG: Yeah. And longhorn beef actually has a lot of excellent health qualities, as far as it being so lean. It's—yeah, yeah. It's very good.

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HG: It's very good; very lean; very low cholesterol.

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GG: I have an article about it.

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HG: It's not—it wouldn't be—it's not anything like the beef you would buy in a supermarket. You know, there's no marbling and no fat, you know, because of the type of cow it is. But we do everything from—from turning it down to—to packing it, you know. We do the whole process. You know we don't—because you can send animals out and have them done at slaughterhouses or whatever, but we do the whole process from start to finish.

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SR: Yeah, sort of like the old boucherie?

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HG: Yeah, just instead of a pig, a cow. It's probably a French name for that; I just don't know what it is.

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GG: [*Laughs*] Yeah, yeah, probably so.

00:17:55

SR: And when you do that, do you cook anything that day or is it mostly to freeze?

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HG: Yes, I always cook—I always cook liver—the day we cook fresh calf liver.

00:18:05

SR: And can you tell me a little bit about the process of that—what kind of—your recipe, I guess, just verbally?

00:18:09

HG: Yeah. Start with some fresh liver and—and slice it into slices or little chunks and then a little bit of grease or fat in a heavy pan, and then you roll it in a little bit of flour and brown all the pieces. You take those out and add—we have kind of a tradition. I use real big pieces of onions, just quartered or cut onions in eighths or something, and then that's browned a little bit.

And then the liver is put back in, cooked until it's tender with a little bit of broth or water, and then we serve it with grits. Liver and grits, yeah.

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GG: That's good.

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SR: That sounds good.

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HG: You know, not—we don't eat it very often at all, you know, but every chance I get.

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SR: What about the other innards? Do you use those from the cow?

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HG: I personally am not too crazy about it, but I have a friend of mine that every time we kill a calf his family requests that—the lungs and the intestines and all of that stuff. And the lungs are actually called the white liver, and I would never eat them—think about eating that, but they—they will go out of their way to get it, you know. So it must be good.

00:19:26

GG: Yeah, I've never eaten it either, but you see what's interesting about—you see my mom comes from, you know, a very close—but her family lived on the bayou, so it was all wild game and a lot of seafood. My dad—

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HG: Wild game and seafood.

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GG: —was raised with cattle and sheep and, you know, pigs—

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HG: Pigs, yeah.

00:19:55

GG: —and chicken. So actually, the food for the two—. So there was a lot of things that my mom would not eat, you know. She never really ate beef until she married my dad.

00:20:06

SR: Really?

00:20:06

HG: Yeah.

00:20:06

GG: Yeah, they didn't—she didn't really eat beef and—and pork.

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HG: Yeah, they raised—now they did raise pigs.

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GG: They raised pigs.

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HG: Yeah, but at that time pretty much everybody did, and they had a restaurant, so it was only natural to have pigs in the back, you know. You have to remember that this is the 1950s. You know, now, if you think about a restaurant with pigs in the back, you'd be [*Laughs*]—oh, my God.

00:20:31

GG: But they didn't have a lot of beef when she was growing up so, you know—so a lot of that she didn't know about. And I remember—

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HG: Ducks and rabbits and squirrels and deer.

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GG: Yeah. Fish, crabs—

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HG: Crawfish.

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GG: I remember as a child, you know, back then, it was every other week we were at my mom's eating boiled crabs, these blue tips about this big [*Gestures*] you know, with the claws. My grandfather—.

00:20:56

SR: What was it, like about a foot, that—?

00:20:59

GG: Oh, yeah, definitely.

00:21:00

HG: And that's not exaggerating, either. Freshwater crabs.

00:21:04

GG: Oh, yeah. My grandfather would go out with his tugboat, and he'd fish and crab while he was out there, you know. He'd bring all his—all that back. We ate—we ate really good when we were little. [*Laughs*]

00:21:14

HG: Wax Lake, Flat Lake, all over the Atchafalaya area, you know.

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SR: And your mom, did she get used to the beef?

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GG: Yes, she—actually—

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HG: Yeah.

00:21:27

GG: And I can say like on my dad's side, you know, Maw-Maw Gauthier didn't—she didn't cook a lot of the like the innards and stuff like that but I remember—

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HG: No, but the other people in the neighborhood—.

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GG: —she cooked a lot of beef, yeah.

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HG: Well, no, they actually—

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GG: And she was a good cook.

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HG: —they cooked—when my grandmother and grandfather—my grandfather worked on a dredge boat on my dad's side, and he was gone a lot.

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GG: Yeah, because he worked in Africa, too. He worked overseas and—yeah, when my dad was growing up, yeah.

00:22:06

HG: They raised sheep, and my dad says that the majority of the meat they would eat would be lamb and chicken. Chicken was probably number one because you could—with no refrigeration a family can go out and kill a chicken, eat that chicken that night, and you don't have any loss or whatnot. So like a Sunday dinner with relatives coming over might have been like a lamb or something like that, you know. And of course they would have made the—the cured meats with the salt, you know, in the crock jar and that type of stuff also.

00:22:40

GG: Yeah.

00:22:41

HG: But when my dad was a kid, they raised a type of sheep called Louisiana Native or Gulf Coast Native Sheep, and they had become almost extinct, and a couple of farmers and ranchers got together—Mississippi, Lake Charles area, I think, there's a couple of them—and they brought the—the breed back. And now we have some.

00:23:06

SR: Oh, you do?

00:23:09

HG: Yeah. And it's the same breed of sheep that they raised when they were kids, and it's a kind of scrawny very hardy animal. They require very little vet maintenance, you know, as for parasites and worms and stuff like that—just like the longhorn breed [of cattle].

00:23:27

SR: That's interesting. I've actually tasted that.

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HG: Really?

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SR: Yeah, it's good.

00:23:33

HG: I've yet—I've yet to kill one, and we've had them like three years and I keep saying...but—

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GG: We have them right across the street.

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SR: I'll have to go check those out.

00:23:43

HG: Yeah.

00:23:43

GG: Yeah.

00:23:44

SR: Well, yeah, that's really interesting. Yeah, they were about to vanish, I think. Can you—do y'all know like the heritage of your parents? Are they—their ancestors, did they come from France or Nova Scotia or—?

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HG: I really don't know.

00:23:59

GG: I do know that on my dad's side the—his—well, it would be—I'd have to check with my aunt to know exactly, but on my dad's—my dad's father—my dad's dad's side, okay, the Gauthier side, I don't know if it's a great—it would be a great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather came from Alsace, France, which borders Germany, right? And my grandmother, she—her maiden name was Lavergne, and they came from the Rayne (Louisiana) area, like around Rayne and—. Her family was rice farmers. I'm not certain of—if you know—

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HG: Yeah, that sounds—

00:24:52

GG: —but I would have to check. My aunt would know—

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HG: It's definitely some heritage because—

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GG: my aunt knows the entire heritage.

00:24:57

HG: Because my great-grandmother, Maw-Maw Fis only spoke French, you know, so that's not that long ago.

00:25:05

GG: Well Grandma Fis was a Maraist before she married Paw-Paw—Paw-Paw Lou's daddy who was a Gauthier, but on Maw-Maw's—Gauthier side that's—they're Lavergne, so I don't think—.

00:25:23

HG: Yeah, but they all spoke French too.

00:25:24

GG: They all spoke French too, yeah.

00:25:27

HG: Oh, yes.

00:25:27

GG: My dad actually—when he started school, he had to learn English, [*Laughs*] but back then in school they forbade them to speak French because it sounded stupid. It sounded ignorant.

00:25:39

HG: They were trying to modernize, you know, the country and whatnot.

00:25:43

GG: So my dad had to learn to speak English, yeah, because he spoke just French.

00:25:47

SR: Does he speak French today?

00:25:48

HG: Yes.

00:25:48

GG: Yes, he does.

00:25:51

HG: It's Creole or Cajun French, you know. When people that speak proper French, you know, from France—we have a truck driver that's from France, and they can't understand anything they say, you know—there are words make sense to each other, but the way it's put together and whatnot they don't understand. So often they're like—we have French visitors that come to Saint Martinville, and they'll come in to buy stuff and we try to communicate with them, and I say, “Well let me go get my dad.” And my dad's like [**throws up his hands**]. But—so it's funny how, you know, a language can be that different that somebody can't even understand it—a different dialect or whatnot.

00:26:34

SR: Can y'all understand the dialect here—the French dialect?

00:26:38

HG: Little bit.

00:26:38

GG: Very little. You see my mom didn't speak French. My mom came from—even, you know, it's only a few miles away; it was a completely different lifestyle, and there is no French in her background. So you know, they never spoke French in the house. Now when we were children and we visited my Grandma Gauthier—my grandma, she spoke French.

00:27:02

HG: They spoke French constantly.

00:27:04

GG: They spoke French constantly, especially when they didn't want the kids to know what they were saying, you know. But they spoke a lot of French, so there's a few words that I would say I could understand. Like I could say, "Oh, I think I know what they're talking about," but to say like, "Okay, this is what he said," no.

00:27:21

HG: I understand it just by a lot of times context, and it's broken French because two or three of the words may be English, two or three may be French and I—I put it together, you know. I—I understand it a little bit, but I can't speak it.

00:27:37

GG: Yeah, now there are a couple employees here that my dad speaks French with, you know, to keep his—his practice up. *[Laughs]*

00:27:42

SR: How old is your dad now?

00:27:46

GG: Daddy is going to be sixty-seven in October.

00:27:52

HG: Yeah. Yeah, he was born in 1942.

00:27:53

GG: Yeah, sixty-seven.

00:27:56

SR: And does he still work a lot?

00:27:58

GG: He doesn't look it. Oh, yes, seven days a week.

00:28:00

SR: Really?

00:28:02

GG: Yes, you know, and he would be here today if—something—I don't know what happened yesterday and he got—

00:28:07

HG: We were working yesterday—

00:28:10

GG: —it hit him like that.

00:28:10

HG: Real dusty—we were cutting some fiberglass and working in a real dusty area, and he's got a little something on his lungs today, so he said "I'm not going to be able to come in—try to get some rest."

00:28:23

SR: Yeah, well what about—so y'all work here. This is your full-time job, I mean?

00:28:28

GG: Oh, definitely.

00:28:30

SR: More than full-time?

00:28:31

GG: Yes, and there's three siblings here and my dad and we all work—

00:28:36

HG: Lot of hours.

00:28:33

GG: —lot of hours—sixty-plus hours a week, you know, for—I mean it's a lot of work, yeah.

00:28:43

SR: Yeah, the grocery business doesn't really shut down when the rest of the world does, huh?

00:28:45

HG: No, I find myself here two, three o'clock in the morning sometimes with a breakdown or—

00:28:52

GG: Yeah, they get there in the mornings.

00:28:52

HG: You know I do repairs here and whatnot, so—.

00:28:56

GG: But you were here, was it Sunday night—afternoon—Sunday night or Monday night you were here?

00:28:57

HG: It was Sunday night. I had been up for like—I had went to a camp. I went fishing and I had gotten very little sleep—.

00:29:05

GG: Yeah. It always happens like that, yeah.

00:29:07

HG: It had been about three days with about four hours of sleep. And soon as I laid down after my shower my wife said, “Your—your phone is ringing.” And I knew what it was. Got back up.

00:29:19

SR: What was it?

00:29:19

HG: We had a cooler that was out, so I had to come back and take care of that. And then I got home and then about three-thirty in the morning they called me to come open up so they could come in. **[Laughs]** So—but I took a nap that day; I don't normally take a nap, but I took a nap.

00:29:36

SR: What—did y'all always know that you wanted to stay in the business?

00:29:42

GG: I don't know. Like me, I kind of just, you know, I started out here, and just I guess at some point, you know, you just try to figure out what you want to do; and it just so happened that after a few years it's like—it's kind of like a child. You can't leave it. **[Laughs]** You know, and now it's—I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

00:30:01

HG: I've done other things and came back. Yeah.

00:30:07

GG: Yeah, he's done other things and actually, my younger brother was in the Navy for four years and he just came back about a year ago, so—or a year and a half ago. And then I have an older brother who was—he went to college and he just—he just knew, I guess, because he went into security. He does security technology, and so my sister was in it for a while, and she's not anymore, so—. I guess, you know—.

00:30:38

HG: Yeah, I would probably miss the—the people the most, you know. That's what I like.

00:30:41

GG: It's fun, yeah.

00:30:44

HG: You talk to some of the same people every day for thirty years, you know. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

00:30:49

GG: Yeah, so—.

00:30:50

SR: I can tell that you like your jobs. It's—it's inspiring.

00:30:54

GG: Oh. [*Laughs*]

00:30:55

HG: It's got its moments.

00:30:59

SR: Yeah, I'm sure. I should have talked to you on Sunday night.

00:31:03

HG: I was still in good spirits, though.

00:31:05

GG: Yeah, that's what I was going to mention. You asked if my dad still works. On Sundays we actually all have off, and he works on Sundays to allow us to have off; and he actually cuts meat on Sunday, so he still cuts meat. He still—it keeps—keeps him going. You wouldn't guess he's sixty-seven years old. He really looks good for his age, and he's very active, yeah.

00:31:23

HG: Yeah, he stays very busy, from the cattle to repairs around the farm to this.

00:31:29

GG: His horses.

00:31:30

HG: Horses, cutting grass, yeah—everything.

00:31:36

SR: You know, I didn't ask his name. I should get that for the record.

00:31:39

GG: His name is Lowell Gauthier.

00:31:43

SR: How do you spell that?

00:31:43

GG: L-o-w-e-l-l—yeah and Lowell Gauthier.

00:31:46

SR: Oh, okay. And your mother, is she still alive?

00:31:50

GG: My mother is still alive, but she hasn't been a part of the business for—jeez—.

00:31:55

HG: Since I was a kid. They were separated years ago—[nineteen]'91—'90.

00:32:03

GG: Let's see, yeah, it's probably pushing on twenty years now. Her name was Joyce—Joyce Gauthier. Well, Joyce Buck, but her maiden name was Buck—is Buck. [*Laughs*] Sorry, I get nervous with this.

00:32:19

SR: No, this is good. Believe me, this is great.

00:32:19

GG: Okay. [*Laughs*]

00:32:24

SR: What about—so did you, from your memories of the—the first couple stores, did you have any prepared foods, like the deli or the sausages? Like did you actually—like did they—did they make anything?

00:32:37

GG: I don't remember Daddy making sausages in the little store on Port—definitely not in the—the country store by the house.

00:32:49

HG: The country store at the house, they had a company called Frey Foods.

00:32:53

GG: Yeah.

00:32:55

HG: That would get very young pigs, small portions of pork, and they sold pork in the country and very little beef.

00:33:11

SR: And was that prepared?

00:33:13

HG: I don't think—they had cold cuts. They always—.

00:33:13

GG: Yeah, they had cold cuts.

00:33:17

HG: Sliced cold cuts, which is—.

00:33:17

GG: My mama would cook our meals in the store. [*Laughs*]

00:33:22

SR: She did cooking at work?

00:33:24

HG: Yeah.

00:33:24

GG: Oh, yeah, [*Laughs*] because the store was actually just a—it was on the side of the house, you know. You can go from the house to the—you know, so she'd cook while—while she was working.

00:33:36

HG: Not even ten yards. [*Laughs*]

00:33:35

GG: She'd just look out the kitchen window to see if someone drove up to, you know—and she'd wait on them. But now on Port Street we didn't prepare foods there either, you know. We

had one register, and you know, you could barely handle it. And I think they added a second register later on.

00:33:53

HG: They used to put a register by the door like on a little stand. *[Laughs]*

00:33:55

GG: Yeah, right next to each other, you know. It was a very small store.

00:34:02

HG: Now we've all—when we came here, we had the cafeteria where we prepared food.

00:34:05

GG: Well he didn't build the cafeteria immediately, though.

00:34:07

HG: Built the cafeteria in [nineteen] '80.

00:34:11

GG: Because I remember as a child what we'd do is we had—

00:34:14

HG: In here.

00:34:13

GG: —in the meat department here we had an area. That's where we'd serve boudin. We'd slice cold cuts and hamburgers.

00:34:22

HG: This was the kitchen right here.

00:34:25

GG: Right here, yeah.

00:34:24

HG: Actually there's burnt marks on the ceiling; they had a fire on the stove underneath that—that white paneling it's all burnt, and that's what that's from.

00:34:36

GG: We'd do hamburgers and stuff here—right here.

00:34:38

HG: Uh-hmm. And what happened was—and this is just from my dad telling me. I don't remember any of this. But it was so busy at this meat case with plate lunches and—and then business for fresh meat it was just mass confusion. So he built a facility back here in like [nineteen] '80 or '81.

00:35:00

GG: Yeah, later on.

00:35:01

HG: And they served lunches in there. You know, plate—plate lunches, you know, Cajun-style lunches until about five years ago. And we closed that, and now we serve plate lunches in the front of the store. We have a deli where we cook fresh homemade meals every day.

00:35:23

GG: Yeah, the only difference is we don't have sit—sit-down dining and back there we had the sit-down dining.

00:35:32

HG: Yeah, that's been closed for five years and—.

00:35:34

GG: Now we don't.

00:35:35

HG: —and we have—

00:35:36

GG: Yesterday somebody drove up looking to eat.

00:35:37

HG: We have tractors and stuff parked in front of there and old equipment and stuff and people go in the door, so—. People still come and that's been over five years.

00:35:47

GG: Yeah, even from out of state they like remember, “Man, I ate the best plate lunch there.”

They come inside, you know.

00:35:56

HG: We used to barbecue on Sundays and on an open barbecue pit, and then the Board of Health regulations changed that you had to barbecue in a building, you know, with a screen. So they built the building, and they built a barbecue pit in there and everything and—and people wouldn't see it, so they used to haul the old barbecue pit to the road and just light a fire in it.

[Laughs] It's like smoke signals; the people across town would say, “Oh, look. They're barbecuing at Joyce's.” And it was just old wood—.

00:36:28

GG: I forgot about that.

00:36:29

HG: We set the leaves in it.

00:36:30

GG: My dad had some good ideas, yeah. He can get people in here.

00:36:34

HG: Because the cafeteria was way out back, and you wouldn't see it, you know, and—and—.

00:36:37

GG: Sometimes you'd think, "Where is he coming from?" But you know what? It works.

00:36:41

HG: It all works out.

00:36:44

GG: It always works. He has some crazy ideas sometimes, but they're really not crazy. They really work. Yeah, I forgot about that.

00:36:52

SR: What kind of—I think you said that you cook here one day a week. What do you cook?

00:36:58

HG: I cook on Mondays. We normally cook like two—

00:37:03

GG: His lima beans.

00:37:04

HG: —rice and gravy type dishes, always cook dry beans.

00:37:09

GG: His beef and gravy and his chicken stew.

00:37:11

HG: We cook smothered sausage. Red beans and rice I do on Mondays a lot. Pretty much what we grew up on—.

00:37:21

GG: Smothered pork and chicken stew and—.

00:37:25

HG: Smothered potatoes.

00:37:27

GG: Smothered potatoes, lima beans.

00:37:28

HG: Chicken fricassee.

00:37:30

SR: And on the other days you have—you have employees that cook?

00:37:34

HG: I have a lady—Miss Kathryn (Maturin). And—and she cooks on the other days.

00:37:37

SR: Oh. Okay. What about—can you tell me a little bit about the—your sausage production?
You have so many sausages. When and how did that start?

00:37:49

GG: It's all Harvey. [*Laughs*]

00:37:55

HG: Well it started with just three sausages, really: pork, mixed, and *chaurice*, which is not like chorizo which a lot of people—but *chaurice* is a local sausage here and normally it's a pork sausage that's ground coarse and contains garlic. And there's variations from store to store but you know we've always—that's one thing we've always made was the *chaurice*.

00:38:24

GG: Yeah, it's very good in gumbo. We serve it in sausage gumbo. It gives it a lot of flavor.

00:38:31

HG: And from there, with those three sausages, we would do a hot pork, an all-beef sausage, or a pork sausage with green onions, you know, and it just kind of kept growing and growing, and now we have sausages with—we have an apple pork, we have a Hawaiian pork with pineapple, we have a honey-lemon [*Phone Rings*] that's just excellent. There's a honey-lemon that's really good.

00:39:03

SR: Honey-lemon—what kind of meat is in there?

00:39:04

HG: Pork sausage. Most of our specialty sausages are pork-based. The only beef sausage we have is a green onion mix, which is fifty percent pork and fifty percent beef and we have a—a hot beef and a mild beef. And those—those are the only sausages that contain beef. I personally don't like beef sausage.

00:39:25

GG: Yeah, throughout the years we've had a lot of specialty sausages, but we kind of just weed out the ones that weren't—they're always good, though, like—. You know, he does a chili sausage, he does a salt meat sausage, he does a barbecue sausage with barbecue sauce in it.

00:39:42

HG: There's a "Dynamite" that has like a bunch of the peppers in it.

00:39:45

GG: Oh, it's good.

00:39:48

HG: We've done it with tomatoes and rice and potatoes and—.

00:39:51

GG: And you're forgetting about the chicken sausages.

00:39:53

HG: We do a very good business with chicken sausage.

00:39:55

GG: And we make chicken patties.

00:39:57

SR: Yeah, I saw that.

00:39:57

GG: Yeah, very good.

00:40:00

HG: And we'll have anywhere between twelve and twenty kinds of sausage that we'll make at a particular time.

00:40:07

SR: And are you the one doing like the recipe development?

00:40:10

HG: My dad and I work on it together a lot. I'll see stuff somewhere, or I'll go to a camp or to a friend's house and they're cooking something, not even a sausage-type dish, like—we haven't made it yet, but I do pork ribs with a fig glaze. And we're going to do a pork sausage with figs in it. So we have to wait for fig season to come back around, though, but—stuff like that, just yeah a little bit of Food Network, a little bit of friends and family, you know.

00:40:45

GG: And just having—between the experience of cutting meat and what works, you know, and Harvey is really good. He's just such a good cook, and he has really good ideas when it comes to cooking, you know. He just has a knack for it, and the two of them together, they come up with some really good stuff.

00:41:02

HG: We have a chicken and shrimp sausage, which is—in gumbo it's excellent, you know. It—I put it in my seafood gumbos, you know. It's just something a little different, you know.

00:41:14

GG: You're very good with okra.

00:41:16

HG: The deer sausage.

00:41:16

GG: If you're cooking the okra, they'll put the chicken and shrimp sausage in there, and it's excellent. And then the salt meat sausage—.

00:41:25

HG: If you're from Saint Martinville, that's *oker*.

00:41:27

GG: *Oker.* [Laughs] I'm sorry. Yeah, the deer sausage, of course they get—it's not—.

00:41:36

HG: It's a farm-raised deer but we make a deer sausage.

00:41:37

GG: It's farm-raised deer from—New Zealand?

00:41:40

SR: Where is it from?

00:41:40

HG: Yeah, New Zealand—half pork and half deer. That's a popular one, kind of.

00:41:47

GG: And then we—y'all started—they—they also came up with some—they got really creative with the boudin. All right now we don't have—.

00:41:56

HG: Right now we're only making the—.

00:41:58

GG: We kind of—our sausage maker is a little overwhelmed, so we're not making all of them right now, but at some point we have the white bean boudin, chow-chow—.

00:42:05

HG: Yeah, the chicken.

00:42:09

GG: The chicken boudin, chow-chow boudin, shrimp—.

00:42:14

HG: Crawfish.

00:42:13

GG: —crawfish.

00:42:14

HG: We even had a crabmeat one, but it wasn't very good. **[Laughs]** The shrimp boudin, the crawfish, and the regular pork boudin are by far our—our big three, you know. And the white bean boudin, it's kind of like a play on the bean soup and the white beans that are very popular around here, you know. And it is pretty good but it—it—it didn't really catch on, you know.

[Phone Rings] But we—our pork—regular pork boudin, I'll backup and tell a story that my dad—when he first opened up the street—the store on Port Street, there was a lady. I can't remember her name, but she would buy the stuff.

00:43:00

SR: I'll pause this. Okay.

00:43:03

HG: My dad would sell to this lady her ingredients for boudin, and the lady was very, very poor and had a bunch of kids and it was—I think her husband might have passed away or something. So he'd sell it to her at cost, and she would buy pork fat, pork liver, onions, rice and bell (peppers)—and green onions—no meat whatsoever. My dad used to say, “Well this has got to be the most horrible thing,” you know. I couldn't imagine—and she would bring it, you know—bring him a couple links as a thank-you for selling everything at cost, you know. And one day they—she had brought some and he's like, “We'll heat that up. Let's try it.” And it was like the best boudin. And I'm sure it wasn't very good for you, but he said it really had the original boudin flavor, you know, which was the pork liver and pork fat. I mean that's what boudin is: what you got left, you know, grind it up and stuff it into some casing. But our boudin has kind of evolved over the years to less liver, more lean pork, less rice. It's—it's more like—it's a meatier product, you know. But they still—if you find a little store in the country somewhere, sometimes you'll find that original, you know, pork fat, pork liver type thing, you know. [*Cell Phone Rings*]

00:44:41

SR: And did you—did the recipe evolve because of just more modern tastes?

00:44:44

HG: I think so. I—a little bit because people became more health conscious, and it made a prettier product and we're trying to improve the looks of it and—and a lot of the things—any time we do something over here, we always have input from all our employees. If we make a sausage, we cook some that day, cut it up and have everybody try it. And they'll say, “Look, you need more jalapenos” or “you know don't put so many of this or that,” you know, whatever it is.

So the boudin has really probably just as much to do with all the input from the employees as us, so—.

00:45:25

SR: Well I was thinking, you know, with all those—with all your different sausages and the different boudin, I would have to really trust someone to even try it, like a sausage with pineapple in it or something. Like I wouldn't buy that—.

00:45:38

HG: Yeah, that's like our number one item.

00:45:38

SR: —just anywhere but—. Well you must have a lot of your—you have a customer base that's pretty regular.

00:45:45

HG: Oh, yes. Like I said earlier, we have customers for thirty years or more, probably. Look at—.

00:45:54

GG: And the generations too because I had Miss—Miss Willis' nephew who lives in Houston called for me to pack him some sausage and freeze it because he was making a pass through town, so it's like, you know—.

00:46:10

HG: What's—what's the people that used to farm across the street from the house? The story—she was pregnant in the field, and they used to come in and get pop. Was it—it's not Simon, Airplane and them's family?

00:46:27

GG: Well the—that would be the—the Charles'?

00:46:34

HG: What's her first name?

00:46:33

GG: Miss Simon—Miss, uh—?

00:46:35

HG: Her husband died a few years ago. She stays in the car now.

00:46:38

GG: I know her face is in my mind, but I never called by her first name. [*Laughs*]

00:46:41

HG: Well that lady—that's sad that we've known this person our whole lives—.

00:46:48

GG: I never called her by her first name, I'm sorry.

00:46:50

HG: But she was a customer—.

00:46:50

GG: Her husband was Lawrence.

00:46:53

HG: Yeah, Lawrence Charles.

00:46:53

GG: Yeah, that's her husband—but I'm so sorry.

00:46:55

HG: Lawrence, yeah. They were customers at the original store in the country, and their grandkids and great-grandkids, they still come in. Well Mr. Lawrence died, but she comes in; the—the daughters come in but there's a story about—they were very hard -working people. They worked for some farmers cutting cane that needs to be cut by hand and planted by hand. And she worked until—you know, she was pregnant working and she went into the store and my mom said, "Well, so-and-so, you must be about to have your baby, huh?" And she said, "Yeah, any day now." And the next day the other workers came in and she wasn't there, and they said, "Well where is, you know, so-and-so?" They said, "Well, she had her baby last night." Well the next day she comes in and she's back working—one day after having her child working in the field.

00:47:58

SR: Whoa. And she lived to tell about it.

00:48:00

GG: I wish I could remember her first name. You know growing up, of course, we called her Mrs. Charles—not, we didn't call her by her first name; my dad would know her name. Yeah, you know that's kind of—because I remember my mama used to tell me, she said, you know, when I was born—the year they opened the store—and I was just—I was, you know, bald, big huge blue eyes, and white, you know, pale skin, and she'd put me in the car seat or in a baby seat—back then they didn't really have car seats, but they had like little bassinets or whatever and she'd put me on top of the counter. And she said the people would come in, and they'd just stare at me. They wanted—they—it was like—.

00:48:44

HG: It was mostly a black community.

00:48:45

GG: She said I looked like a porcelain doll, you know, because I was so fair, you know, and they—they wanted—they said, “Can I—can we touch her?” **[Laughs]** And I was a big baby, you know, so I was real full, and she said she used to get the biggest kick out of that, because—everybody that would come in, they were amazed. **[Laughs]**

00:49:11

SR: That's what I looked like, too.

00:49:14

GG: That's what I was going to say. You must know what I'm talking about because I was bald until I was almost three years old.

00:49:17

SR: Me, too.

00:49:20

GG: You know now I got plenty.

00:49:20

SR: Yeah.

00:49:22

HG: But that's just to show you how—how people have changed, you know, in society. Though it's, you know, not that many years ago, people are still working in fields and—. Now it's almost unheard of.

00:49:38

GG: Yeah, hard-working, you know.

00:49:39

SR: You know, what about your—so today you just have the regular pork boudin and not—not any of the special stuff?

00:49:45

HG: No, we probably have some crawfish boudin right now. Crawfish season just ended, so we're still making it.

00:49:48

SR: Oh, okay. Yeah, so you make that in season pretty much?

00:49:53

HG: Well the crawfish now, they freeze enough crawfish that we can have crawfish year-round. So we do continue making the crawfish, you know, and if we see it slows down or stops selling, we'll stop making it. But the pork boudin is a constant thing. That's twenty-four/seven.

00:50:11

GG: Well what we do a lot with our specialty boudin is—is we actually have a vacuum packing machine, so we vacuum pack, and we have a freezer, a self-serve freezer in the front for, you know, specialty boudin. And Kitty (Kathryn Maturin) makes gumbos and chili and soups, and she'll freeze them in containers and we sell a lot of that, so it works out really well.

00:50:33

SR: What about for your crawfish and your shrimp boudin, do—is that a pork base or is it all seafood?

00:50:39

HG: All seafood because this a big Christian—Catholic community, so come Lent and whatnot you would be persecuted if you had pork and something that day, you know, because it's a very, very strong Catholic community.

00:50:56

GG: Yeah, we're supposed to be fasting.

00:50:57

HG: Fasting and everybody is eating seafood platters.

00:51:02

GG: [*Laughs*] Seafood, wow. It's a treat now. You know back then it might not have been such a treat to have seafood it was so plentiful.

00:51:10

HG: Although I think the whole meaning of that has gotten turned around a little bit. Yeah, that's got spun into what people wanted, you know.

00:51:16

SR: Yeah, there's not a lot of sacrifice.

00:51:19

HG: When you have to eat boiled crabs for a sacrifice or fried shrimp.

00:51:21

GG: Yeah.

00:51:23

SR: Well what about like the boudin part of your business here—well, compared to the sausage is it—how does the boudin sell, I guess?

00:51:35

HG: We'll sell 200 to 300 pounds of boudin a week on a good week. On a good week we'll sell 1,000 pounds of sausage a day.

00:51:50

SR: A day?

00:51:52

HG: Yeah. So that's—that's the ratio there, you know. Now that would be a good week, but the girl makes pretty much—she's off one day, and she'll make between 800 and 1,500 pounds of sausage just about every day, you know, except for her day off.

00:52:13

SR: One person?

00:52:13

HG: One person, yeah.

00:52:13

GG: I bet you want to meet her. [*Laughs*]

00:52:19

SR: I do.

00:52:19

HG: Well the way we have it set up—.

00:52:19

GG: She's really good. She's—she's awesome.

00:52:24

HG: The way we have it set up, it goes quick. We have someone that will help her grind everything and you know and whatnot, but the actual production of the sausage in the—the stuffing machine, she does everything.

00:52:34

SR: And do y'all have a recipe book for all the sausages or—?

00:52:37

HG: More or less. A lot of it is upstairs though.

00:52:40

SR: And so does she have a hand in the development?

00:52:44

HG: Yes, because Lisa is a real good cook and Cajun heritage and family. They speak French in that family.

00:52:52

GG: Oh, yeah, definitely.

00:52:54

HG: So when she says, you know, “We ought to try this,” we go with it.

00:52:57

GG: And she’s worked with us on and off for many years, and she’s always worked in the meat department and, yeah, she’s very, you know—and she actually—she recently took classes in cake decorating and stuff so we—we can pop her in any department. Last week she was making sausage and helping—she took our bakery manager’s place last week while she was on vacation so she—she made sausage and decorated cakes last week.

00:53:28

HG: Yeah, I make sausage some days when she’s on vacation or something happens, so—.

00:53:33

SR: What’s her last name?

00:53:35

HG: Originally?

00:53:40

GG: Richard. Well that was her—

00:53:43

HG: She's an Hebert now. Yeah, I'm trying to think of her—her maiden name. I don't know.

00:53:50

GG: What is her maiden name? I know Patti is—and Lisa is a Richard and an Hebert.

00:53:54

HG: Lisa, who makes sausage, her sister, Patricia, is a cashier, and Lisa is married to Brian, which is the produce manager, so we still have other families that have been with us for twenty-five years, you know. Brian, I remember Brian working in the produce as long as I can remember, you know.

00:54:19

GG: Yeah, he's been here for many years. Yeah, and Paula Borel. Sara, we've had people that have been here twenty-five years, yeah.

00:54:29

HG: They've watched me grow up, you know.

00:54:31

GG: Yeah.

00:54:33

SR: For the boudin do you use like a shoulder or a butt?

00:54:37

HG: We use a butt—pork butt, pork liver, onions, bell pepper, celery, garlic, onion tops, red pepper, black pepper and salt. That's the whole recipe, you know. I can't give you the amounts.

[Laughs]

00:54:57

SR: No, no.

00:54:57

HG: But that's it and we also—we use a rice called Toro. It's a—a breed of rice. Years ago the rice families in the area would grow that certain rice [*Phone Rings*]—would that stop?

00:55:19

SR: You were talking about the rice.

00:55:23

GG: The Toro rice.

00:55:25

HG: Oh yeah. And this came from the Romero brothers. Remember the Romero brothers?

00:55:28

GG: Yeah.

00:55:30

HG: They used to play at the—.

00:55:30

GG: They played accordions. They're musicians.

00:55:33

HG: Do you know about the Evangeline Oak?

00:55:35

GG: By the Acadian Memorial.

00:55:38

HG: You know. the two people that used to play music in front of there?

00:55:42

SR: Uh-um.

00:55:43

HG: The Romero brothers, well they were rice farmers and this is where this—this history comes from. The Toro rice was a type of rice that was a very kind of long-grain, but it cooked very tender. But it had a poor yield and a poor disease resistance, so as a crop it wasn't good, but the rice farmers used to always grow it in a little patch for their personal use, you know. And through the years they've kind of tweaked it and made it a little more productive, and you can get it now. We sell it—we sell a good bit of it, actually, and that's what we use in our boudin.

00:56:21

GG: Very good.

00:56:21

HG: Most people use medium-grain rice. We use a long-grain Toro, so it's one of the things we do different to try to set it apart.

00:56:30

SR: And—and so the families would grow some for themselves because it tasted good?

00:56:36

HG: Yeah, the texture and the flavor was better—or some people think. You know it's a preference thing, I'm sure.

00:56:45

SR: And do you get that locally?

00:56:48

HG: We get it from Falcon Rice Mill.

00:56:51

GG: In Crowley.

00:56:50

HG: Crowley, yeah.

00:56:52

SR: Oh, okay. That's so interesting.

00:56:54

HG: Yeah, I was actually in Arkansas, actually, which is like the rice capital in the world, pretty much. I know we claim that, you know—quality but everywhere you go there it's rice. I mean it's rice, rice, rice. And I mentioned it [Toro] to them, and nobody knew what I was talking about. I talked to a farmer who was a third generation rice farmer, and he had never even seen that before or heard of it. So it must be a very local thing.

00:57:24

GG: And around here, actually, the rice farming is becoming a—a bigger industry here because the crawfish farmers are actually integrating the—.

00:57:36

HG: Yeah, they—they crop, you know, crawfish and rice, but years ago rice was huge here. Our grandfather—or great-grandfather was a rice farmer.

00:57:45

GG: Yeah, on Maw-Maw Gauthier's side, you know, that was Crowley/Rayne area, that's where they came from, as I was explaining earlier, yeah. They were rice farmers.

00:57:57

HG: Yeah, so—.

00:57:59

SR: Oh, shoot, what was I going—I was going to ask something about the rice, I'm sorry. Well do you use a lot of local products in your cooking here?

00:58:05

HG: Oh, yeah. Cajun Chef, which is in Saint Martinville, some real good friends of mine—we do a lot together. We use a lot of their products.

00:58:17

GG: They have really good products.

00:58:18

HG: Hot sauces and stuff like that. Peppers—we use a lot of the jalapeno peppers.

00:58:21

SR: They're fresh?

00:58:25

HG: No, they're pickled and it's—it's a pickling hot sauce business, Cajun Chef products. We use some McIlhenny products in New Iberia out there on Avery Island. What other local products do we use—local honey like our honey sausage has a honey from Breaux Bridge in it.

00:58:48

GG: Yeah.

00:58:51

SR: What about the seafood. Do you usually use local like crawfish and stuff?

00:58:57

HG: Yes, we have—we buy from one supplier, Terry Guidry, Catahoula Crawfish Incorporated, and the majority of his crawfish comes from Jim Builliard, which his also a very good customer of ours, so the—our customers are some of our suppliers too. Because Terry shops with us often and he's—. You may have heard of him. He's in a band, Niklbeer. It's kind of a famous Cajun band and he—he does that on the side of the crawfish processing. Right now they're about to start processing alligators. So that's—.

00:59:37

SR: Do you ever make an alligator sausage?

00:59:38

GG: That's something—.

00:59:39

HG: No.

00:59:39

GG: I was about to say that's something we never really touched on—alligator.

00:59:43

HG: Yeah, I've cooked it a few times. I don't really care for it, but we'd probably make an alligator sausage, and it would have a little bit of—you know, just an impulse thing. People might go for it. It's a good idea. You just helped make a sausage.

00:59:57

SR: I have had good alligator sausage before.

00:59:59

GG: Really?

01:00:01

SR: Yeah, there's a place—a po-boy shop near my house that has alligator sausage po-boys, and it's—it's good, not just for the novelty, but like it's a good-tasting sausage.

01:00:10

HG: It probably contains pork.

01:00:13

SR: I think it probably does.

01:00:14

HG: Alligator by itself is—it's kind of dry.

01:00:17

SR: It's probably mostly pork. [*Laughs*]

01:00:20

HG: But I mean if you get a little bit of that—like if you get the deer sausage, it has to be half pork, you know, because it's so dry. But deer sausage is something everybody around here eats and likes them, you know. So the pork—it's a good base, you know, but you can always add stuff to it. And we make a rabbit sausage.

01:00:41

GG: I've never had the rabbit sausage. It's interesting.

01:00:45

SR: What's in the rabbit—just rabbit or pork, too?

01:00:46

HG: Half pork, half rabbit, uh-hmm.

01:00:51

SR: And—and people—well, let me—well first of all let me ask: So your sausages in your case, they're really big. They're fat sausages. Is that like the same casing you use for boudin or—?

01:01:02

HG: Yes, we use one casing, and I think it's called a thirty-five millimeter euro, and it's—you know, like the size of the casing has less to do with why we use it than the quality of casing. We want a casing that's kind of firm. That way you can make a—a—kind of a dense product, you know. A lot of times you'll buy sausage, and you'll pick it up and it just—it just bends over and you can just pinch right through it. Our sausage, if you tried pinching through it, a lot of times it will break because there's so much meat in there. You know, and we find it keeps it moister and just more juice and more seasoning in it. That may not even be true; that's just something we've always done, you know. I don't know if that's really what does it, but we're not going to change it, so—.

01:01:55

SR: And is it a natural hog casing?

01:01:57

HG: Oh, yes. Yeah.

01:02:00

SR: Let me just ask you one thing about the *chaurice*. Is that fresh garlic in there, or is it garlic powder?

01:02:07

HG: We'll make it both ways, but most people prefer the garlic powder. I don't know why. So that's what we use now.

01:02:18

SR: Do you think that Saint Martinville is particularly a sausage-focused town or is it—?

01:02:25

HG: Oh, yes, yes.

01:02:26

SR: Even before y'all started making all this sausage?

01:02:29

HG: Yeah, the first little—and I'm talking cold snap; I'm talking like sixty-five degrees—every person is making a chicken and sausage gumbo. That's—I mean if we get into—into the fifties, we run out of sausage and hens and andouille and whatnot.

01:02:59

GG: Really. We make our own smoked andouille.

01:03:02

HG: The andouille.

01:03:05

GG: You know what andouille is?

01:03:05

SR: Uh-hmm.

01:03:06

HG: We use beef casing for andouille.

01:03:08

GG: And actually Harvey is—Harvey is the smoking man.

01:03:13

SR: Really? Well maybe you could explain just for the record what andouille is.

01:03:17

HG: Well real andouille has a lot of leftover parts in it, you know. There's—you have, you know, parts of the—the necks and tongue and whatnot and skin and fat in real andouille, and it's ground coarse. And it's usually not even ground; it's actually cut up into chunks and stuffed by hand. We've tweaked it a little bit more for modern taste and whatnot. We use pure pork. We grind it with a half-inch plate, which gives you half-inch pieces of meat; and we put it into a beef casing, so it's about twice the size of the sausage. It's about this big around. [*Gestures*] And then

we smoke that with hardwood chips and that's our—our take on andouille. It's not really a traditional andouille, if you look at 100 years ago because they did use a lot of skin and fat, you know, and other parts.

01:04:20

GG: I didn't know that. [*Laughs*]

01:04:24

HG: Yeah, they did.

01:04:25

GG: See, I'm glad I stayed. I learned something. [*Laughs*] I'm glad you came.

01:04:26

SR: Me too, this is really fascinating.

01:04:31

GG: I didn't know that. I didn't know that about the rice either.

01:04:36

HG: A lot of this stuff—it comes from the customers and people that we talk to and whatnot, you know.

01:04:40

SR: And what kind of wood do you use?

01:04:44

HG: We use a mixture of the pecan and hickory. It's—we buy a—some chips and dust that we buy from a guy, and he blends it and whatnot. It's fifty-fifty.

01:04:56

SR: Is that the only smoked sausage that you make or you make other—?

01:04:59

HG: We make a pure pork smoked sausage also.

01:05:03

SR: What's your best selling sausage?

01:05:06

HG: *Chaurice*.

01:05:09

SR: This is sort of a personal question because I don't really know how to use *chaurice*: If you use that in your gumbo, do you take it out of the casing or do you—what do you do?

01:05:18

HG: Most people in this area will take it and leave it whole on some pieces that they can manage. And they place it into the pot before they start the gumbo, and they brown it. It's taken out. It's browned until it's almost fully cooked. It's taken out and put to cool, and you start your

roux and your other meat. Most people in this area brown their meat for their gumbo. Some people just put their meat into the juice but that—that's kind of a thing around here—people brown everything and get that little flavor in the bottom of the pot.

01:05:52

SR: Yeah, and you get a lot of the grease out, too, by doing that.

01:05:55

HG: Yes, and then you use that for your roux. After everything is browned and—and cooled, the sausage is cut up into bite-sized pieces with the casing and put back in because the natural casing will cook until it's completely tender. That's what you don't get with a synthetic. It all stays a little tough.

01:06:18

SR: I guess I just thought with the—this has happened to me before, like with the fresh sausage, like the casing will shrink up, and then the meat will just fall out.

01:06:27

HG: Well when you brown it—well our sausage, when you brown it and you take it out, once it cools, you can cut it up and it will not fall out of the casing.

01:06:36

SR: Hmm, okay.

01:06:37

HG: You won't end up with those little pieces of casing.

01:06:40

SR: Yeah, I don't like that.

01:06:41

GG: Each piece and it won't fall out.

01:06:42

HG: And that's—I think that might have something to do with how tight we stuff the sausage—
how packed in the casing it is.

01:06:49

SR: Right.

01:06:50

HG: But the—the traditional gumbo for—for me would be a hen, *chaurice*, a little *tasso*, some
okra, and that's it.

01:07:04

SR: That sounds good.

01:07:04

HG: Some shrimp—get some shrimp and call it a day.

01:07:09

SR: Do you make that here ever—the gumbo?

01:07:14

HG: Uh-hmm, yeah.

01:07:17

GG: Oh, yeah, as soon as it reaches seventy degrees, “What day are you making gumbo?”

[Laughs]

01:07:25

HG: And we make—I have like a sixty-quart pot that we make. We’ll sell half of it that day and then freeze the other half in little containers and people will buy—buy that and take it home. We have a lady—I’m not going to say her name—she buys like five or six containers. She goes home and she tells her husband that she made gumbo. And he comes in and he’s like, “Oh, my wife made a gumbo for me the other day. I’ll tell you what, that was the best gumbo.” I can’t let her secret go, though. **[Laughs]** But I’ll tell you, you’re going to like that.

01:07:58

SR: Oh, I can’t wait.

01:08:01

HG: But yeah, that’s—

01:08:02

GG: I didn't know that.

01:08:05

SR: So are you known for a particular kind of gumbo in the store, or do you make all kinds?

01:08:07

HG: Well the chicken and sausage mostly. I make a lot of different gumbos at home. But in the store, chicken and sausage is probably the—.

01:08:19

SR: Can you tell me, for the record, what the difference is between the chicken and a hen?

01:08:24

HG: A chicken is the—we refer to a chicken when we say a fryer, which is a younger, but usually not mature. A hen has been a bird that's matured and usually is older and bigger, very tough. So you have to cook it a longer time. Chicken tends to cook very fast or fall off of the bone and gumbos—you've probably seen gumbos where they take all the meat, take it all off the bone and put it back into the gumbo? That's not really how it's made around here a lot. Most people, you actually have a piece of chicken with the bone in the gumbo, and then you know you kind of pick at it in your bowl. The hen allows you to cook the gumbo for two, three hours to get that good broth and flavor from the bones without the meat falling apart.

01:09:19

GG: It gives it a much better flavor [*Phone Rings*] and you can taste the difference immediately if a gumbo is cooked with a hen.

01:09:25

HG: Oh, yeah. Well if you cook a gumbo with a hen—.

01:09:27

GG: Now I'm not crazy about a rooster but—.

01:09:31

HG: I like roosters, but if you cook a gumbo with a hen and a gumbo with a fryer, and you put the leftovers in the icebox, the one you cooked with hen will actually gel up solid because of all of the, I guess the—you know, the bones and whatnot and that broth and that, you know—and the chicken won't do that because you can't cook—cook it long enough to pull that out of the bones.

01:09:55

GG: Well I don't know about all that, but I know a gumbo with a hen is good stuff.

01:09:59

HG: I can always—.

01:10:00

GG: That's my favorite.

01:10:02

HG: Gumbo is like one of the few things I'll eat as leftovers. And we always know when we made a good gumbo because it completely almost solidifies and not—we always skim all the grease and try to get as much grease out of the gumbo as possible. Like sometimes you'll go get gumbo, and there's an inch of grease on top of the pot. And you're like—but that's—but that's almost like the boudin and people are getting away from that more and more, you know.

01:10:29

SR: You know, I live in New Orleans, and it's hard to come by a hen. Do you have a hard time finding hens—suppliers for hens, or—?

01:10:35

HG: No, not really. We have them pretty regular.

01:10:41

GG: Uh-hmm.

01:10:44

HG: Hen, rooster, capon [castrated male chicken], we handle all of that pretty regular.

01:10:53

SR: You sell it here?

01:10:54

GG: Oh, yeah, we always have hens. When it's going to get cold, you can count on it. People call up, "Cut me two hens. I'm coming in," you know.

01:11:05

HG: Yeah. I don't know how many hens I've cut the last minute—walking out the door and say, "Hey, so-and-so is here. Can you cut them a hen?" Because a chicken is very easy to cut, but a hen, it takes a large knife and a little power to cut a hen.

01:11:18

GG: Yeah, it's a little harder to do.

01:11:21

HG: But we'll cut two, three dozen on a cold weekend, you know, and put two, three dozen out whole. Because there are people here that do take the meat off the bone. There's a few people like that, and that's a fine gumbo. It's just not what—what we're used to.

01:11:33

GG: And it don't have the flavor. I mean you put a hen and start with that—that flavor just comes and it's so good.

01:11:42

HG: But I've made—I've cooked—.

01:11:45

GG: I'm not crazy about rooster, though. My dad will cook—yeah, my dad will cook a rooster gumbo. I'm not crazy about rooster, but if he puts a hen in it, I think I'll come and eat.

01:11:55

HG: Ducks, squirrels—.

01:11:55

GG: Duck gumbo, Daddy—you do that, too.

01:12:01

HG: I make that a lot.

01:12:00

GG: Yeah, you make duck gumbo a lot, yeah.

01:12:03

SR: What does rooster taste like?

01:12:05

HG: Rooster has kind of a gamey taste.

01:12:08

GG: Yeah.

01:12:10

HG: And I'm not going to lie to you. If you probably never had it, and if you don't like—like wild duck and—and stuff like that, you probably won't like rooster because it has that kind of—a gamey—that's the only way I can really describe it.

01:12:28

GG: Yeah. See I'm not—we never grew up eating a lot of, you know, wild game, so it's not, you know, something I'm—I'm acquired to or like. Now Harvey likes it because you eat—you know, you cook deer and duck and rabbit and squirrel and everything, you know.

01:12:47

HG: Yeah, tree rats.

01:12:48

GG: Yeah, the squirrel. But he's a very good cook, you know. He can make—.

01:12:52

HG: Well I enjoy hunting and fishing and whatnot, so—.

01:12:56

GG: Yeah, but you see, I didn't—. So I'm not—you know, I can distinctly taste a game. You know, I have—I have a very sensitive, you know, I can smell and taste it.

01:13:09

HG: Have you ever had squirrel?

01:13:10

GG: I'm not saying it's terrible. It's just not something that I like personally, you know.

01:13:15

SR: No. But I'm not opposed to it. I just haven't been offered it.

01:13:19

HG: It's—it's a distinct thing. I'm not going to lie to you. There's this tradition of people of cooking the head of the squirrel. And you can say "I'm a Coon Ass," whatever—or whatever but—.

01:13:33

GG: Well—well remember Maw-Maw Artie—she goes, "Y'all go eat. I got a squirrel gumbo in there." And I went and they had the little heads popping up. I'm like, "Maw-Maw, I'm not eating that."

01:13:43

HG: It's the tradition of eating—*[Laughs]*—of cleaning—.

01:13:47

GG: Little squirrel heads in the pot—.

01:13:47

HG: And they eat the brain, okay, and I have never been able to bring myself to and I love—squirrel is my number one favorite thing to hunt, cook and eat. I'll go to somebody's house, and they'll have the heads in the pot; I'll make somebody else go fix my plate because I just can't bring myself to those little heads and those little teeth looking at me.

01:14:12

SR: They'll have the teeth still in there?

01:14:13

HG: Yeah.

01:14:13

GG: Oh, yeah, the whole little head. You see, Maw-Maw Artie, she—I don't know if she used to cook that when we were young, but it was like the first time I had ever seen her cook it. And I'm sure she had done it a thousand times, but she goes, "I have," you know, "it's good. It's really good. Go get you some of that squirrel gumbo." I think it was a gumbo because it was in a big pot and I—I did like that with the spoon, [*Gestures*] and a little head popped up. And I was like, "Maw-Maw, what is that?"

01:14:48

HG: You know what's funny about Maw-Maw's?

01:14:49

GG: Oh, I lost it. I couldn't—I didn't eat that day.

01:14:53

HG: To see somebody take a BB or a bullet out of their mouth and put it on the table. It was such a common occurrence, and my dad used to always fuss because he wasn't—he was never exposed to that.

01:15:06

GG: Yeah, Dad grew up a little different than my mom.

01:15:08

HG: I would cook something—.

01:15:07

GG: You know, my mom, they hunted and fished, and that's all they ate.

01:15:12

HG: And he would come eat, and if he would find a BB in his food, it would ruin—he was like, “Oh, see why I don't eat this kind of stuff?” You will go and break a tooth on a BB or something like that and, to them, that was nothing. I mean that's—that's like, you know, no big deal. The shell of a shrimp and you know—you know, it's no big deal.

01:15:30

GG: And she grew up with, you know, the shotguns locked and loaded at the door. We grew up, you know—or my dad grew up, you know, and the guns were kept in—in a—.

01:15:40

HG: They might not have even been there.

01:15:42

GG: There might not have even been a gun in the house, you know. So my mom—

01:15:44

HG: Yeah, well I've seen my grandfather—

01:15:47

GG: —she grew up with three brothers and, you know, they—“I'm going to hunt,” you know and—

01:15:54

HG: Yeah, well my grandmother hunted for food. You know, my grandmother used to go in the woods and shoot squirrels or a coon or a rabbit and go home and cook for when my grandfather would get home out of necessity, you know, not out of sport. Out of necessity.

01:16:08

GG: Now you know but as—once Paw-Paw got—the tugboats.

01:16:15

HG: We keep getting away from sausage. [*Laughs*]

01:16:15

SR: No, no. I'm also studying gumbo so that's—.

01:16:19

GG: Once Paw-Paw got the tugboat, and they bought that property—they had a big garden. They had a huge garden, but they never had like cattle or anything like that, which my dad's side did, so it was kind of, you know, two cultures merging together, so we were kind of lucky, you know. And then my mom's side was Baptist; my dad's side was Catholic. We had a little bit of everything.

01:16:42

HG: Now on my mom's side, gumbo is a real big thing.

01:16:43

GG: It's huge.

01:16:45

HG: Seafood gumbo, duck gumbo, squirrel gumbo, rabbit—.

01:16:49

GG: Seafood gumbo is probably like my number one, and then it's chicken—or hen. Hen, not chicken. But my grandma's seafood gumbo, oh, my God.

01:16:58

HG: Gumbos were cooked year-round at my grandmother's. That was a very common dinner but—big, large variety—shrimp and oyster, shrimp and crab, chicken and sausage, sometimes just chicken, ducks, goose.

01:17:13

GG: Sometimes she'd use okra with shrimp in it.

01:17:16

HG: Okra and shrimp. I've even seen turtle, rabbit—often. Rabbit is very good in gumbo. Squirrels I might have said already. I'm trying to think what else they would harvest out of the woods over there. I mean—.

01:17:34

GG: Well I knew we ate frog legs a lot. But I never remember eating it in a gumbo. They'd always fry it—fried frog legs. There wasn't that—you know, as much alligators as they had around there, I never ate a lot of alligator at my grandmother's. I've never eaten a lot of alligator. The only time I've ever eaten alligator even with both families was in a restaurant.

01:17:57

HG: It's not a popular thing.

01:17:58

GG: It's not a popular thing, you know, and they'd catch alligators all the time.

01:18:01

HG: Well the guy that—.

01:18:02

SR: Really?

01:18:04

GG: Yeah, frog, turtle, you know, all of that—.

01:18:06

HG: My little—.

01:18:09

SR: And what do they do with it if they don't cook it?

01:18:11

HG: You let it go. He just wanted to catch him.

01:18:13

SR: How did he catch him?

01:18:14

HG: With his hands.

01:18:15

SR: Uh-uh.

01:18:16

HG: Yeah. And a rope.

01:18:17

GG: I don't think they realized how big it was.

01:18:19

HG: Yeah, when they got it out of the water, it was a lot bigger, so they just let it go.

01:18:24

GG: It was about five feet they said. They thought it was smaller than that. [*Laughs*]

01:18:28

SR: Did they like lasso it or something?

01:18:31

HG: I'm not sure. I wasn't there, so—. I was out doing something productive. [*Laughs*]

01:18:37

SR: It sounds like one of those fishing stories, like really it was this big. [*Gestures*]

01:18:39

HG: It might have been. But no. No, if they didn't bring it home, it probably was kind of big, because I know Morgan would have had it behind his truck, you know, to let it—we have a pond. He'd just probably let it go over here or something.

01:18:49

SR: So those—those gumbos that you were just listing, would they all be made with a roux?

01:18:56

HG: Yes.

01:18:58

GG: Yeah.

01:18:58

HG: All roux-based, even the okra gumbo, you know, because that okra does thicken the gumbo, but it would still be—be roux-based, all homemade.

01:19:07

GG: Yeah. Now a seafood gumbo, I find that they—you know the—the roux is a lighter roux.

01:19:13

HG: Well when we make a roux here, we have the stages of the roux, you know: peanut butter, chocolate, you know, and those—those stages—come in. [*Knock on Door*] And that's—those stages of the roux are for different types of gumbos. A dark, dark roux will often be used with

wild game. A little bit lighter gumbo—roux will be for chicken and sausage and the lightest roux is normally for seafood because you—.

01:19:47

GG: Seafood.

01:19:46

HG: Really, seafood doesn't—I think the stronger the flavor of the food, the darker you want your roux.

01:19:53

GG: Yeah.

01:19:55

HG: But I mean that's what one of the first things I made—learned how to make was a roux, you know.

01:19:58

SR: And who taught you?

01:20:01

HG: My mom. Um-hmm. But you know, not really taught me. A roux—you have to stand in front of the pot. You can't leave. If she was washing clothes or doing anything else, she said, "Come stir the roux." So I think it was more out of necessity than continuing heritage.

01:20:23

SR: And would she—what would you be stirring with, a wooden spoon or a whisk?

01:20:27

HG: With a spoon, yeah.

01:20:29

SR: Um—.

01:20:29

HG: Usually worn down to almost nothing, yeah.

01:20:34

SR: And what about—what kind of fat would she use back then? Was it oil?

01:20:38

HG: My mom—probably cooking oil, yeah.

01:20:40

GG: Vegetable oil, you know. That's what Maw-Maw Artie uses a lot of—just vegetable oil—
and she cooks everything from scratch.

01:20:50

HG: Well I think that started out as convenience, you know.

01:20:54

GG: Yeah, convenience.

01:20:55

SR: And what about you now when you make a gumbo—vegetable oil?

01:20:59

HG: Sometimes. Sometimes I'll cook all the sausage and try to get as much oil out of that as I can, and then I'll just add a little oil to that until you have a little flavor, you know, to start with. But I'm not going to lie to you. If—if I don't have time, I'll just get a jar of roux, you know, because it's so convenient, you know.

01:21:17

GG: Yeah. And the rouxs, they make now are so good—even the powdered roux, you know. I'm not a big cook, and I think you kind of got that from the conversation [*Laughs*]*—*from the interview.

01:21:27

SR: You have enough people around you.

01:21:29

GG: Well they—like Harvey—Harvey and my dad, you know, really, you know—and Maw-Maw Artie, too, they're just really good cooks, you know.

01:21:38

HG: I always cook a lot, you know.

01:21:40

GG: They always cook extra so—.

01:21:41

SR: Can you tell me, when you say seafood gumbo, what do you mean by that? What's in a—
your seafood gumbo?

01:21:48

HG: Probably the most traditional is shrimp and oyster by far.

01:21:53

GG: Uh-hmm. A little bit of crabmeat, not a whole lot. You don't want to overwhelm it with
crabmeat, you know.

01:21:59

HG: Now my grandmother used to often make a seafood gumbo with the crab still in the shell.
She would clean them real good and cut them into pieces, and then they'd actually have the—the
crab in the shell that you would pick through while you ate your gumbo. And there would be
some shrimp and oyster and some crab. And probably—.

01:22:18

GG: She'd do that with stew, too, like a crab stew.

01:22:20

HG: Yeah.

01:22:23

GG: And just put some potatoes in it—really good.

01:22:25

HG: Yeah, shrimp and potato—shrimp and egg stew.

01:22:26

SR: I've never had potato—oh, in stew, okay, and not gumbo?

01:22:30

GG: Yeah, stew.

01:22:33

HG: Have you ever had a boiled egg in a gumbo?

01:22:33

SR: No, but I've read about that.

01:22:34

GG: That's good. It's very good.

01:22:36

HG: Yeah, it's very popular around here, too.

01:22:38

SR: What kind of gumbo would you put the egg in?

01:22:41

HG: Any kind, especially a seafood gumbo, and I think that just came out of trying to stretch your seafood a little bit, you know, you put in an egg and—. But we put it in the regular gumbos too.

01:22:49

GG: Yeah, or if you don't have time to finish potato salad. *[Laughs]*

01:22:56

SR: That's good. What about I—the last time I was here I bought some dried shrimp. You have a really pretty big selection of dried shrimp.

01:23:05

GG: We do.

01:23:05

HG: I use that in gumbos very seldom, but it's powerful. You have to use a little bit. She doesn't like it at all.

01:23:11

GG: Oh, I can smell it a mile away without—I swear. He can put in dried shrimp, and I just take—I'm—I can smell it before I stir the pot.

01:23:22

HG: Now they do have a powder that—.

01:23:24

GG: I know. [*Laughs*] It's just not for me, but we sell—.

01:23:24

HG: The dried shrimp powder—.

01:23:26

GG: When I was a kid we used to eat them raw, like as a snack.

01:23:29

HG: My wife still does that.

01:23:31

SR: Really?

01:23:30

GG: And now I—I can't stand them.

01:23:34

HG: They have a lot of people in this area—

01:23:36

SR: It's very strong.

01:23:39

HG: —that cook the dried shrimp. They basically rehydrate them, and that's their meal—tomato gravy with dried shrimp or in a gumbo. They won't buy fresh shrimp. They'll buy a couple packs of dried shrimp. You know probably the number one thing dried shrimp are used for is okra.

01:23:58

GG: Yeah.

01:23:58

HG: A lot of people cook that in okra, yeah.

01:23:59

GG: Yeah, because we actually sell the dried shrimp or the shrimp powder. They even have the powder you can buy.

01:24:05

HG: A seafood gumbo, I'll put a teaspoon of the powder if—if I buy fresh shrimp and I have their heads, I boil it and make me a stock. But if I don't have that, I'll take like a half of the pack

or a quarter of the pack and put it in my gumbo. And you can easily ruin it—because it's a very, very strong flavor.

01:24:23

GG: Yes, it's super strong.

01:24:24

HG: In the right amount it's very good.

01:24:27

GG: Yeah, I've probably eaten it with you and didn't know it. But you know—.

01:24:33

HG: Now something that's really not that popular in this area but was very popular by my grandmother's on my mama's side was gumbo filé, you know, that's—.

01:24:42

GG: Oh, yeah, Maw-Maw used to make her own.

01:24:45

SR: Really?

01:24:45

GG: She'd get this—what was it, sassafras, the sassafras leaves and she'd roast the leaves and grind it all herself, yeah.

01:24:52

SR: What would—what would she roast it in, the oven?

01:24:55

HG: Just in the oven on the sheet pan just to dry them out.

01:24:57

GG: Dry them out, yeah.

01:25:00

HG: Or they would—I've even heard of them putting them on a tin roof, like cutting the branches and just leaving the branch on top of the house for a couple of days.

01:25:10

GG: Yeah, she used to make her own.

01:25:11

HG: I'm not a huge fan of that, personally.

01:25:12

GG: I like gumbo filé, I really do—not a whole lot of it but, you know, just a sprinkle. I—I like it, but I grew up eating it, you know, at my grandmother's.

01:25:23

HG: I don't mind it at all. I very seldom add it to my gumbo.

01:25:25

SR: But is that what you would do? Would you—at her house would you add it at the end or would she cook with it?

01:25:33

HG: No, you normally don't cook with it.

01:25:36

GG: I don't remember Maw-Maw doing it, but I remember Mama adding filé, you know, towards the end of the gumbo. But I remember at my grandmother's it was always on the table as an additive, if you chose, you know, if you wanted it. But I remember how Mom, she would add a little filé to her gumbo right at the end—

01:25:55

HG: Yeah.

01:25:55

GG: —when it was just about—when we were about ready to eat, you know.

01:25:58

HG: But at Maw-Maw Artie's on the table, they always had the filé in a little—usually a baby food jar. That's what I remember. And the Tabasco, pepper, and vinegar—

01:26:12

GG: Yes, she—she pickled her own peppers.

01:26:13

HG: The best peppers and you would sprinkle that vinegar over your rice and gravy or over your gumbo or—.

01:26:19

GG: Yeah, and it was—.

01:26:22

SR: Yum.

01:26:22

HG: And in this area—in Saint Martinville—chow-chow is real popular, which is the ground up peppers with vinegar. That shows you how—

01:26:32

GG: I love to put that on red beans and rice and—.

01:26:32

HG: —two different areas how much difference but essentially kind of the same thing, you know.

01:26:40

SR: So you put chow-chow on your beans and rice? That sounds good.

01:26:42

GG: It is. That's the way I like it, you know. [*Laughs*]

01:26:45

SR: You were telling me earlier you had a chow-chow sausage?

01:26:51

HG: Yeah, we have boudin.

01:26:51

GG: Boudin.

01:26:53

SR: Boudin—what is that like?

01:26:53

HG: It's a pork boudin that we add fresh chow-chow to, and we sell chow-chow here.

01:27:02

SR: That you make or that—?

01:27:03

HG: We have someone make it—Landry's Pepper in Cypress Island. Yeah, and it's just ground up peppers and vinegar. Now another thing that's—I don't know if they have that in other areas with red beans and rice on Monday. You dice up peppers, onions, vinegar, salt, and pepper and you put that in the icebox for about an hour, and then the peppers and the onions are so crisp and then you pour that over your food and it's like a fresh relish, yeah. And I've only eaten that in this area.

01:27:42

GG: Oh, it's good. That's better than chow-chow. [*Laughs*]

01:27:43

SR: I've never heard of that. So you mean green bell peppers you—?

01:27:44

HG: Jalapenos.

01:27:46

GG: Green bell peppers, jalapenos, onions—.

01:27:52

HG: That's what I use. I use jalapenos and onions.

01:27:54

GG: That's it.

01:27:55

HG: And dice it up kind of small and I just let it sit for about an hour, and that's something if it—after it sits for a day or two you usually throw it away because it loses that little crisp. It's like a fresh flavor compared to—a chow-chow kind of has that pickled (flavor), you know.

01:28:14

SR: That's such a good tip. Thank you for that.

01:28:16

HG: I've never had that anywhere(s) else. That's from the Thibodeauxs.

01:28:19

GG: That's very good. Especially on red beans and rice, yes.

01:28:23

SR: Hmm.

01:28:25

GG: That's better than chow-chow on beans and rice.

01:28:28

HG: My mother-in-law makes a lot of chow-chow. That's like—everybody asks for it, like, “Hey, can you get me a jar of your mother-in-law's chow-chow?”

01:28:33

SR: Really?

01:28:35

HG: Yeah, so—.

01:28:39

SR: I could talk to y'all forever, but you've given me so much time, and I'm also going to ask that I can take some photos around here, so I think I'll just let you have the day. So thank you—unless there's anything—I mean there's a lot we could still talk about but—.

01:28:58

HG: We—we talked more about family history than food.

01:28:58

GG: Oh, gosh, yes.

01:29:01

HG: But—but it all ties in.

01:29:01

SR: Well that—well it is. It all ties in, and that's what this is about is getting your story, whatever the story is, and I'll definitely get you a transcript when it's been edited and transcribed so you can have it.

01:29:16

HG: Yeah, do. Do you want any pictures of the—the original store or the—?

01:29:21

SR: Yeah, yeah, let me just cut this off and thank you and then we can talk about that. Thanks a lot.

01:29:27

GG: Thank you.

01:29:27

[End Ginger & Harvey Gauthier Interview]