

Jane Ann Jarvis
Old Brick Pit Barbecue – Chamblee, GA

Dates: November 22, 2010 & November 29, 2010
Location: Old Brick Pit Barbecue – Chamblee, GA
Interviewer: Ashley Hall, Southern Foodways Alliance
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
Length: 10 minutes & 38 minutes
Project: Southern BBQ Trail - Georgia

[Begin Jane Ann Jarvis – Part 1]

00:00:01

Ashley Hall: This is Ashley Hall with the Southern Foodways Alliance. It's November 22, 2010. I'm at Old Brick Pit Barbecue in Atlanta, Georgia, or is it Chamblee, Georgia?

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Jane Ann Jarvis: Chamblee, Georgia.

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AH: Just outside of Atlanta. I'm here with Jane Ann; Jane Ann if you could give me your full name and occupation for the record, please?

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JAJ: Jane Ann Jarvis, owner and operator of Old Brick Pit Barbecue.

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AH: And what is your date of birth?

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JAJ: October 3, 1953.

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AH: So you're the owner and operator; could you give us a--a little history of--of the barbecue restaurant?

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JAJ: It was started in 1976 by Bob Newton, who was a Georgia Tech Engineer Graduate and he designed a pit with the air flow that he thought was optimal for the best barbecue pork. And he also believed in cooking fresh hams whereas most restaurants, barbecue restaurants do butts. He--he--we do hams, and he started the business and he died about 11 years ago. And my brother then took it over, and then I came in about four years ago.

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AH: And what can you tell us about Bob and--and why he decided to open a barbecue restaurant?

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JAJ: It was--it's from what I understand just a dream that he had of doing this and he loved every minute of it. He--I mean people come in all the time; everybody that comes in was--oh I was one of Bob's best friends. [*Laughs*] And he would sit here and talk to the customers forever, and, you know, he made all of them feel special. I mean I--every day I'm amazed at how many people—"Oh, Bob and I were really close." "And I have the original bottle of barbecue sauce that he gave me. Would you mind refilling it? I don't want to get rid of the bottle." And so he was just you know a real special guy.

00:01:58

AH: Did you know him?

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JAJ: No; I didn't but my brother did.

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AH: Do you--have you seen pictures of him?

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JAJ: Yeah; we have a few newspaper articles that have a picture of him and his wife.

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AH: Can you describe what he looked like?

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JAJ: Oh kind of skinny, medium height, brownish hair; nice looking guy.

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AH: And your brother had a relationship with him? Is that how your family got involved?

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JAJ: Yes; he got to know Bob just because he was in the restaurant business, too. And he stopped here one day because my brother really believes in eating at individual owners' restaurants, not franchise type things. And he came in here and he was another person who struck up a relationship with Bob and loved the business because he had worked for Chick-Fil-A. He-- he knew the food business, and so when Bob told him that he was sick and not going to be around, Steve, you know, stayed with it and took it over.

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AH: And what is your brother's name?

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JAJ: Steve Garner.

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AH: And what--what time period was this when he started to work on taking it over?

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JAJ: It was around 2000.

00:03:14

AH: And what inspired your brother to want to be a part of it?

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JAJ: He really wanted to get out of the franchise business and into his own small owner/operator business.

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AH: And did he--can--do you remember when he took it over? What--did his life change?

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JAJ: It--it changed somewhat [*Laughs*] in that you know he--he could relax a little more. He didn't have to live up to you know Chick-Fil-A's standards, and I mean there's a lot of pressure put on anybody in any franchise as far as the requirements. And--and he really--even though owned--when you own your own business you put in a lot more hours it seems like; it's more satisfying.

00:04:04

AH: And so what was your brother doing for Chick-Fil-A when he changed over to barbecue?

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JAJ: He had the Lenox Square Store and the Emory Chick-Fil-A.

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AH: So he owned franchises?

00:04:17

JAJ: Uh-hm.

00:04:17

AH: And did you--is your family from Atlanta?

00:04:20

JAJ: No; originally from Orlando, Florida. But we moved up here back when I was in elementary school, so basically from Atlanta. [*Laughs*]

00:04:31

AH: And did you grow up eating barbecue?

00:04:32

JAJ: Not really. [*Laughs*] We'd have, you know--we'd have the Fourth of July family reunion and do cookouts there, but we didn't eat a whole lot of barbecue.

00:04:44

AH: When did you start coming around here; what was the transition like as far as you getting involved?

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JAJ: I think I was working for a printing company, and we closed up, and I saw the beauty of the business as far as you know a limited menu, no waste; we use everything. It was just--Bob just did a great job in forming a business that was really smart, as far as I'm concerned. And so when my brother needed some help I came on over.

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AH: And when was that?

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JAJ: That was about three and a half, four years ago.

00:05:28

AH: So 2006--2007?

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JAJ: Yeah; somewhere in the 2006--2007--.

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AH: Describe for us what you mean about Bob setting up a business that was really efficient and waste-free.

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JAJ: Well the menu is limited to pork and chicken. And then we use the pork and the chicken in the stew. And you know we have beans and slaw, potato chips, but--but basically everything, you know, we don't buy a lot of different products. We have a limited menu and what's left over from that day gets frozen and goes in the stew. As far as, you know--we don't use any meat from one day to the next. It's immediately frozen so that it can be used in the stew and so we have very little waste, other than what, you know, the customers don't eat--that goes in the trash can [*Laughs*]; you know that's basically--basically it. The--I mean, we have the slaw down to where we know exactly how much to make, and we make that much. And if we have a really busy day we run back and get some more but we just--you know we don't have a lot of waste. I know I keep repeating myself but--. [*Laughs*]

00:06:50

AH: No; that's great.

00:06:51

JAJ: But you know I think it's pretty--pretty interesting to--to be able to not have to throw out a lot of stuff and buy a lot of different things. It's just a very smooth operation.

00:07:02

AH: So describe your menu for us.

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JAJ: We basically have chopped pork, half a chicken, ribs; there's a combo plate. We have slaw, baked beans, potato chips, potato salad, pickles, and--and drinks. And that's basically it--and Brunswick stew. We're known for our Brunswick stew. I shouldn't leave that out.

00:07:32

AH: And how--do you know how, if—if at all, the menu has changed through the years?

00:07:37

JAJ: It hasn't. This is the original menu and other than the baked beans. That--that changed when I came in. But Bob didn't put a lot into his baked beans [*Laughs*] so now we have more of a homemade baked bean. But other than that it's--I mean, people come in and say, "I'm so glad that you've kept it like Bob had it and that you didn't change." You know we were fortunate that we could get all the recipes and--and keep it the same but it's--it hasn't changed.

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AH: How did you change the beans?

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JAJ: Well [*Laughs*] I hate to say it but they were just basically a can of beans warmed up when I came [*Laughs*] in because that was just kind of an afterthought, I guess, for Bob. But my family had a--a baked bean recipe that we've used for years at the family reunions and so that's what we serve now.

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AH: And how is it--how is it different?

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JAJ: It's got bacon, onions, brown sugar, a little Liquid Smoke, Worcestershire, just you know a--a good flavorful baked bean.

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AH: And how long does it take you to--to make a--a batch?

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JAJ: About 30 minutes, and then it has to cook for an hour and a half.

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AH: Let--let's go back to Bob's design of the kitchen. You were showing me around earlier; could you describe for us how the pit is--is unique?

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JAJ: Bob had the idea that if you had the fire at one end and there was a certain length 13-feet or whatever it is from the fire to the--where the meat is making a turn--he had it drafted out as an Engineer, so it just pulls the smoke through and over the meat and back out again. And it seems to work really well. *[Laughs]*

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AH: And you said he was an Engineer. Is--is there a tie to Atlanta there?

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JAJ: I think from my understanding I think he went--he graduated from Georgia Tech, and he worked on these plans for this pit you know for a long time and was determined to--to have a barbecue restaurant, so he did.

00:10:01

AH: Do you know how old he was when he started this restaurant?

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JAJ: Hmm; no, I'm going to say maybe in his late 40s but that's just purely a guess.

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AH: And you don't know what his profession was before?

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JAJ: I don't. It's somewhere in one of the--.

00:10:17

[End Jane Ann Jarvis – Part 1]

[Begin Jane Ann Jarvis – Part 2]

00:00:01

Ashley Hall: This is Ashley Hall for the Southern Foodways Alliance. I'm back at Old Brick Pit Barbecue in Chamblee, Georgia. I'm here with Jane Ann; Jane Ann, will you please state your name again and your profession for the record?

00:00:12

Jane Ann Jarvis: Jane Ann Jarvis and I'm the owner of Old Brick Pit Barbecue.

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AH: And you are the third owner of Brick Pit; is that correct?

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JAJ: Yes; uh-huh.

00:00:23

AH: So if you could briefly go over again who the founder was and the transition of how you ended up in this--in this role?

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JAJ: Okay; Bob Newton was the founder, originator, of Old Brick Pit Barbecue, and then he passed away from cancer about 11 years ago and my brother, Steve Garner took it over. And then I came in about four years ago. And even though my brother still works here, we work together, but I took over ownership and he kind of retired and just works here as he wants to.

00:01:04

AH: So why did you decide to take over?

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JAJ: Just I saw it as a great business and one that I was really interested in getting involved in. Bob had a great business plan, and I recognized it and wanted to be part of it.

00:01:20

AH: And why did your brother decide to step aside?

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JAJ: Well he has been in the food business forever and just, you know, was kind of tired of the day-to-day grind of keeping up with everything. And so he welcomed me coming in and taking over the burden [*Laughs*] for him. And so all he has to do is kind of enjoy the business and not do so much of the--the day-to-day grind part.

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AH: And could you tell us his name again?

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JAJ: Steve Garner.

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AH: And what--what are his favorite things to do around here?

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JAJ: Around here, oh, he loves to just putter around and fix things like the tea containers when they're leaking and stock the firewood and, you know, just--he kind of just has his hands on all the little things that the day-to-day business, the employees and stuff, whereas I'm keeping up with the materials that need to be ordered, the food, the--you know, cups and maintenance and all of that.

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AH: So how often do you think he's here?

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JAJ: Oh, he's here every day, but he just isn't you know having to tend to all the--the necessary things that--. I mean, the things that we wouldn't be able to open if the food wasn't here. If I didn't go to Restaurant Depot and Costco, he--you know that's not his thing.

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AH: Can you give us an idea of what a day at work is like for you?

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JAJ: Yeah; I come in--in the morning and check with Isadora to make sure that we have everything that we need. And then go up and balance the books from the day before, put the stuff in the computer, and then come down and make beans or potato salad, whatever is needed for, you know, for the day. And then we get started with the lunch hour crowd. And Steve and I mainly during lunch fill the tea containers, wipe the tables, clean the trays and you know keep the fire going--all of that from 11:00 to 1:30 when we have the busiest part of the day.

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And then after that it's checking to see what I need to get for the next day, what we're out of stock on, and doing--doing that.

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AH: What--do you make your sides and things or--and also the meats? How--can you tell me the process of that? Are they made a day in advance or are they made fresh every day?

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JAJ: The meats are delivered three times a week. We get the meat in Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and we cook it fresh every day. The coleslaw is--we usually have to chop coleslaw every other day and but we don't mix it up. It's just the cabbage is chopped and ready for--we can chop two days worth of cabbage at a time. And so they'll chop it like they did this morning and mix up enough for today. And the rest stays in a container unmixed until tomorrow morning. And then they'll--they'll mix that up again. The beans are about an every other day process too. Sometimes it's every day; it just depends on you know how busy we are.

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The cobbler is cooked fresh every morning.

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AH: Does the cobbler change which kind of fruit is used?

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JAJ: It's just always peach because we've tried apple and people just you know--we end up with it forever. There's so few people who want the apple, which has really surprised me. I thought people would like that more but they don't.

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AH: What about the Brunswick stew?

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JAJ: The Brunswick stew we make every other week, and then we--once it's made, we freeze the containers, and then we thaw it out daily as we need it.

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AH: Tell me about your Brunswick stew. It's kind of what you're known for; is that right?

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JAJ: Yeah; we're--I mean, a lot of people know us for our stew. It is a combination of chicken meat, rib meat, and pork, tomatoes, tomato sauce, onions, corn, both yellow corn and shoe-peg corn, a lot of spices, and--.

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AH: What was the second corn you said?

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JAJ: Shoe-peg and yellow corn; shoe-peg is that little teeny white corn and I'm thinking--I think that's everything that goes into the stew.

00:06:00

AH: Whose recipe is your--?

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JAJ: Bob's original recipe. I'm not sure where he came up with it from but it--we--we're doing it just like Bob did and the sauce. That was his--

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AH: Well tell us about the sauce.

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JAJ: Well the sauce is a North Carolina vinegar-based sauce, but he worked a really long time to come up with the amount of vinegar to tomato that he wanted and--and we've kept that recipe exactly the same.

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AH: What would you--how would you describe the consistency of your sauce?

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JAJ: Very thin. I mean it's a very thin vinegar sauce, not thick at all, but--.

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AH: And you were mentioning to me that you know you've changed the menu very little and that's comforting to your customers?

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JAJ: Yes; they like--they like things to stay the same. We haven't really varied it. We added potato salad to it. Bob didn't have potato salad at the time but--and we may add a couple of more things but we won't change what was done to begin with and what the customers come back for.

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AH: Do you have a lot of customers that have been coming since the restaurant opened?

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JAJ: Uh-huh; yeah, a lot of them and a lot of them were Bob's best friend. [*Laughs*] Everybody that comes in here that knew Bob, "Oh, I was one of his good buddies." And, but yeah; we have a lot--and we have ones that are here two and three times a week, and--which is really surprising. I mean one week, you know, we were sitting there going, "He's been here every day. This was like four days in a row." So, you know, it's funny because you do see a lot of the same faces, and you get to know your customers. And then, you have--you have a lot of new people, people that say, "I've lived over here you know a couple streets over for 10 years and never knew you were here." So you know we don't do a lot of advertising, so they--they may not know and--.

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AH: Do you have any idea why Bob selected this location?

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JAJ: Why he chose this location? I really don't. I don't know why. I know it was a Dairy Queen and I don't know why he decided to come in here.

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AH: How would you describe the location?

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JAJ: We're just north of Lenox Square and Phipps in Chamblee, right at the beginning of Chamblee, right where Peachtree Industrial turns--Peachtree turns into Peachtree Industrial. And we're close to Oglethorpe, Dunwoody, Chamblee, North Atlanta, so--.

00:08:33

AH: So what kind of clientele do you have? How would you describe them?

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JAJ: [*Laughs*] Very interesting. You know we will have--I mean some days we will have three dump trucks, three or four dump trucks pull through here and line up over on one side and then there will be a couple little old ladies from Brookhaven coming in and having lunch. And you've got these big burly men and then these little old ladies, and, you know, it's so funny. We just have a neat clientele. It is a little bit on the older side because a lot of the people have known us

forever and have been coming in forever. But it's--it's a neat clientele because you have a little bit of everything.

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AH: Do you think that some of the regulars maybe were nervous when you and your brother took over, maybe wondering how the barbecue would change?

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JAJ: Probably a little bit because I do get a lot of comments that they're so glad we kept it, that, you know, we didn't change it. So, obviously they were thinking--they were worried about it. So, I think there were a few people that were probably concerned about that.

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AH: But you've comforted them by not doing it?

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JAJ: Hopefully so; they--you know, they always say, "Oh, we're so glad you kept it, you know, just like Bob had it." So, I think they're happy.

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AH: So tell us about the pork that you use. What kind of meat do you use?

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JAJ: We use fresh pork hams. Most barbecue places use butts, but we use the fresh pork hams. It's a very lean white meat, not a lot of fat and grease like the butt has. And that's what Bob started with. I mean, I like--I like barbecue butt. We've done it some, just for the fun of it, for us, but you know, there again, we hate to change it because that's what--you know, people know us for the ham.

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AH: How--can you give us an idea of how many hams you might go through in a week?

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JAJ: Oh gosh, let's see; probably close to--I'm trying to think--probably 60--70 hams a week, depending on what week it is--just a normal week, not a holiday week, and probably close to 60--70 hams.

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AH: And can you describe the process of how you cook--prepare those hams?

00:11:02

JAJ: You know with the hams there's not a lot of prep. It--they come with the--the skin on them, so you--there's really no point in doing any kind of rub because it isn't going to get through to the meat. So basically it's just putting it on the pit; it's just pure smoke. You know just good old smoked ham; it's straight--straightforward like that. And--and then once it's smoked for a good 12 hours--12 to 18 hours depending on the size--sometimes they send us bigger ones, sometimes smaller ones--but we know they're done when the bone wiggles good

and is loose and the meat has come loose from it. And then it's just, you know, we just chop it and put that vinegar sauce on it. *[Laughs]*

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AH: And how—so, do you put the--the hams on overnight? Is that how you smoke them?

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JAJ: We put them on first thing in the morning and cook them all day, and then the next day we put them back on and serve them.

00:12:06

AH: So if I were to come in here for lunch, I'm--you started smoking that ham yesterday morning?

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JAJ: If you come in at lunchtime it probably was at dinner; we're usually serving ones that were put on that morning. It just depends on when you're in here.

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AH: Describe the chopping process. Do you offer different kinds of preparation?

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JAJ: No; we--we just have one--we've debated doing you know different types of cuts on the ham. We have a buffalo chopper and we chop it with that.

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AH: What's a buffalo chopper?

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JAJ: It's just a big bowl with two blades and you put the meat in it, and it goes around, and it chops it once, and then we take it out. But we've thought about the other ways of doing it but that would slow down--it would change us into a different restaurant. We're also kind of known for fast food. I mean, you walk in and, by the time your credit card has gone through, your tray of food is ready. There's no waiting. So a lot of people like that, too, because they can get in and out really quick. And if we started chopping and doing--you know doing things, adding more things to it, it's going to slow it down and we're not going to serve people the way they're used to. So we've--we've--you know as much as we'd like to try a lot of things, we do keep that in mind because that's another thing that we're known for is you know you don't come in and sit down and wait to be served or have a waitress come over. It's you know truly just come in and get it. I think we're probably faster than McDonald's or Burger King. *[Laughs]*

00:13:45

AH: Describe how you prepare the chicken.

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JAJ: How what?

00:13:50

AH: You prepare the chicken.

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JAJ: The chicken; the chicken, we--excuse me--we serve a half of a chicken. It's a small chicken but a--a half of a chicken. So you get the breast, the leg, the thigh, the whole bit. And it's washed and then we put our rub on it, a rub that Bob came up with again, and it's cooked on the smoker and it takes a couple of hours. And then they baste it; we have a basting sauce also that Bob came up with. And it's basted two times during the smoking process and then ready to go.

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AH: Describe the--the flavors of the rub and the sauce if you could.

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JAJ: The rub is just a lot of mainly pepper and paprika. The sauce, the basting sauce is similar to the vinegar sauce but then it's got a few more ingredients added to it to make it thicker--more ketchup, more brown--a little more brown sugar, and a few more spices to make it thicker to baste the meat with. But it's complementary to the--to the sauce. It's not something totally different.

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AH: So if you order chicken here you get it on the--on the bone?

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JAJ: On the bone; yeah, and I've been working on a chicken--pulled chicken sandwich but we haven't gotten there yet. *[Laughs]*

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AH: It's a process?

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JAJ: Yeah; well, it's you know there again, the line--you've got two meats for them to choose--you know to grab and get and it could slow things down. So we give a lot of thought before we start doing anything.

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AH: Describe your ribs for us.

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JAJ: The ribs are spareribs. We do keep--we do trim them ourselves and we keep the rib tips on. We don't--they don't cut those off. And those are smoked; they--we also put the rub on those and--

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AH: The same rub?

00:15:54

JAJ: The same rub and then they're basted with the same sauce as the chicken.

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AH: Is there--what's the advantage of leaving the tips on?

00:16:02

JAJ: You know, I don't know. A lot of people like the meat; like my mother loves the meat up there around the tips. It's really tender, and she'll, you know, go through and--and pick it out. She likes it. And I'm not sure why Bob always served it that way but we've continued to do it that way.

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AH: And can you describe the process of smoking those ribs?

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JAJ: The ribs smoke for, oh, about two to three hours and--

00:16:33

AH: Is it placed--are the chicken and the--the hams and the ribs placed differently in the pit?

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JAJ: The hams are all on the main big shelf, and they're closer to the smoke and the heat than the ribs and the chicken. The ribs and chicken are put on a second shelf above the hams and that way we can baste them and--and if necessary, we can move them a little bit closer--that rack is

on wheels. We can move it a little closer to the heat and smoke or move it back some if it's you know--if they're getting too done.

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AH: Do you have any idea how hot it gets in the pit?

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JAJ: Well we--in the middle of the pit it stays about 2--we try to keep it around 220 to 225. Of course, over closer to the heat where the hams are, it gets a little bit hotter and further--over to the right further away it gets a little bit cooler. But right in the middle you know we try to keep it right around 220--225.

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AH: But you have the flexibility to kind of play with it?

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JAJ: Yeah; we do, depending on whether we throw the wood on the fire or not. [*Laughs*] If somebody forgets it quickly can drop to 150 and we all scramble to get more wood on.

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AH: What kind of wood do you use?

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JAJ: We use straight hickory, nothing but hickory, and we've got a--a guy who delivers it to us and just that's the only wood we use.

00:17:57

AH: Could you tell us what are some of your best-sellers and if you give us an idea of how much you do of each of your--your entrée items?

00:18:10

JAJ: Gosh; the best sellers, I mean when people come in, probably the chopped pork--people order a lot of chopped pork for parties and things, Brunswick stew, and our coleslaw. I mean people come in and just buy a gallon of coleslaw for their party or whatever. So I would say it was the pork, the stew, and the slaw are our biggest sellers.

00:18:36

AH: Do you have any idea how many people you'll serve in a week?

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JAJ: Um, no; I should because I feed it all into the computer. I should be able to pull it up but you know I'd say we average probably 100 to 125 a day, 150 maybe.

00:19:04

AH: Are you open for dinner also?

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JAJ: We're open until 7:00. So we miss a lot of the dinner crowd because a lot of people don't eat until later. But the earlier, you know, the earlier groups and the people that know we close at 7:00, get here in time to get it.

00:19:17

AH: So give us an idea of how the flow is during the day of customers coming through.

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JAJ: During the week it's mainly at a--from 11 o'clock to about 1:30 is when we have most of our customers. And then we'll have people you know a few people all afternoon and then it starts back up about 5 o'clock. On Saturday it's totally different. I mean it's just all day long, people you know coming in all afternoon. It's like you know, I guess, whenever they crawl out of bed and they can get going they're--they're out and eating. But we're only open Monday through Saturday. Sunday we're closed; that's pit-cleaning day.

00:20:05

AH: What's that process like?

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JAJ: Oh it's loads of fun. You should have been here yesterday when I was doing it. **[Laughs]** It's just a process of using lye and--and a hose and scrubbing down the inside to get all of the smoke and creosote or whatever it is off the pit and off the grates and getting rid of all of that and starting with a clean fresh pit Monday morning.

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AH: What's the advantage of cleaning it once a week?

00:20:35

JAJ: You know, you could probably not do it that much but it starts getting really goosed up with sauce and the charred pieces of stuff. And I think you know the grate stays cleaner so the air flows better and I just--it's kind of like having a fireplace. If you don't clean it out every so often, and we use this so much that you know it just--it's better to do it once we--. Plus if you wait it's a lot harder to clean. *[Laughs]*

00:21:06

AH: How long does it take you to clean it?

00:21:08

JAJ: About an hour and a half; it's not too bad. But it--it is a process; it's a dirty process.

[Laughs]

00:21:15

AH: So that's every week?

00:21:17

JAJ: Every week--every Sunday we clean the pit out.

00:21:21

AH: What--how would you compare what you--what you serve here to barbecue places elsewhere in Georgia or elsewhere in the region?

00:21:30

JAJ: Hmm; I would say that we're real close to like Fresh Air but we're very different from a lot of places because we just don't offer the variety. You know, we have a limited menu. A lot of place try to do a lot of sides and vegetables and different--different things with the meat, which is--is great, but, you know, we have tried to stay where we keep doing the small things and serve people quickly and--and that would just totally change us into more like what they are where you have to sit and wait.

00:22:12

AH: What's that noise we're hearing--that thumping?

00:22:13

JAJ: That's the pit [lid] going down. [*Laughs*] They just opened the pit up and probably to baste the meat, and that was it being lowered again. It's got a--a big pulley system that opens and closes the iron lid.

00:22:28

AH: Big heavy iron top over the pit?

00:22:30

JAJ: Yes.

00:22:31

AH: When you say you think you're closest to Fresh Air, you're referring to the barbecue place down south of Macon?

00:22:36

JAJ: Uh-hm; yes, because they have a limited menu. They do--I believe, they do the hams. They have a vinegar-based sauce, but they have a more limited menu like we--we do.

00:22:47

AH: And how--did you grow up going there? How are you familiar with them?

00:22:51

JAJ: No; well [*Laughs*] I've been to it because my--my children played tennis and the State Tennis Tournament was in Macon, so we'd go into Fresh Air. But then ever since I've gotten into the business I've heard about, you know--everybody knows about Fresh Air Barbecue that's from Georgia. And--and having gone there all those years, I would say this was similar to that.

00:23:16

AH: Did--I have--I've read about them, but I've never been there. Do they have Brunswick stew as well?

00:23:21

JAJ: Yes; they do. And I'm not sure if their stew--I never got their stew, but as far as their meat and sides, you know their menu is real close to ours.

00:23:33

AH: How would you describe Georgia barbecue to somebody who has never been here?

00:23:39

JAJ: Hmm; Georgia barbecue is just a great mixture of all kinds of barbecue. [*Laughs*] You can get anything in Georgia. I mean you can get Kansas City barbecue; you can get South Carolina, North Carolina; you know there's just--everybody has their own take on what's good barbecue. And Georgia is just kind of, you know, the melting pot of barbecue. [*Laughs*] And everybody has their own ideas and--and really and truly you can go and get just about any kind of barbecue in Atlanta--or in Georgia that you want.

00:24:14

AH: Any thoughts on why that might be?

00:24:16

JAJ: I think a lot of it has to do with where people came from and what they experienced as children. You know people come in; "Oh, I've been dying for something like, you know, North Carolina barbecue, vinegar-based." And then other people are from other areas and, you know, Alabama and they want more of the sweet, thick--sweet sauce or whatever. And so I think it has a lot to do with what they grew up on.

00:24:42

AH: And you--you have experience with your regulars being opinionated about what they are used to?

00:24:48

JAJ: Oh, yes. I mean my regulars do not want anything to change. They like it just the way it is and you know they--they're not real big on change.

00:24:59

AH: And you mentioned to me last time that you have people who come in with an original bottle and have you fill it up with sauce?

00:25:05

JAJ: Uh-hm; yeah. They had a bottle that Bob--their good friend Bob--gave them and they could never get rid of the bottle. So would we mind filling it up? And you know there are a lot of people with a lot of nice stories. And--and that really, you know--I think that's another thing is it's just not so commercial where people don't care. It's you know people really have a lot of feelings and emotions towards the--you know towards the place--that they knew Bob or they have you know gotten--eaten here a lot. So it's, you know, it's kind of neat that way, too. It's not like the big franchises, where you never really know anybody.

00:25:48

AH: Can you recall any specific stories that--that are--people--where people describe their fondness for this place?

00:25:56

JAJ: Well, I mean, you know, I had one guy tell me what the place was before and how it was-- they sold firecrackers and all kinds of things like that. And then it blew up and then this was built here.

00:26:10

AH: Like, the building blew up?

00:26:11

JAJ: Yeah; you know, I mean this guy was like, you know, “The door shot across the street to where Peachtree Golf Course was!” *[Laughs]* And then, you know, I have people that come in and say they--you know, they came in and they talked to Bob forever. And you know showed them this, and, you know, they were going to buy this place. But, you know--everybody has got their own little--. And it's, you know, Bob had a lot of good buddies. *[Laughs]* That's all I have to say. He had a lot of them.

00:26:42

AH: What are your thoughts about--you mentioned earlier that you think your clientele is older and any thoughts on why you--that might be or why maybe young people aren't as apt to come?

00:26:54

JAJ: Well my children say we're a little old-school. You know, we don't have any of the updated fancy furnishings and--. We did just add the--the porch on this past year, but, you know,

yeah; we are old-school. My brother's thinking is that you know he wants to be original and you know not like every place around here. And my son made us change the radio station you know.

[Laughs]

00:27:25

AH: What was it before?

00:27:27

JAJ: It was-it was B98.5 and now we're on The River. **[Laughs]**

00:27:33

AH: How would you describe those two stations?

00:27:33

JAJ: Between hard rock and--. **[Laughs]**

00:27:36

AH: What--what was the first station like?

00:27:38

JAJ: It was real oldie goldies, and he said, "You just--that doesn't go with barbecue." Oh what was it? "Mariah Carey and barbecue just don't mix," that's what they told me. So I said, "Okay, you know, you pick out the radio station." And you know we don't have TVs. We've thought about putting TVs in and--.

00:27:59

AH: What made you decide against that?

00:28:01

JAJ: About--

00:28:02

AH: So far decide against that so far?

00:28:04

JAJ: People don't stay here that long. I mean it--you know it's fast. You know they're on their lunch hour. They're in and out, and so we haven't done it. But we did just--just sign up with somebody so that we could have TV. And I'm getting internet this week [*Laughs*] so I'll have internet here.

00:28:25

AH: For people to work on their computers?

00:28:26

JAJ: Well, you know, we do have people that do it. I guess they have that wireless thing. But I haven't been able to use my computer here because we didn't have internet. So we are getting internet this week.

00:28:39

AH: So you're updating?

00:28:39

JAJ: We're really updating, coming into the updated technology times.

00:28:45

AH: Has this--can you describe how this building has changed so far as you know since the restaurant opened? Has there been expansion?

00:28:53

JAJ: It hasn't changed at all except for [*Laughs*]--except for you know we have painted the outside of the building and we've just this year added on the covered patio. And we had a patio out there with just cement tables and umbrellas. And it was really, really hot; I mean the sun just would beat down. So we added the covered patio with ceiling fans, and people love it. I mean, they--they--it's, you know, because we do have the smoke in here. They love to sit outside. So that was really good you know addition that we did. And the--the property owner was real thrilled with it, too. He said, "We should have done this years ago." So, that--you know that's really about the only thing that's changed. Not much else has, but we're slowly since I've come onboard, we're going to slowly make changes to--to just replace things that need to be replaced and you know keep things going.

00:29:51

AH: Like what?

00:29:53

JAJ: Well we need booths, new tables; we need to do a few things you know. But it's really hard to think of what to do on the walls when you have all this smoke in here. And anything that you decide to do is going to get ruined, so you know there's a lot of thought that goes into it. But you know, it's just that maintenance that you have to replace things every so often.

00:30:17

AH: Did having smoke on your clothes take some getting used to?

00:30:21

JAJ: *[Laughs]* Not for me. I got to where I don't even notice it but other people definitely notice it. No two ways about it.

00:30:32

AH: Do you have a pit master per se?

00:30:34

JAJ: Not really. Margarita, who does the--makes the sandwiches and serves up the meat, she basically takes care of the meat on the pit. So she would be the main pit master. And she serves it and keeps it going behind her; up-front she's putting it all together and then when she needs to she opens that pit behind her and tosses it on.

00:31:04

AH: You don't often hear of young ladies manning the pit.

00:31:07

JAJ: That's right, You don't, but she's--she's good at it and she knows what she's doing, so--.

00:31:12

AH: How long has she worked here?

00:31:15

JAJ: Oh gosh, she's been here seven years--eight years.

00:31:19

AH: Her name is Margarita?

00:31:19

JAJ: Margarita--gosh you had to ask me--

00:31:25

AH: I can ask her.

00:31:26

JAJ: Oh I can't remember. It just went out of my head. Oh Margarita Paxtor, sorry. *[Laughs]*

00:31:34

AH: How many employees do you have?

00:31:36

JAJ: We have, let's see; seven including myself and my brother. We have three full-time employees on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and then we have four on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday during the day, and then we have one person that changes for the afternoon and evening shift. But altogether seven people.

00:32:12

AH: And what do you like about your job?

00:32:16

JAJ: Oh gosh, what do I not like? I love the people I work with. And they're great employees, and I love the customers. I mean, it's just--it's just a fun business. Every day, you know, I don't know who is going to walk in the door, but, you know, always somebody interesting and--and you get to know them as they come back. I have one lady that comes in all by herself two or three times a week and sits at this little table over there. And last week when I said hi to her, "Glad to see you again;" She said, "I'm going to have to get a job here I'm here so much."

[Laughs] And I said, "You are." But I mean, you know, she's Brookhaven, you know nice non-working little lady and--and comes in here at least three times a week. And all by herself, but she loves it.

00:33:11

AH: Do you find that a regular like that will order the same thing over and over? Does she try different things?

00:33:13

JAJ: No; they usually order--they usually know what they want, and they come for that particular thing. And but we--we have a lot of regulars like that, and it's fun to see them and then it's fun to get to--to meet new regulars--people that become regulars.

00:33:32

AH: How do those folks usually find you?

00:33:36

JAJ: You know, it's somebody telling them about us. We did get a lot of people that found out through the Atlanta Magazine article.

00:33:46

AH: What was that article?

00:33:47

JAJ: It was Barbecue Places in Georgia, Top 50, or something like that and they came in and they did a picture of [Eke] at the pit, and so a lot of people after reading that article came by to try us. So, you know, that was one way that some regulars came in. But mainly you know people will bring somebody in for lunch that--one of our regulars will come here and meet somebody or tell them to meet them here for lunch and then they become a regular, so--.

00:34:18

AH: Do you ever get comments from new people or people who haven't been here that much about why don't you do butts or why don't you do this?

00:34:25

JAJ: No; we don't get--we really don't get that, except for--we get people who would like beef and would like a pulled chicken sandwich. That's, you know, those are the main comments that we get. But most of the new people that come in are just, you know, "It was great. Thank you. I'm so glad to find out about it." And, you know, they're very nice people.

00:34:50

AH: What kind of beef are they looking for?

00:34:52

JAJ: Brisket. I've been experimenting with it, but brisket is tough--to get good brisket and I don't want to serve it unless it's good. I don't like dry brisket. **[Laughs]** So we're working on it, but it may be a while. **[Laughs]**

00:35:06

AH: I noticed on your menu that there was an option for whole hog at some point and now it's no longer. Do--when--when was that change made?

00:35:15

JAJ: Oh gosh; I mean, well, I know they did a wild boar, like five years ago. But they just had to take that option off because we don't have the pit space. You know with all the--the meat that we have to cook daily in here, we just don't have the space. So they don't--we don't do that.

00:35:37

AH: So is the barbecue business healthy or is it holding steady? Is it growing?

00:35:43

JAJ: You know, we really haven't seen a big decrease. You know, what's killing us is the price of pork going up and trying to not you know--we've tried really hard to not increase prices but the--you know the meat going up, all the groceries in general, you know, it's been tough. But business has stayed steady. So we've been very thankful, you know, because a lot of people have been hit hard. But we've, you know, we're plugging along and staying--you know, we were comparing last November to this November and, you know, right in there, so you know we can't complain.

00:36:24

AH: So is it about the same as last--?

00:36:25

JAJ: Yeah; well, and, you know, I'd say for the four years I've been here, we've increased a little each year. We have not gone down. So that's you know for the last four years with the economy the way it's been that's--that's good.

00:36:38

AH: Can you give us a sense of how much the price of pork has increased?

00:36:43

JAJ: Yeah; we've gone from 79 to 89-cents a pound two years ago up to \$1.21 a pound, which is, you know, just--. I mean, that's a lot; that's a big difference. And cabbage has gone up, and with the gas prices, the fuel surcharges that are being put on, you know it's--it's not easy.

00:37:10

AH: Have you had to--have you had to raise your prices in the last few years?

00:37:13

JAJ: We have raised it once and we're trying very hard just to hold steady and--and not have to.

00:37:20

AH: Well is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your restaurant?

00:37:25

JAJ: I can't think of anything except for, you know, it's good food. *[Laughs]* You'll have to try it.

00:37:33

AH: Thank you so much for your time.

00:37:34

JAJ: Thank you for being here.

00:37:36

[End Jane Ann Jarvis – Part 2]