

MARCYNE JONES and MARTHA CROWE JONES
Sally Bell's Kitchen – Richmond, Virginia

* * *

Date: February 16, 2013
Location: Ashland, Virginia
Interviewer: Sara Wood
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
Length: 1:17
Project: Women, Work & Food in Richmond, Virginia

00:00:01

Sara Wood: My name is Sara Wood and I'm with the Southern Foodways Alliance and it's Saturday, February 16, 2013, and I'm sitting here in Ashland, Virginia with Marcyne Jones and Martha Jones who are both of Sally Bell's Kitchen. And so Marcyne I'm going to have you start, could I get you to introduce yourself for the record?

00:00:20

Marcyne Jones: I'm Marcyne Jones, Ashland, Virginia.

00:00:26

SW: And for the record will you give me your birth date Marcyne?

00:00:28

Marcyne Jones: I was born in – on September 18, 1922. I'm 90 years old.

00:00:35

SW: And Martha can I have you do the same thing? Will you introduce yourself?

00:00:39

Martha Jones: I'm Martha Crowe Jones. I grew up in Mechanicsville, Virginia and I now live in Richmond, Virginia. I was born February 21, 1955.

00:00:47

SW: Okay; so you have a birthday coming up?

00:00:50

Martha Jones: Uh-hm.

00:00:52

SW: All right. So I wanted to start at the very beginning if possible and could you both you know if you want to switch it up here, talk a little bit about Elizabeth Lee Milton and Sarah Cabell Jones and just tell me who they were and where they're from?

00:01:07

Marcyne Jones: Her name was Cabell – Sarah Cabell Jones; she was my husband's [Callom Hunter Jones] aunt. I didn't know Miss Milton at all. That was before I moved here and but Sally Cabell was Hunter's aunt. And she started the business I think in 1924 or '25 in that area. And that was very unusual for a lady to have her own business. And I think Hunter's father helped her quite a bit when she started.

00:01:37

SW: Can you for people for the recording, can you explain who Hunter is? He's your husband?

00:01:42

Marcyne Jones: Oh Hunter is my husband; yes, uh-huh.

00:01:45

SW: And Sally was his aunt?

00:01:47

Marcyne Jones: That's right.

00:01:49

SW: And can you talk a little bit more about why it's so unusual for a woman to start a business at that time?

00:01:54

Marcyne Jones: Well at that time she started it, it was not retail. It was wholesale. She and Miss Milton started it and my – that's my understanding. And that didn't go over too good. And Hunter's father who was Joseph Jones advised her – he thought it might be good for her to go into retail. And that's what – that's what they did.

00:02:16

SW: And why would wholesale be such a bad idea?

00:02:18

Marcyne Jones: I don't have any idea other than maybe they had – you know Richmond wasn't that large to accommodate you know. I just don't – I really don't know.

00:02:31

SW: Could you talk about – I know this was mentioned in the book and I think this is important for Richmond because they met at the Woman's Exchange. Can you explain what that was for people who don't – ?

00:02:41

Marcyne Jones: See, I'm not from around – I moved here from California when I got married, so I don't know anything. I don't know what the Woman's Exchange was; did you – do you – ?

00:02:51

Martha Jones: I think they just brought their wares and goods and you know for the Richmond community to exchange and – .

00:03:00

SW: Well maybe Marcyne, you can start by telling me – so you're from California. Can you tell me where you were born and how you ended up out here in Richmond – in the Richmond area?

00:03:09

Marcyne Jones: I met my husband in – in California. He was in the Service. And so I was a war bride like most everybody else was at that time. **[Laughs]** I moved here in 1944. And I've been here ever since.

00:03:23

SW: And what you brought you out here in 1944?

00:03:26

Marcyne Jones: When I got married. We got – we got married in California. He was stationed in California.

00:03:31

SW: Was he in San Diego?

00:03:32

Marcyne Jones: No; he was out beyond Riverside on the desert and we got married and moved back here. Well we came back here after the War [World War II]. After he came home; he was over in the Pacific and he was – well he sort of went back to school and he ended up passing the CPA exam so that was his business. He also taught economics at Randolph Macon College and he enjoyed that very much, so – .

00:04:03

SW: That's just over here, right [a few blocks from Marcyne's home]? Can you talk about what it was like for you being from California to move all the way over here to Virginia? What was – what were the changes like for you? Do you remember your first impressions?

00:04:15

Marcyne Jones: Well I liked it but it was different because of I don't know, it was just slower and more Southern. **[Laughs]** And I thought people were nice, you know they were nice to me. Hunter's mother was real nice to me. And she was a good mother-in-law. **[Laughs]** And just the difference in the black people. You know we were not used to that and I just didn't understand a lot of the ways that they did.

00:04:49

SW: Are you referring to segregation?

00:04:51

Marcyne Jones: Well I mean I just never really knew what segregation was until I moved to Virginia. But that soon – that changed.

00:04:59

SW: Were things more progressive when you were in California?

00:05:03

Marcyne Jones: Well they just didn't have that out there. You didn't have the people living there. It was very unusual where I lived at – see anybody of a different race. It would be more – they say Asian now in California at that time and probably from Mexico too.

00:05:26

SW: What about the food? What were the differences in – did you notice like culinary differences– ?

00:05:34

Marcyne Jones: Well several things like sweet potato pie I had never heard of before and I just thought [*Laughs*] – and it wasn't too much difference I don't think, but there were some differences – corn pudding and Sally Lunn bread, things that I hadn't heard of before.

00:05:52

SW: So when you moved here how did you get involved with Sally Bell's Kitchen?

00:05:58

Marcyne Jones: Oh [*Laughs*] Hunter's – Cabell – Hunter felt like she needed help. He helped her with her books. You know being a CPA he more or less advised her at this point and he had me go into help her. He was teaching me how to do her books. And then he said, “Well I think you could go in and help her two or three days a week on – on the front you know,” [*Laughs*] which I did and I just – you know anyway, and I'd work on the books.

00:06:33

And then she had an opportunity to sell and made arrangements with a couple to sell it and I think did and they were – she [Sarah Cabell Jones] lived upstairs at the time and had an apartment upstairs above Sally Bell's. And she would come down and do certain things and so the people she gave them the key and the next day they gave the key back and said they didn't want it. [*Laughs*] And you know I guess it just didn't suit them. I don't know what happened. So anyway her health got so it wasn't as – what it should be, so that's eventually we – we bought it from her.

00:07:12

She had a stroke in church one Sunday and that really – that really did it then 'cause she ended up in the hospital. And but she – she helped me a whole lot after I took over. She – she was bedridden at that time but I could by and talk to her and she could tell me exactly what to do or I could call her on the phone. [*Laughs*] So she you know was a big help to me.

00:07:36

SW: Marcyne do you remember – I'm sure there are many things she said to you but do you remember like a piece of advice that really stuck with you or something she – some kind of guidance she gave you that really had a profound impact on how you – ?

00:07:50

Marcyne Jones: I can't think of anything. I don't know, the only thing I can think of – she always bought things in supply so she always – you never ran out. **[Laughs]** But she was a very sharp businesswoman. I mean she – she knew what she was doing. And I could – I mean there are just certain things she used to go through and buying the nuts you know for different things and they'd be chopped. She'd sit there and go through them and make sure they didn't have any shells or anything in them. And she didn't do the actual cooking there but she just did things like that. She'd make the sandwiches and help butter the – you know well she didn't make them; she helped cut the crust off the bread and put mayonnaise on it. And they'd put it there and then they'd put a damp towel over it. **[Laughs]** I can see that now.

00:08:39

SW: They would put a damp towel over the mayonnaise?

00:08:40

Marcyne Jones: No; over the – you'd cut your bread crust off and you had this tray and you'd put it together and then when you got that ready – then when somebody wanted a sandwich they'd take them then and put the filling in it. You got it prepared ahead of time and it was – I can remember. They had the damp cloths that would go over it so it wouldn't dry out. But we got away from that though I think eventually **[Laughs]** 'cause then we wrapped them in that wax paper that was what 9 x 12, the sandwiches; we you know do plastic now of course – plastic wrap. But that's what you had – that's what you did then.

00:09:22

SW: Can you talk a little bit more about what the kitchen was like between – the relationship between Miss Jones and the other women who worked there ‘cause it was mostly women who worked in – ?

00:09:33

Marcyne Jones: It was all women except for Clarence [Brown] who didn’t – when she – Clarence didn’t work for me but Clarence I think worked there full time and he kept the yard and did the heavy lifting and different stuff. I think all of them respected her. And if she said something I mean it was done. [*Laughs*] But she did it in a good way that I think they were all very fond of her. And she had what three people on the front? Let me see, there was Minnie [Walker], there was a black girl, she helped with the salads and she worked on – she had her own little cash register. I thought that was always sort of strange.

00:10:17

SW: So she had her own cash register to herself?

00:10:20

Marcyne Jones: She [*Laughs*] – her own little box. The cash register didn’t – you rang it up and it didn’t go over \$3.00 you know so if you got \$9.00 then you had to do \$3.00 three times. I mean you know [*Laughs*] – and there was Miss [Mary] Nichols was part time and Miss [Madeline] Evers. Who was the larger lady that worked there ‘cause she had – ? Well there was another lady that worked there full time. And they had been with her for a long time. And Miss

Dena, but she – Miss Dena – she retired shortly after I took over. She was older. And so she didn't – I wasn't around her that long.

00:11:09

SW: Was Estelle [Curtis] there when you took over?

00:11:13

Marcyne Jones: The what?

00:11:14

SW: Her name is Estelle Curtis?

00:11:17

Marcyne Jones: Estelle, oh yeah, Estelle and Lucille [Miller] those two were the main ones and Estelle was in the back and Lucille [Miller] was in the front. Lucille Miller was – she also – well Cabell would stay during the week at the apartment and come out here [Ashland, Virginia] on the weekends. And Lucille [Miller] always cooked her breakfast for her. And then she'd go upstairs and then Lucille [Miller] would take her lunch to her and then I think she came back over and fixed her dinner. And so Lucille [Miller] was sort of the main one over the girls in the back more or less when Cabell wasn't there. And she and Estelle were very close and had a very close friendship. And then Lucille [Miller], well we had a little difference and she [*Laughs*], she retired.

00:12:08

SW: A little bit of personality difference?

00:12:09

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; *[Laughs]* she thought she was Cabell. *[Laughs]* You know but I mean I like Lucille [Miller]. She – she really was – she was a real nice person. She was – she was a good worker. And she knew it; she iced those cakes and just – well they all were amazing. All had – each had a job to do and they did it.

00:12:38

SW: Can you talk about some of the jobs and maybe for people who aren't familiar the difference between the front jobs and the back jobs?

00:12:44

Marcyne Jones: Well the front job is just waiting on customers more or less. And once in a while if you – you may have to make a sandwich if you need it – isn't that right?

00:12:55

Martha Jones: Uh-hm; you did.

00:12:57

Marcyne Jones: And well in the back you had – you had Lucille Miller and she iced the cakes and the Devil's Food cupcakes. You had Sarah Henderson there and she did cupcakes. Then there was Ella [Jackson] there when I first came there, but that's where Marie [Morris] ended up. And they did – they – let's see; which one did the pies? One of them did the pies and the other did the tarts. And also then they made the beaten biscuits and when you needed to do that – that wasn't an everyday occasion.

00:13:29

Martha Jones: Lucille [Miller] made cinnamon buns.

00:13:30

Marcyne Jones: And cinnamon buns and then they did the – between them they did the blueberry muffins and applesauce and then you'd go back to the next place is where the salad and bread was made. And then next to that was well – Thelma was the one working there then, but that was where the potato salad – you made potato salad and then beyond that was another – where Lucille Z. [Zimmerman] sat. No, Dorothy [Daniels] was there next to her and she made – made bread and then Lucille Z. [Zimmerman] made bread. And then you got to the very back and Estelle was there and we had different ones that made the cupcakes and Estelle did the cakes and the chicken salad and the deviled eggs. So they all just sort of – that's the way it was you know each little station it seemed to be all the way back.

00:14:24

SW: I know that the book referenced all the employees singing together in the kitchen and I'm wondering if that's something that you were – you experienced or if – does that still happen today?

00:14:35

Martha Jones: Just for a birthday. [*Laughs*]

00:14:37

Marcyne Jones: No; it didn't. I think it was – probably I got to think it was probably more when they were across the street [701 W. Grace Street] before they moved to where we are now.

The house – the place has been torn down but there was a smaller place and you sort of went down into a basement area. And I got a feeling that's where they probably sang. I – I don't remember that at all.

00:15:02

SW: And what year – was it in the '50s that – ?

00:15:05

Marcyne Jones: She moved over there when – the year Eisenhower was elected because they wanted to go nationwide because she was – she was Sarah Lee Kitchen 'til that point. And my husband worked on it with another lawyer in Richmond with the Sara Lee Company in Chicago fighting them for the name in Virginia. See, they couldn't sell in Virginia and they wanted to go nationwide when they had the election results [television ad]. That night – that's when you sat down and you watched 'til two o'clock in the morning [*Laughs*] waiting for the results from California. You don't do that anymore.

00:15:46

But and so they ended up selling – they had to change their name and the logo and so it was in '52 I think. She was over there in '52 so it was the early '50s she had moved over there.

00:16:02

SW: And she spent a while and there were several rounds of this back and forth between the Sara Lee Corporation and – ?

00:16:08

Marcyne Jones: Oh yeah; oh yeah. One night Hunter didn't sleep; he thought – he thought it was all settled and then she added on for the lawyer and him and he didn't want her to do that and she insisted. And he just thought you know nothing – it was over. And then see, then the election thing came and they had – you know they more or less had to do it, but she got what she wanted. She didn't really want to do it in a way but I think it was probably a little bit beyond you know when you get a nationwide thing like that it's sort of – . But she was smart enough to get her name – whatever you call it – copyrighted for Virginia. And it paid off for her. But I think she still liked the name Sarah Lee. *[Laughs]*

00:17:01

SW: That was a combination of her name and Miss Milton's name?

00:17:04

Marcyne Jones: Right.

00:17:04

SW: When you're referring to the election is – are you talking about the Sara Lee Company wanted to advertise?

00:17:11

Marcyne Jones: They wanted to go nationwide. See, I think this is about the first time it had been on really TV and you didn't get the results like we do now the minute they're – the polls close in the East they say, "Well so-and-so has won," you know. But I think people used to have

parties. I mean [*Laughs*] election parties and sit up and watch – . But I think it was '52 when – when Eisenhower was elected if I'm not mistaken. And that's when the switch made – before that happened during that year.

00:17:51

SW: And then she changed it to Sally Bell's Kitchen?

00:17:53

Marcyne Jones: Uh-hm. And changed the – changed the logo some too.

00:17:58

SW: Did anything else change or was it specifically name and logo?

00:18:02

Marcyne Jones: Just the name and logo. And nothing to do with recipes at all. That wasn't – I don't think that was the – the problem. I think it was just the name problem that you know existed between the two. They wanted to sell in Virginia and they really couldn't – they were overlapping and somebody – she found – somebody had told her, two or three people had told her they had – they were selling out in the Washington area and then somebody in the – from North Carolina I think came over to the Safeway store into Virginia through their – you know they had their trucks delivering in Virginia. And somebody happened to be down there traveling and they saw it and told her you know that they were selling in Virginia. And so she sued them.

[*Laughs*]

00:18:53

She's the one that started it and then they turned around and sued her back for some reason. I don't know the ins and outs but it did go back and forth. And Hunter went to Chicago a couple times I think to meet with, you know, meet with the different people. **[Laughs]** That's about it.

00:19:14

SW: Well you brought up the recipes and I wanted to talk about that. So the recipes that are used today are they still the recipes that had always – have always been used and – ?

00:19:25

Marcyne Jones: You talk to her about that.

00:19:25

Martha Jones: Yes; yes, they are uh-hm.

00:19:28

SW: Martha can you talk about some of the like – I think I read that there's still a hand – some of the recipes are – they're handwritten and there are still books of handwritten recipes?

00:19:37

Martha Jones: There's a little green vinyl book; uh-huh that's the same recipes in Cabell's handwriting that we refer to.

00:19:45

SW: Can you talk about – you don't have to tell me the recipes but what the recipes are for?

00:19:49

Martha Jones: Uh-huh; okay they're for the batter for the cakes, the cupcakes, the fillings for the sandwiches, the mayonnaise, the salad dressing, the potato salad. Uh, let's see the deviled eggs, the chicken salad. Let's see what else – just everything we make we refer to that book. But most – most of the cooks/bakers whatever they – they have it in their – their heads. But we were having a little problem with the Devil's Food batter and my husband, Scott [Jones], came in and he went over with Gladys [Walton] again and again the proper measurements and so on and – and got it back to where it used to be, so – .

00:20:33

SW: And how – can you – who is Gladys [Walton] ?

00:20:35

Martha Jones: Gladys [Walton], well she retired last year but she was the cupcake baker. And she made the Devil's Food batter and the yellow batter.

00:20:46

SW: I think maybe now is a good time, 'cause I have all these side notes but can you talk about – can you for – for people who aren't familiar with the boxed lunch can you walk us through what's in a boxed lunch?

00:20:57

Martha Jones: Yeah; certainly. You have your choice of sandwich. You have a cup of potato salad which is standard or you could have macaroni salad, tomato aspic or congeal fruit cup, cheese wafer, the cupcake – I think I've named all five pieces. And let's see; the cupcakes we have chocolate yellow-batter, chocolate Devil's Food batter, caramel, mocha, lemon, orange, strawberry, pineapple, crushed almond, plain and lemon filled. So we you know we have the two batters and all the icings are made from scratch. We cook or boil the chocolate icing as well as the caramel icing and let's see; the sandwiches, we have chicken salad. We boil our own chickens daily and they're picked and seasoned. And we have Smithfield ham that's sliced thin and with our homemade mayonnaise and lettuce on the roll. We have a roast beef and Swiss cheese which is fairly new and we have sliced turkey on whole wheat, tuna salad, which is fairly new, creamed cheese and olive, creamed cheese and nut, pimento cheese, egg salad, corned beef spread.

00:22:15

Marcyne Jones: Those are recipes.

00:22:17

Martha Jones: Uh-hm; those are original recipes.

00:22:20

SW: And the cupcakes they're the upside down; can you explain that?

00:22:22

Martha Jones: Upside down, they are, and I think from what I've learned is that Cabell did that because you get more icing that way.

00:22:31

Marcyne Jones: Yeah.

00:22:33

SW: That's pretty clever. I think people –

00:22:36

Marcyne Jones: And the boxes that we have to put them in she measured. They're made special for the half a dozen and dozen that they fit in. You get them in just right. *[Laughs]*

00:22:48

SW: Did she – did she measure the box for the box lunch as well do you know?

00:22:52

Marcyne Jones: No; we use that for the boxed lunches, no. It just happened to turn out.
[Laughs]

00:22:57

SW: And so everything is made – it's a family recipe; it's made from scratch and I've heard – and Nicole [Key Lang] has told me this actually – on Christmas Eve people line up around the block for potato salad. Can you talk about the – ?

00:23:13

Marcyne Jones: Well years ago [*Laughs*] we – of course we opened at eight-thirty [AM] then and it got to a point that at six o'clock they'd be at the door and we started using numbers. Well we used to have the hanging numbers and people would take the hanging number. And I finally – I don't know what happened, a light bulb went off and I thought – I went to the door and I started giving them numbers out and they – they took the thing and they said we'll take care of that.

00:23:40

That way they could take their number and go get coffee somewhere and come back. And this gentleman was there and he got number 33. No, what happened? No; he was there first but when he came –

00:23:53

Martha Jones: Mr. Bob?

00:23:54

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; when he came back he held the door open for – [*Laughs*] and by the time he got to the – they weren't – I wasn't giving out numbers then and by the time he got to the numbers his number was 33. He says, "I'll never do that again." He was being a gentleman and letting all these ladies in and they apparently knocked him down. [*Laughs*]

00:24:13

SW: Did he end up getting potato salad?

00:24:15

Marcyne Jones: Oh I guess; I don't know. *[Laughs]* And then another time this couple that we – I knew were there and then we had to wait for more potato salad to be made, so people were standing there waiting so I would – was filling the orders you know one-pound, two-pounds and everything. And this little old lady came in the door and she pushed everybody aside and came up to the counter and looked over at the potato salad and she looked up at me and she said, “Is that fresh?” This couple said they thought I was going to take the spoon and do this *[Gestures waving the spoon]* because we were – they were standing their waiting for it you know and it had just been made *[Laughs]*. We've laughed about that one, too. “Is that fresh?” *[Laughs]*

00:24:57

SW: I was reading in the book too and I don't know if you – either of you could talk about this but in the '50s everybody – the way that the country was eating sort of changed and there were some things that were taken off the menu or things that weren't made anymore for health conscious reasons. Is – is that – ?

00:25:13

Marcyne Jones: Well no; I don't think that was it. *[Laughs]*

00:25:15

Martha Jones: Oh did they have fried chicken ever or they had meat – they had meat croquettes?

00:25:19

Marcyne Jones: She – she never had that when I was there. Those – fried chicken was when they were across the street and to my knowledge she never had it over where we are now.

00:25:27

Martha Jones: Okay.

00:25:28

Marcyne Jones: The meat croquettes, I think she had but they had stopped doing that when I did but they were still doing that Kossuth cake which was a larger cupcake that you lemon filled and they cut the top off and Lucille would go and – Safeway was next door then – and get the whipped cream and they used – she'd whip the cream and they'd put whipped cream in and then put the top on – a little caramel icing and they did it in the chocolate and –

00:25:53

Martha Jones: And strawberry.

00:25:54

Marcyne Jones: – chocolate and strawberry and caramel, yellow batter. And they'd use some of the icing. I don't know how they did it. I think they put icing and then they'd put some whipped cream and then they would put that top back on. They were – they were –

00:26:06

Martha Jones: Yeah, they were wonderful.

00:26:07

Marcyne Jones: They were good. And we also – we did peach bread, little – Dorothy [Daniels] used to do that and what else?

00:26:16

Martha Jones: Fruit salad.

00:26:18

Marcyne Jones: We did the frozen fruit salad. I think Dorothy [Daniels] did that too didn't she? I'm not sure.

00:26:23

Martha Jones: Uh-hm; she did.

00:26:25

Marcyne Jones: Um there's something else though that we did out there that I can't remember. We did a pineapple upside down cake for a while. But I don't think we did that after I got there, the German chocolate cake that was good. But boy that – that's a – I made one at home and I said I'd never do it again. I dirtied every pan in the kitchen.

00:26:51

Martha Jones: Did she do a Boston crème?

00:26:54

Marcyne Jones: I think she did. And they had – they didn't do it after I took over. I mean you know when I was first started –

00:27:01

Martha Jones: Oh and years – I guess this is before your time, but fruitcakes, they did them –

00:27:05

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; they stopped that just about the time I – because well Cabell wasn't able. She would go through all – that was another thing like the nuts but then also the raisins. She'd sit – I can see her now. She'd go down [*Laughs*] you know – but she was very particular about everything being just so. And they'd start that early I think. I don't think – we didn't make fruitcakes after – well after I – . She had stopped it I think just about the time I started helping. See when I first started in only went in a couple times a week – maybe three times a week for I don't know how long. Stuart [Jones, Marcyne's son] had just started school and all the kids were in school. And um I think I was about forty– that's been fifty years. I think – and I think Sandra [Lynne, Marcyne's daughter] had – was at Mary Washington College her first year when I took – started work, when I started working more or less full time I guess.

00:28:06

And see, Cabell was still there when I first took over. She still came downstairs every day; she was there 'til about ten or eleven o'clock in the morning. She was always there early. She would get down there real – 'cause the girls came in early. And so I think that – she was there probably a year or two after I started you know coming in every day which was a big help to me 'cause I don't think I could have done it without her being in – you know being there to –

to help me because I could call her up and say where did so and so come from? You know well she could – just you know knew exactly, size everything. She wrote everything down in a – not only the recipes but all – had a notebook that had all the different boxes and sizes.

00:28:59

Martha Jones: It's still there.

00:29:02

Marcyne Jones: And everything where they – where you ordered from and how much you ordered. I mean she was very detailed.

00:29:09

Martha Jones: And measurements and –

00:29:12

Marcyne Jones: Very, very much so which was a big help. I don't know if I would have done that or not. [*Laughs*]

00:29:18

SW: I wonder how – how else, I mean it seems that the – the – every time I mention Sally Bell's Kitchen to someone they all have the same reaction. It's the – they have a special place for it. It's this thing that has remained constant in this culture and this area. And I'm wondering, when you started taking over full time were there any major changes – I don't want to say major changes,

but was there anything that you did differently that up until that point had been done a certain way or did you stick with – ?

00:29:48

Marcyne Jones: I – I stuck with it. I mean – I mean I – I didn't do any of the cooking down there. Well she didn't either. Cabell wasn't a cook believe it or not. *[Laughs]* That's hard to believe but I mean 'cause Lucille did all that for her. And then when she came out here it was her sister Mary [Nichols] who is not – neither one of them had ever married. Mary [Nichols] did the cooking. But no, I kept everything like you know like that. I mean, oh I ruined a good –. I had one time I hired a lady to do potato salad that we didn't keep her too long 'cause she decided she needed it to be a different way than what we wanted you know. And it – you just – you can't do that. I mean it's got to be done the way you want it for – you know 'cause that's what people like.

00:30:47

So we – we still stick with it don't we?

00:30:50

Martha Jones: Uh-hm.

00:30:51

SW: When did the boxed – you know we had talked about this earlier, the wholesale and she decided to scratch the wholesale side of it. Were – did the demand for boxed lunches increase gradually? Did you see – ?

00:31:04

Marcyne Jones: They didn't increase 'til after I took over.

00:31:06

SW: Can you talk about – can you talk about what happened?

00:31:08

Marcyne Jones: Well [*Laughs*] what I remember, Miss [Virginia] Mayfield that's who I was trying to think of – Miss [Madeline] Evers was a little lady. She was real nice and just a real good worker. Miss [Virginia] Mayfield was, she was – she was all right but she sort of tried to run the front you know. Anyway Miss [Madeline] Evers told me that Miss [Virginia] Mayfield turned down an order for twenty-five boxed lunches. See if they got ten boxed lunches or fifteen boxed lunches – fifteen boxed lunches that was really an ordeal. I mean it was a lot for them and if it was one order.

00:31:48

So I told Miss [Virginia] Mayfield – well Miss [Madeline] Evers didn't want me to let her know but anyway she said, "Miss Jones said I can get those lunches out for you." And so I told Cabell about it and I told Miss [Virginia] Mayfield, I said, "The next time somebody calls and wants an order for twenty-five lunches," I said, "Check with us – check with me first to see if we can do it." Of course she didn't like that; she didn't know where I got – she didn't know – . See, my husband being a CPA she didn't know if it was one of my friends had told me about it. And so – but we started taking more orders after I started there. And with Miss [Madeline] Evers, Miss [Madeline] Evers would – was really a real good worker and she said, "Miss Jones we can do this."

00:32:41

SW: And what's Miss Evers' first name?

00:32:42

Marcyne Jones: Her name was Madeline.

00:32:45

SW: So how did that by facilitating the larger orders how did that change the dynamic of the kitchen? Did you have to do things a different way in order to get all those boxes?

00:32:55

Marcyne Jones: Well the same people made the sandwiches. You just made more. And you had – and you'd leave a ticket back there for them when they came in – in the morning if they – if they had an order. And it just sort of – it – I mean I don't know exactly but I mean I just knew that we could do more than ten or fifteen you know a day.

00:33:18

Martha Jones: But that one time you had the 500 –

00:33:22

Marcyne Jones: Oh what happened there?

00:33:23

Martha Jones: Didn't you say that never again because you could – you had to cut other people. You couldn't take other people's orders.

00:33:28

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; I never did that again because that was too many. That was too much for us.

00:33:32

SW: And 500 in a day?

00:33:34

Marcyne Jones: Five hundred for one order.

00:33:36

SW: Who ordered 500 boxes – ?

00:33:38

Marcyne Jones: I don't know; I've forgotten. But it was – it was one order I think. And I just said it's – you know you couldn't – you couldn't supply to your regular customers. You just – it just sort of shut you down in a way just to do it. And probably be able to do it now better than we could when I was doing it; don't you think?

00:33:58

Martha Jones: Well the most I've had since I've been there was about 450, close to that and it was – it was pretty much the same thing. You couldn't take anyone's orders; they'd call and I'd say, "I'm sorry. I can't take your order." And people coming in across the counter, "you know I'm sorry you can't – . We have to save these cupcakes for the order." So I mean we can do – probably about 300 but over that it gets to be a little too much.

00:34:25

Marcyne Jones: If you – you know it's – you want to keep – you want to do – supply your regulars –

00:34:31

Martha Jones: Your regulars; yeah.

00:34:32

Marcyne Jones: – that come in and so really sometimes I think you hurt yourself more than you make off of a real big order you know. It's – it's not easy. It's sort of hard. And you have to find a place to keep them. I mean – . *[Laughs]*

00:34:48

Martha Jones: We're small and we just you know to put all the boxes, to pack, and –

00:34:52

Marcyne Jones: When they don't pick them up 'til later you know it's –

00:34:54

Martha Jones: Yes.

00:34:54

Marcyne Jones: – it's a problem. You either have to carry them upstairs to the walk-in which is not easy you know – . But I always felt that you should be able to supply your customers that

come in. I always thought that than – than over the phone for the holidays too when people came in. I always felt like you needed to have something there for them if they take the time to get in their car and come down.

00:35:21

SW: Marcyne maybe you could talk about just a few examples of regular customers that are pretty striking people that you remember through the years that always come in?

00:35:32

Marcyne Jones: Well we had one; we had Mrs. Davy who used to come in. She lived over there in the Prestwould Apartments. I don't know – are they still there?

00:35:38

Martha Jones: Yeah, they're still there, yeah.

00:35:40

Marcyne Jones: And she was really nice. I mean she'd come in even on the holidays and she'd just take what she could get [*Laughs*] and be happy you know. She was always – I think most of our customers were very nice and the ones that would get after you was – were the ones that maybe you saw once or twice a year. So you just – [*Laughs*] just lived with it.

00:36:05

SW: What was the neighborhood like when you started and how – I'm curious just to see how that area, that particular area because I know on Grace Street – ?

00:36:14

Marcyne Jones: Well we had Safeway stores next door. There was a small Safeway store where Logo Bookstore is. The office building next to us was a church. And across the street were some homes where they – well they put a hospital there now; it's VCU [Virginia Commonwealth University] Dorms. In that area we had a lot of homeless people would come and go through your dumpster and Safeway's dumpster and they'd sit out under the bushes on the sidewalk [Laughs] sometimes up against your building and you'd have to run them off. I mean you know it's been – it was a real education. [Laughs] And the – the older you know buildings across, they tore all those downs and then up there where – is Arby's still there?

00:37:11

Martha Jones: Yeah; there was a Lums.

00:37:12

Marcyne Jones: Oh Lums excuse me, yeah. Is – that's not – ?

00:37:16

Martha Jones: That's been long gone. That's now a Chipotle and Panera [Panera Bread].

00:37:20

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; well they've got more things in there now too. But – but Lums went in there after I – after I started working down there, and what else? Well see Panele's behind us over there on the corner of Broad and that little street there behind the church was the bicycle

place, Panele's and then where there isn't any building anymore was Avery's Beauty and Barber Supply, which Hunter and three other CPAs bought. Why they bought in the beauty parlor business I'll never know but anyway they did. And that burned down a couple times, so somebody said – one of them said what are y'all doing setting fires – ? **[Laughs]** That's another story.

00:38:05

Anyway and behind us we had Northside Electric, the office supply place, and you get farther up – I don't know what was up there on that corner. There was –

00:38:15

Martha Jones: It was Gray's Place like one of the first vegetarian restaurants in Richmond I remember that.

00:38:22

Marcyne Jones: There was like a night club on that corner and I just – up there and I just never really – .

00:38:26

Martha Jones: Night clubs and Habiba's and –

00:38:28

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; never paid any attention to those. I don't know if it's still a night club there on that corner or not where that light is when you come to Broad Street.

00:38:37

Martha Jones: You know it changes all the time.

00:38:39

Marcyne Jones: Going north –

00:38:39

Martha Jones: It might be the Nile now.

00:38:42

Marcyne Jones: Yeah. You know there used to be a night club there on the right when you came to the corner. But and then there was a food place right at the alley. I don't know if there is anything there or not. But I know there is a parking lot. So that all changed –

00:39:03

SW: How did that – did that have any impact on the business at all?

00:39:06

Marcyne Jones: Well it may have; it – it helped the neighborhood when all this stuff got torn down and VCU [Virginia Commonwealth University] started building on Broad Street. There was a big difference in the neighborhood because it was getting to be run down and because across from the church was an apartment building and it's still – it's still there on Gray's before you get to this on this – towards Belvedere. And I guess that's still there, too isn't it – the apartment building there on that corner up there where the mailbox is?

00:39:36

Martha Jones: Uh-hm; yes. It is.

00:39:38

Marcyne Jones: I don't know; do they still rent to people?

00:39:39

Martha Jones: I think they do. It looks a little run down and next to that is a Chinese restaurant but it – I mean I see kids going in and out.

00:39:46

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; that was a chicken place. That first opened as a chicken place.

00:39:51

Martha Jones: Right; Holly Farms.

00:39:52

Marcyne Jones: Is that what it was?

00:39:53

Martha Jones: Uh-hm.

00:39:54

Marcyne Jones: I went up there and got fried chicken one time and that's been a long time ago. I didn't know whether there was still a restaurant there or not. But no, all this to do with VCU and all that really has helped the neighborhood hasn't it?

00:40:11

Martha Jones: Uh-hm.

00:40:12

Marcyne Jones: Now across the alley, Northside moved. What's in there now?

00:40:18

Martha Jones: Where is that?

00:40:19

Marcyne Jones: Northside.

00:40:20

Martha Jones: Northside is – well there's an apartment building which was the office supply and I think next door to that is I don't – I don't think they have anything in there.

00:40:32

Marcyne Jones: I know somebody went in there and remember we had trouble with them in the lot, a lot. See, I don't go down there at all. I haven't been down there for a good while, so I'm not – not sure what's around there anymore. But then VCU went across the street and built what – dorms and apartments and stuff for their students at Belvidere and Broad on the other side of the street, so they were – they're coming up and then on down you get to the Siegel Center and all that. It's improved the neighborhood a whole – 'cause it was beginning to get a little run down.

00:41:12

SW: Did that start happening like in the '60s – '70s, like is there a timeframe where that started to – ?

00:41:18

Marcyne Jones: I think later than that don't you, Martha?

00:41:21

Martha Jones: Probably later – late, probably in the '80s.

00:41:26

Marcyne Jones: Was Safeway store there when you – ?

00:41:27

Martha Jones: Uh-um, no.

00:41:28

Marcyne Jones: We had to go – they had moved up those –

00:41:30

Martha Jones: It was Logo's. Safeway went up –

00:41:33

Marcyne Jones: Moved up okay. I don't know when they – when that changed. When did you start working there?

00:41:41

Martha Jones: I started working there in 1985.

00:41:45

SW: Can you talk about how that happened, how Martha started?

00:41:49

Martha Jones: I married her son [Scott Jones] [*Laughs*] and I – the business that I was in I was in insurance and I really didn't care for an office-type environment and I wanted to work in the Sally Bell's Kitchen.

00:42:07

Marcyne Jones: She'd like to get out. [*Laughs*]

00:42:10

Martha Jones: No; I wouldn't say that.

00:42:10

Marcyne Jones: She done a good job. I told her I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't had Martha. I just would have had to close up 'cause none of my girls – neither one – well Sandra [Lynne] was teaching school and Sarah [Byrne] just helped a little bit. She didn't want to work full time. And of course the boys all had jobs, so –

00:42:30

SW: Can you tell me the names of all of your kids? You have five kids?

00:42:34

Marcyne Jones: Five children; uh-huh. Well we have Sandra [Lynne], Steve [Jones], Sarah [Byrne], Scott [Jones], and Stuart [Jones] in that order.

00:42:44

Martha Jones: She has five S(es).

00:42:47

Marcyne Jones: Everybody often said – I don't know –

00:42:51

Martha Jones: I always said if she had a number six she would have called it stupid. [*Laughs*]

00:42:55

Marcyne Jones: No; I would have called it – no, he was asking about a name for Stuart [Jones]. And this one partner of his said well, first of all call it stupid – or stop, too. [*Laughs*]

00:43:06

Martha Jones: Yeah; stop or stupid. [*Laughs*]

00:43:10

SW: Marcyne when did you – when were you ready to kind of stop running everything and – and how did – I mean you said that Sandra and Sarah were – one of them was a teacher? I mean how did you decide – how did this all work out with Martha and – ? Do you remember that conversation?

00:43:27

Marcyne Jones: Well I don't think we ever had a conversation did we?

00:43:30

Martha Jones: I may have approached you. I think I did, you and Sarah [Byrne] because Sarah [Byrne] was working there and you were working there.

00:43:40

Marcyne Jones: Well I was ready; I mean I was getting older and I don't even know when I did stop. When did I stop? How old was I? I can't even remember.

00:43:49

Martha Jones: You were still coming in.

00:43:51

Marcyne Jones: I'd still come in more – more than I did. I haven't been down there. Well I'm not driving anymore but I stopped going down there I think a year or so before I stopped driving. I just didn't like driving down there on – coming from the – when I'd go get my hair fixed, I'd go down – go down and then come out that way. And I'd have to go down Franklin Street and I just got to a point that I preferred not to do it. But I can't remember when I stopped. I did – I did the book work here at home though. I still kept – I still did that but I didn't go in.

00:44:35

Martha Jones: Yeah; you did that up until about three years ago all the book work.

00:44:41

Marcyne Jones: When did I stop? When he went over to Byrd Park 'cause Caleb [Jones, Martha's son] came out and helped. When Caleb –

00:44:54

Martha Jones: Five years ago I believe.

00:44:56

Marcyne Jones: Okay; when Caleb [Jones, Martha & Scott's son] started doing things – and then we moved – I went and took the computer over to Byrd Park was when I actually I guess gave it up completely because we did the – we printed the checks there. But Caleb, her son, was coming out and doing the payroll at that point. He had been doing that what for about a year?

00:45:24

Martha Jones: I think so.

00:45:25

Marcyne Jones: Which was a help to me. [*Laughs*] He'd come up there and I'd be – he'd be sitting one way and I'd be sitting the other and I'd be doing all the hand-work and he'd be over there on the computer [*Laughs*]. Guess who got through first? He did. See, I liked the paper trail.
[*Laughs*]

00:45:45

SW: It's safer; it's always there. You can count on it.

00:45:47

Marcyne Jones: I'm a paper – I'm a paper trail person. *[Laughs]*

00:45:53

SW: Before we talk about Martha coming in, in 1985 can you just talk about were there still women who worked in the kitchen or in the front rather, both, who had been working from the very beginning? Were they still there when you left? Was – was there anyone left?

00:46:13

Marcyne Jones: Well Estelle was still living but I think she – her health had gotten bad and her daughter came, Dazarie [Thompson] and had been there for a good number of years. And then her grandson who is still working there; Estelle and Lucille [Miller] were originals and they stayed there for a long time, Estelle until she – you know her health got bad.

00:46:35

Martha Jones: Yeah; she worked there sixty years.

00:46:39

Marcyne Jones: And Miss [Madeline] Evers worked there as long as she could and then her health – . She was there; she was original when I came there. Lucille [Miller], Estelle, who else on the front; Miss [Virginia] Mayfield, she – she ended up having – retiring.

00:46:58

Martha Jones: Ann Mulfinger.

00:47:00

Marcyne Jones: Ann Mulfinger, well I hired Ann Mulfinger shortly. I think she is one that I did hire after I came there. But of Cabell when she was there they were there and then Sarah Henderson was another one that stayed there.

00:47:16

Martha Jones: Rose came, Rose Flippen.

00:47:19

Marcyne Jones: Rose Flippen came afterwards. She wasn't – she – I don't think she knew Cabell. She was one of the later ones.

00:47:29

SW: How did you know who to hire when you had to hire people?

00:47:32

Marcyne Jones: Oh you [*Laughs*] – it's – I think I had – I think I would call the unemployment people at that time. I think that's what you did and they would send people over that were interested in that type of work and you just took a chance. I mean that's what I did. I didn't know anything about [*Laughs*] – I didn't know anything about business or anything else. I mean you just sort of – you sort of get a sense I think of whether it's going to work or not. And you hire people with the idea that you know they may not like it and you may not you know – it may not work out for you either, so – . You give them – you know you have the option.

00:48:21

SW: And what was – what's Dazarie's last name?

00:48:24

Marcyne Jones: Thompson.

00:48:25

Martha Jones: Thompson.

00:48:26

SW: And then her son is Billy, Billy Thompson?

00:48:28

Marcyne Jones: Billy Thompson.

00:48:28

SW: And Billy is still there today right?

00:48:31

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; one of the best – probably one of the best employees she's got.

00:48:36

Martha Jones: Absolutely; yeah.

00:48:37

Marcyne Jones: Real good.

00:48:37

SW: Is the only man who works in the kitchen?

00:48:41

Marcyne Jones: Uh-hm.

00:48:43

SW: I'm wondering because this is all – this project is all about women and – and food, I mean was the idea to keep mostly women in the kitchen or did that not really matter?

00:48:51

Marcyne Jones: It didn't matter. It didn't matter.

00:48:54

SW: It just happened that way?

00:48:54

Marcyne Jones: We had – we had another boy that – remember, what was his name that – ?

00:48:59

Martha Jones: Kenny.

00:49:01

Marcyne Jones: Kenny that worked for us and he did good. I mean no; that – I didn't object to having males. Well we had a male – for – I had Walter for a long time that cleaned, that would come and do the cleaning before he went to his regular job. You know he'd wash you know – do the floors and whatever and bring down the flour and stuff for the ladies and fill – you know fill up the bins. You have to have somebody like that.

00:49:27

Martha Jones: Heavy – heavy lifting.

00:49:29

Marcyne Jones: Heavy stuff. And you always had – you usually had a man for that.

00:49:34

Martha Jones: Because you know the bags of flour are fifty pounds and salt is eighty pounds and –

00:49:39

SW: And what's Walter's last name?

00:49:40

Marcyne Jones: Oh Walter, I don't – I have forgotten it's been so long since I had – . You never knew Walter I don't think.

00:49:50

SW: So when you took over, now are you from the area Martha? Did you grow up here?

00:49:54

Martha Jones: No; I grew up in Mechanicsville, Virginia.

00:49:57

SW: Okay; and when you took over where there still – I mean how many people did – from when Marcyne was running Sally Bell's did everyone just stay where they were in terms of – ?

00:50:06

Martha Jones: They stayed where they were. And you know if for either health reasons or for whatever you know – you know they retired.

00:50:15

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; but you still keep approximately the same amount of people regardless of whether they're the same people or not. You have to fill –

00:50:24

SW: Can you talk about I mean – there are certain people that do certain things; can you kind of talk a little bit more about that in terms of – ?

00:50:32

Marcyne Jones: Well I think she's better to –

00:50:35

Martha Jones: Yeah; well the kitchen is laid out – that's one thing that Cabell originated that the first part of it – well, we have the storefront and then the first part of the kitchen which is where the sandwiches are made and the cupcakes are iced and the icings are made and then there's the middle or back kitchen which is where the bread and the chicken salad and the things are baked back there, and *[Laughs]* –

00:51:06

Marcyne Jones: They're still all in the same – same spot, like I –

00:51:08

Martha Jones: Yeah; they're in their same spots but it's the – it's the way it's laid out, if the ladies on the front need something for their boxes or whatever you know they know which area to go, which we need more – is closer, you know to the – to the storefront.

00:51:23

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; like the sandwiches and – and then they make the deviled eggs in the back and they put them on a tray and they bring them to the front. But if you don't have any in the front and you need them then you have to walk to the back and see if you can get one *[Laughs]* and see if she's in the process of fixing them. So I mean that's the way it worked. But the baking and stuff was more in the middle to the back because that's not as – the bread, they have to wait until that comes to the front as a rule. I mean you can't do much; they can come back and get a tart possibly if they wanted to or a pie. But that was middle, that's right after the cupcakes.

00:52:02

The only thing way back is they made the chicken salad and the eggs at the very back table. Potato salad was in the middle. And they always brought that up as a rule. You didn't go back – unless you were empty and you needed another bowl you might go back and pick it up and bring it out if there's one ready for it but normally they would bring it up.

00:52:27

Martha Jones: But I do think they're all very territorial about their – their spots and I think that when they come in – in the morning and they go to their – their place they just – it's like their second home.

00:52:40

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; I think a lot of them – I think a lot of them – I think a lot of them would enjoy coming to work in a way. I mean you know like she says it's their second home, and I think a lot of them – I believe it's right to say it – or not, but I think a lot of people probably – may not have hired some of these ladies that we had. I always referred to them as older ladies because I felt like they –

00:53:05

Martha Jones: They're loyal; they're reliable. They take pride in their work.

00:53:08

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; they took pride in their work. They really did. And um you couldn't really ask a whole lot more from them I don't think. I think most of them really did very well.

00:53:24

SW: There was a lot of referencing about how maternal Cabell was with her employees and it seems like that's something that it's more of a family – it seems more of a family. Do you feel like that's true – that the employees are – have sort of become a family in a way?

00:53:40

Marcyne Jones: I think maybe they might have been years ago. I don't know whether it is now or not as much, do you?

00:53:47

Martha Jones: I don't –

00:53:48

Marcyne Jones: Because I don't know the ladies down there now. I know – well see Desiree is not able to work either. Billy is really the only one now that I am familiar with as much.

00:53:59

SW: Did you – when you were there starting in the '60s did you feel like it was a family or did it not feel so much that way?

00:54:07

Marcyne Jones: Well I think the whole business sort of felt family. I mean you had Lucille there who was very much you know – . Sally Bell's was her life. She and Estelle both, I mean I don't think they wanted to be anyplace else but there. And I think a lot of the girls there felt that

way when I first got there. They were – they were very loyal to Cabell there. I don't know what else to say. *[Laughs]*

00:54:40

Martha Jones: That's good what you said.

00:54:42

SW: Was there – I mean in terms of like even – we were talking about Estelle and Lucille, would they ever come to functions outside of work or was that just solely a work environment relationship?

00:54:53

Marcyne Jones: No; Lucille [Miller] came to *[Laughs]* whose wedding? I think it was Sarah's [Byrne] and she and Steve [Jones] were dancing up a storm. *[Laughs]* She and – she and Estelle came out to the wedding and some of them came out to Anne's [Byrne] wedding. That's my granddaughter, Sarah's [Byrne] daughter. She worked there for a while after she got out of college and when she – wasn't it Anne [Byrne] that they came to – ? Yeah; no they – they come – I mean I'd have – Lucille and Estelle came out to several different things I think I had them come out – would invite them out.

00:55:36

One time I brought them out to clean and I said never again. *[Laughs]* I went upstairs and I sat down and two minutes later they were at the back cleaning and had taken the pictures off. I mean *[Laughs]* I hadn't even gotten my breath yet, you know and they were – . They were good.

00:55:55

Martha Jones: You would do – you did your annual New Year's Day party and they would come out and help.

00:56:01

Marcyne Jones: Oh yeah; yeah.

00:56:02

Martha Jones: And I think it was an honor for the ones that were asked to help with the New Year's Day party, and yeah for Sarah Henderson and who else came out? Lucille Foster –

00:56:15

Marcyne Jones: Lucille Foster came out one time with Sarah.

00:56:18

Martha Jones: And they put on their – their crispest whitest you know uniform and just you know I think they were you know around the other workers they're like yeah, "I got to go out."

00:56:31

Marcyne Jones: But somebody was coming by to interview Marie [Morris] – and she got dressed up like she was going to church [*Laughs*] when she came to work. Remember that?

00:56:43

Martha Jones: Uh-hm.

00:56:45

Marcyne Jones: Oh Marie [Morris], poor thing –

00:56:47

SW: Yeah; who is Marie [Morris]?

00:56:48

Marcyne Jones: She made – she made – well she did Sally Lunn bread and then she did the tarts and everything. She worked there for a while. She – she was a real good employee. She was just as sweet and nice as she could be.

00:57:05

SW: So is Billy the longest-standing employee right now?

00:57:10

Martha Jones: I think Billy is.

00:57:14

SW: And how long has he been at Sally Bell's?

00:57:16

Marcyne Jones: He's been there for a good – I don't know; when did he start?

00:57:19

Martha Jones: I think he came – I believe maybe early '90s.

00:57:25

Marcyne Jones: Was Estelle there when you – ?

00:57:25

Martha Jones: Estelle was there.

00:57:29

Marcyne Jones: I think he came in when Estelle's health got bad wasn't it – didn't he?

00:57:34

Martha Jones: Uh-hm. And then he worked with his mother. They worked at the same table.

And he still is at that table.

00:57:40

Marcyne Jones: Yeah, still there.

00:57:40

SW: What table is that? What does he do?

00:57:43

Martha Jones: Yeah; Billy – Billy does so much.

00:57:46

Marcyne Jones: He makes the mayonnaise. They make the chicken salad. They do the deviled eggs and also – and she also used to do the layered cake and bake the layered cakes, not icing them but bake them. And what else?

00:58:00

Martha Jones: Well Billy does that as well as make the cupcakes and he – he takes care of the building.

00:58:07

Marcyne Jones: Does he do cupcakes?

00:58:09

Martha Jones: He does cupcakes. He replaced Gladys [Walton].

00:58:14

Marcyne Jones: What happened to her?

00:58:15

Martha Jones: Her health.

00:58:19

Marcyne Jones: See Gladys came more or less about the time I stopped. See, I don't know – I don't know the girls down there as much.

00:58:33

SW: Martha when you started working at Sally Bell's Kitchen was it sort of – did you kind of help Martha out the way that Cabell helped you out?

00:58:43

Marcyne Jones: *[Laughs]*

00:58:43

Martha Jones: She did; yeah. She did. And I know things would come up especially with an employee, I didn't know quite how to handle and you know Marcyne would talk me through it and you know number one advice is just take them upstairs and talk to them in private and you know – . And so 'cause we've had some –

00:59:07

Marcyne Jones: Oh yeah; you get – it's not all fun and games. I mean it's like anyplace else where you get people you know. They – one person doesn't like another one you know and Lucille [Miller] ends up talking about her – as good as she was she would add the iron handle of all the employees, particularly in the back. Well yeah I guess in the back and not the front, and one time I'll never forget; it was Christmas and everybody wanted potato salad. And we didn't make it like we did – as much as we do now. And when they did the celery they washed it of course and then they would strip it. And then Sarah Henderson used to have – cut celery after she got through with her cupcakes. She'd cut celery. And Lucille Miller got mad with Thelma and wouldn't let the other girls cut celery. *[Laughs]* I'll never forget that. I finally had to you know do something; it – I mean it was awful 'cause you know she needed the celery to make the salad for the people in the front and that's how you know sometimes they could be that way. But it didn't happen that often and then other times they – normally they were usually very, very nice. They were always *[Laughs]* – I guess they were afraid of me, I don't know. *[Laughs]* But I sort of left it that way too.

01:00:39

SW: What was it like when you [Martha] started working in – at Sally Bell's and I'm just curious as to how you know the challenges or changes you've seen or the similarities since you started?

01:00:51

Martha Jones: Oh the changes and the competition, also I got blank; I'm sorry – it's there's so much competition out there, the change in – in diets and the change in – well the economy. We've struggled with that. People you know – businesses would order their lunches and you know they've cut back and a lot of our clients, they're out in the West End and – and they don't want to make the trip down and –

01:01:27

Marcyne Jones: It's –

01:01:28

Martha Jones: There are a lot of factors.

01:01:30

Marcyne Jones: A combination of stuff. I mean I think the economy probably hurt you the best because you can't really charge as much as you'd like because what comes in the back door keeps going up every time the price – the gas would go up. Their prices went up. And it's hard to turn around and change your prices to the consumer.

01:01:52

Martha Jones: Uh-hm; now every delivery has a fuel surcharge.

01:01:55

Marcyne Jones: And even when the gas goes down I don't think they take off that charge.

01:01:59

Martha Jones: No.

01:02:01

Marcyne Jones: See that's the way the system works. I mean once something is usually – you know they don't go back. Who would have thought we would have been paying over \$2.00 – almost \$3.00 for a loaf of bread? You think it will ever go back to under \$1.00? Uh-uh, that's – that's the way it works but it's hard – I think in the food business it's hard on people in restaurants and everything that the margin of making money is not that great in the first place, so it does – it does hit you. And what you can pay your employees is not as much as you'd like sometimes to justify you know everything. So it's – it's hard.

01:02:53

SW: When you talk about competition is it hard also because you know it's – you drive by a town and you just see a bunch of McDonalds and kind of manufactured food and what Sally Bell's is – is the complete opposite of that? So does it become hard to hold onto you know this – this way of feeding people because of that as well?

01:03:14

Martha Jones: I think that's part of it.

01:03:17

Marcyne Jones: That is part – you think about; you don't want to change what you do and you – you could probably do better if you brought in stuff that –

01:03:27

Martha Jones: That's already –

01:03:29

Marcyne Jones: – like your icing already made up and get a tub or a bucket of it and –

01:03:35

Martha Jones: But ours is just so labor-intensive and that's why we have so many employees and the ingredients –

01:03:42

Marcyne Jones: It's more expensive to do. These other places come in and I mean – well a bag of potato chips and a cookie with a lunch and still charge about what we charge. So it –

01:03:57

Martha Jones: But I think Richmond is becoming more of a food town, foodie town, where I think they are trying – a lot of places are trying to go back to the basics. You know I'm not sure if there are that many in boxed lunches but yeah, Richmond has really grown in the culinary scene.

01:04:14

Marcyne Jones: There's some good places to eat in Richmond.

01:04:16

Martha Jones: Excellent places; yeah.

01:04:18

SW: In terms of Sally Bell's, I mean and I've interviewed other women in the Richmond area who are involved in the industry somehow, maybe they're a chef or they run restaurants or they're an oyster shucker, but everyone has said the same thing about Sally Bell's – it holds a special place for them. And I wonder the challenges of continuing to have that be that place for people; how – what goes into that? How do you keep doing that after all this time?

01:04:44

Marcyne Jones: It's not easy. [*Laughs*] It's not; I mean 'cause we – you know we – we – well we – what was the one thing that we did do? We did add macaroni salad but we make that. It was what I made at home and um –

01:05:03

SW: So you added the macaroni salad while you were – ?

01:05:07

Marcyne Jones: Uh-hm, uh-hm. One Sunday we were out here and I had macaroni. It was in the summertime I think 'cause that's when I made it and somebody said, "You ought to have this

at Sally Bell's." *[Laughs]* So we'd do it sort of like potato salad, so you know it's – it's – it's good.

01:05:28

SW: Do you think that the fact that this business has stayed within the family for all these years has contributed to what Sally Bell's is as well and what it means to people?

01:05:42

Marcyne Jones: What it means to people? I don't know about that but I mean it's sort of – in our family I think it sort of means something you know.

01:05:54

Martha Jones: I think Richmond is a nostalgic town and we've lost the Thalhimer's, the Miller & Rhoads, the Bill's Barbeque and it's one place where people you know – I had a lady come in yesterday and she had grew up in Richmond on West Avenue, but she's in Montana, but she came by yesterday and she's like it's so nice to come in the same plates are on the wall, you know it's – it just hasn't changed a bit. And you know she mentioned too the department stores and so on and she goes it's just like a – it's a comfort for her that you know her parents went there and you know and her grandparents went there.

01:06:33

Marcyne Jones: So we used to get people that would – I remember one time a girl called up and I think it was Washington State and placed an order 'cause she was coming – well she lived

– had been you know born in Richmond and coming back for a visit and came by Sally Bell's on her way – way home. **[Laughs]** I mean we've had a lot of people do that. And they you know were born and raised in – you know moved away but they – you know they always want to come back. A lot of them will come back before they even get to where they're supposed to be going, come by.

01:07:07

Martha Jones: They like the boxed lunch for the airplane flight.

01:07:14

SW: Do you get a lot of jealous passengers?

01:07:17

Martha Jones: Yeah, perhaps.

01:07:20

Marcyne Jones: Yeah.

01:07:21

SW: How has and I know this is kind of a big question but just from your – both of your experiences here with Sally Bell's how have you watched Richmond change over the years in terms of that neighborhood or the way – I don't know – ?

01:07:33

Marcyne Jones: Our neighborhood I think has improved. I don't know about you know other places in Richmond but I think with VCU growing so much, with – not the president now but the president before him, they did a lot of expanding. And I think it's improved our neighborhood don't you?

01:07:57

Martha Jones: Uh-hm; it's not as – it did – at one point it was a little shady, those two blocks, yeah.

01:08:04

Marcyne Jones: It really was.

01:08:05

Martha Jones: So it is much better.

01:08:08

Marcyne Jones: 'Cause once they put that dorm across the street I guess it was the first thing that was close to us. And then they – VCU police started patrolling a little bit more on that block, which is good, you know to have that.

01:08:27

Martha Jones: I do feel now that with all the building and the construction with VCU and you know the – the new food places, the chains, I feel that we are kind of a – we're an oddity there now. But we are – we're midtown which is good. We have our own parking lot, which is a plus.

01:08:47

SW: Do you get a lot of college students coming in?

01:08:50

Martha Jones: We get a few, not that many. I think they're more into the you know –

01:08:55

Marcyne Jones: The other types of food.

01:08:57

Martha Jones: – yeah, pizza and beer and whatever and – .

01:09:04

Marcyne Jones: I always said they probably couldn't afford it either.

01:09:05

Martha Jones: Yeah, but yeah we get a few.

01:09:08

Marcyne Jones: Maybe once in a while you'll get a few but it's – it's not – you couldn't – you wouldn't be able to stay in – you wouldn't stay in business just relying on college students.

01:09:17

Martha Jones: They come in for the cupcakes, yeah, every now – every now and then for a boxed lunch. Since they did put housing on Broad Street they have to cross by us, our area, so we do get more. But we get more of the administration and faculty than the students.

01:09:35

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; the students you don't get as much 'cause there's too many fast-food, other stuff that they like to – like to do.

01:09:41

Martha Jones: Ramen Noodles. [*Laughs*]

01:09:43

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; in their room. [*Laughs*]

01:09:44

Martha Jones: Yeah.

01:09:46

SW: I just have two more questions and I really mean that and in terms of – because this – I've mentioned it a couple times that this women – this project is all about women and food, what

kind of impact do you think Sally Bell's has had on women in – the women who have worked – and we've mentioned – you talked about in the beginning how it was rare for a woman to do such a thing at the time to start a business like this and I'm just wondering – and you've also mentioned hiring some of the older women who – you know they may not be able to find employment – .

01:10:19

Marcyne Jones: What impact – what was the question?

01:10:21

SW: In terms of just – just the role of women in Sally Bell's. I know that Billy is there and we've talked about it's not specifically just for women but just it is – there's been so many women come and go through that place but they've stayed – many women have stayed for years and I'm just – I'm just interested in the impact that this place has had in terms of the women in order to give women a certain role or you know in terms of you know 1920 for opening a business until now.

01:10:50

Marcyne Jones: Well I don't know exactly how to answer that one. Nineteen twenty-four and twenty-five is completely different from now of course. I just – I don't – I just don't know how to answer that. I don't know if it's had that much impact on women now; do you think so?

01:11:16

Martha Jones: Well I'm not sure if this is the right way to answer the question –

01:11:23

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; I'm thinking – if you're talking about the people that worked for us I don't know. Right now I mean I don't know the ones working down there now but I feel like they're just working because they've got a job. I don't feel like they – I don't – well maybe they have the same feeling of the ones when I was working there you know like Marie and Estelle and all of them. But you have Virginia and you have the different ones that feel the same way. But um I don't know. I think you have – when you employ somebody you have to get somebody that likes to be around food or you, you know there's just no getting around it. And they have to be able to do what you want them to do and not what they want to do because [*Laughs*] they can ruin your business, like I said about that one girl. It's funny how you –

01:12:28

Martha Jones: I think a lot of people's first impression or – of Sally Bell's is the box, the silhouette of the lady and just that it has been a women's business for years and years and the employees and help me out here – .

01:12:48

Marcyne Jones: I can't; I don't – I don't know. I don't quite understand it what she's –

01:12:53

Martha Jones: I guess it's a throwback to ladies being in the kitchen.

01:12:59

Marcyne Jones: I don't know if she started out for it to be an all-woman thing. I think you just happened that way because they did – they liked – you know that's – now men like to cook. If you think about chefs, all your good chefs are men. But they work in more or less like hotels and things. They don't open businesses like Sally Bell's is a real –

01:13:23

Martha Jones: But it's detailed work and I think that's a feminine asset.

01:13:29

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; I think you do have some men that have bakeries.

01:13:36

Martha Jones: John Jacque.

01:13:36

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; is he still in business?

01:13:39

Martha Jones: He's still in business.

01:13:40

Marcyne Jones: Still at Carytown?

01:13:41

Martha Jones: Uh-hm.

01:13:43

Marcyne Jones: How about that.

01:13:44

SW: Do you intend to keep Sally Bell's in the family so when you're – when you – the day comes that you decide that you're ready to stop working there Martha, is it going to stay in the family do you think?

01:13:55

Martha Jones: Oh we'd love for it to. We'd love for it to but we just don't know the next generation who – who wants to come forward. Maybe somebody will – whoever, Caleb [Jones] or whoever marries or I don't know. **[Laughs]** You just don't know.

01:14:07

Marcyne Jones: You don't know. I mean right now I don't know of anybody in the family that's ready to –

01:14:12

Martha Jones: Yeah.

01:14:13

Marcyne Jones: – or we're ready for them to take over either. **[Laughs]**

01:14:17

Martha Jones: And my daughter [Sarah Natalie Jones] works at the other location but she wants to try something else. And I think it's a good thing. I want her to test other waters and you know –

01:14:28

Marcyne Jones: Yeah; I think so, too 'cause it's not easy but – .

01:14:37

SW: Well I've asked you both a lot of questions this morning and afternoon. Is there anything else that you want to add about Sally Bell's or about the family that you think is important for this particular story?

01:14:49

Marcyne Jones: I don't think so. [*Laughs*] I think we've covered right much. I just you know – like you said, passing it down that's where you want it to stay but – 'cause I don't think you – if you sold it somebody say that it would retain what you do, because I feel that the new people walk in and they will have their ways of wanting to do things. And I think that's sort of life in a way that I could understand. But I think maybe if you sold it to somebody and went back a year later and bought potato salad I bet you two cents it wouldn't taste the same. It might but I think – you know I just – I just think that's human nature. And it's something that you can't control 'cause they used to have people come in and say, “Why don't you open up a – another place out in the West End?” And you know well I didn't want to in the first place, but in the second place

you have no control over a franchise, what's happening in the other place and so your name is on there. I mean that was my way of looking at it.

01:16:07

Martha Jones: Yeah.

01:16:12

Marcyne Jones: But that's about it for me. [*Laughs*]

01:16:16

SW: Do you have anything else you want – ?

01:16:18

Martha Jones: I think she said it all right there. Yeah.

01:16:19

SW: All right. Well thank you very much.

01:16:21

Martha Jones: You're welcome.