

JERRY KOUNTOURIS
Mayflower Café - Jackson, MS

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Interviewer: Rien Fertel

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[Begin Jerry Kountouris — Mayflower Café]

00:00:00

Rien Fertel: All right, this is Rien Fertel with the Southern Foodways Alliance. It is March 19, [2014], Wednesday afternoon, just after lunch at 2:36 in the afternoon. I'm here at the Mayflower Café in downtown Jackson, Mississippi, and I'm here with the owner, Mr. Kountouris, Jerry Kountouris. I'm going to have him introduce himself and give us his birth date.

00:00:24

Jerry Kountouris: My name is Jerry Kountouris; I'm the owner and manager of Mayflower Café in Jackson, Mississippi. Born seven, [July] 21, 1947.

00:00:33

RF: All right; so the first—I want to lead off with the question kind out of left field. I just sat down and had lunch, and I love the soundtrack in here. Can you talk about the music in here; if music—if the music, the soundtrack, the station that you listen to means anything to you, can you kind of describe—?

00:00:50

JK: This is music that's brought in through Muzak, and I have it on a station that depicts the restaurant's décor.

00:01:02

RF: Okay.

00:01:03

JK: Of '50s-style, '60s-style music.

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RF: And how would you describe the restaurant's décor?

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JK: The—it's an old family diner that was started in—founded in '35 and has décor of the '50s and '60s diner look.

00:01:20

RF: Does that mean it looked different when—I mean I'm guessing it looked different in 1935?

00:01:25

JK: Well, the only thing that's different really is the seating was—when they put air-condition in this restaurant in the '50s, they decided to bring the—lower the seating where the air-condition wouldn't be as expensive as it would normally be if it had high seatings like it normally did. Other than that it's pretty much the same. Same floor. The restaurant itself looks pretty much almost identical to what it did fifty, sixty years ago.

00:01:52

RF: What is your earliest memory of being in this restaurant?

00:01:58

JK: Well, I grew up in this restaurant not really working in the business because my father didn't want me to come into this business. But I remember as a kid at ten, eleven, twelve years old we had parades in downtown Jackson and we'd come and sit at the restaurant and watch the Christmas parades, Thanksgiving parades; that's my earliest memories.

00:02:21

RF: Do they still have those parades? Or are they kind of a long-gone—?

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JK: We do have a brief account of the type parades that we—of the Christmas and Thanksgiving—well, there's no Thanksgiving anymore but Christmas we do have a small parade. But it's nothing like it used to be.

00:02:38

RF: Umm; who—how far back does this restaurant go? When was it founded?

00:02:43

JK: It was founded in 1935 by my great-uncle and one of his partner, which came from the same island from Greece together.

00:02:53

RF: Okay; let's go through kind of the minor details. What was your great uncle's name and his business partner's name?

00:02:57

JK: My great-uncle's name was George Kountouris; his business partner's name was John Gouras. And that family grew into bringing my father in, in the—right before World War II and he also had another cousin by the name of George Gouras, which was his brother, came in. And then we had a fourth family member that was actually the brother-in-law, John Gouras. So actually there were four families at one time in this restaurant.

00:03:29

RF: Okay.

00:03:29

JK: And the—John Gouras decided to get out of the restaurant business; he was probably the oldest member, the oldest partner, and in the late '50s so it ended up—most of the time it was three families that owned the restaurant.

00:03:46

I came to this restaurant in 1990, where I was at the time practicing pharmacy. My father asked me, "Would you like to try the restaurant business? You've been in the pharmacy business for almost twenty years, but we know you wanted to own your own drugstore and it has not worked out that way." So I said, "Sure, I'll give it a shot." And I said, "I'll give it a year or two. Let me see how it goes." And now I'm—I've been here right at twenty-five years.

00:04:21

RF: When your father came to you with that proposition, had you worked here as a young man, as a teenager growing up?

00:04:28

JK: Not really. I did work with him prior to coming here in 19—early-1980s. I worked here for almost a year, where we thought one of his partners was going to leave and he decided to stay, so I went back into pharmacy up until 1990.

00:04:46

RF: The two gentlemen, George Kountouris and John Gouras, who founded the Mayflower, what island—you mentioned they were from the same Greek island. What island was that?

00:04:58

JK: That’s the Island of Patmos—P-a-t-m-o-s.

00:05:01

RF: And can you kind of describe where it is in the—?

00:05:04

JK: It is one of the Dodecanese Islands which means—Dodecanese in Greek means “twelve Islands off the coast of the Mainland Greece.” It, Patmos, is probably the most religious island of the Dodecanese Islands. It was owned, the island itself was owned by—sometimes by three or four different countries until it finally ended up owned by Greece. It—at times it was owned by Turkey, Italy, and I believe one other country, and then it ended up being in Greece’s hands.

00:05:39

RF: Hmm; do you know—I'm interested maybe in the history of this island. Do you know why it's one of the more religious places in Greece?

00:05:48

JK: [*Laughs*] It's got a monastery—[*Phone Rings*].

00:05:54

RF: And we can pause if you need to pause.

00:05:58

JK: Like my grandson [Nicholas], which he just got back—and one of the Patron Saints of our church here in Jackson, which was founded by most—several people—families that came from Patmos, St. John the Chrysostom, and that's the patron saint that he saw the churches that represent that patron saint, in Patmos.

00:06:28

RF: Okay.

00:06:28

JK: And a lot of Greek families came here. Why they came to Mississippi, I don't think I can answer that. But a lot of them showed up here in the State of Mississippi and decided to make their home here. Several—there was a man that had a candy shop in Jackson, Mississippi that was originally, I believe, in Ohio or Illinois making candy, and he ended up bringing his family and he was from the same island as my dad was from, from Patmos.

00:06:58

So they kind of all ended up here for some reason. But they all came from the same island and they—when Greeks come—migrate to a new country they're very religious, especially the ones that came over with my father at the time that he came over here. And they were very, very religious and gave homage to the saints that they felt like they ventured to make a better life for them in this country.

00:07:34

And so why they came to Jackson, Mississippi, I really don't have any idea but a lot of them showed, you know, ended up here.

00:07:40

RF: What year did your father arrive here?

00:07:43

JK: Okay; he came here in the early-'30s, right before the Great Depression, and he was here in Jackson through the Great Depression.

00:07:50

RF: Okay.

00:07:51

JK: And he gave me stories about times where times where they had soup lines and they were selling burgers for a nickel apiece, coffee was literally a nickel, and things were just, you know,

people didn't have—he was making a dollar a week as a wage. So they made it through—my dad went through probably some of the roughest times in America's history.

00:08:21

RF: Did he tell you his immigration story? Do you know it? Did he—?

00:08:26

JK: He came through Ellis Island. My grandfather which was his father was—had come to this country to make—to try to bring his family over here. Well he brought his son, which was my dad, in the early '30s, and he met his dad in Houston, Texas. And he was with his father about a year, or a little over a year, and his father had a heart attack and passed away. And that's why he—his Uncle George was—who founded the Mayflower, brought him over here—brought him to Jackson.

00:09:00

RF: Okay, and became like a new kind of father figure for him?

00:09:02

JK: Right, right. A new father figure for him because he didn't have any other family.

00:09:06

RF: Yeah; how—what year was your father born in?

00:09:08

JK: Nineteen fourteen.

00:09:11

RF: Okay.

00:09:12

JK: And he was like seventeen years old when he came to this country. He joined the military; I think he was like thirty or thirty-one when he joined the Military in the early-'40s. Fought in World War II and was a Paratrooper. He's decorated several—Purple Heart, Bronze Star, the works.

00:09:38

RF: Where did he see combat? What—?

00:09:41

JK: He was—he paratrooped in—was dropped in the hills of Northern Greece, where they would go and blow up mines, railroad crossings, where the Germans were trying to cross over. So he saw combat in Greece. And he—actually the reason he mainly wanted to go back to Greece was because he felt like that was the only way he could see his mother again, was joining the service and be deployed to Greece to fight the Germans.

00:10:17

RF: And did he end up hooking up with his mother during the War?

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JK: I don't think he saw her until after the War was over with. Then they were—they went to Athens when the truce was—when Germany called a truce, and he did see his mother then but just for a brief time.

00:10:38

RF: And so when your father moved back here did he then start working here, at the Mayflower, or did he have another job?

00:10:43

JK: Well actually there was—they had another—they had a couple other smaller restaurants before they opened the Mayflower. Actually, the Mayflower, where you sit now, the little back part back here behind, not—you can't see it from here, but if you go outside you'll see a little wooden sign that says Mayflower. Well it was a little hamburger joint place and they sold hamburgers out of the back of it here before they opened the front part. They—this was a beer—my dad said it was called a beer garden, so I guess it was like a tavern back in the '30s, '40s before they—well '30s, I guess, because they opened in '35. But back in—the man that owned Southern Beverage here in Jackson he had a beer tavern in here and it—when they decided to expand the Mayflower from a hamburger place, they expanded it to the front part which made it a larger—a restaurant.

00:11:37

RF: Hmm; and your father was working here at the time?

00:11:39

JK: Yeah; he was. He worked under his uncle, and his uncle decided to go back to Greece to retire. And so he left his part to my dad. And his Uncle George went back to the island of Patmos, to retire.

00:11:56

RF: And that's where he lived the rest of his life?

00:11:59

JK: He did. He lived the rest of his life there.

00:12:01

RF: Hmm; so I'm guessing you have been back to the home island.

00:12:05

JK: I have. I've been—I went—my first time was like I was seventeen years old. I went another time in 1977, I think it was. My aunt was—we thought she was going to pass away but we—I went with my dad. We didn't stay but like three or four weeks, just to see her. And then I took my family back; my wife in 2001, the weekend of 9/11, and then went back in 2005 and took my wife again with my kids. I got a son and a daughter and I took them so they were able to see where their grandparents came from in 2005. That's the last time I've been.

00:12:52

RF: How would you describe the island? What comes to mind when—if I was to ask you what is Patmos like?

00:12:59

JK: Patmos is like a hidden jewel because most people don't tour that island for a lot of reasons. One, the main reason is because it doesn't have an airport. It's not large enough to have an air-strip where people could fly in there. It's also if you go by ship, which I think my grandson did, for sure, tourists—the seas aren't real easy—I mean it's rough seas to get there. And it's not—in other words, it's not easily gotten to because you have to make a special effort to get there.

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But it's like I said, it's a real religious island. [*Phone Rings*] And you can just hold it there. They have—the cave is still there that St. John Revelation wrote the Revelation. And that's a big tourist attraction. Well the attraction is for people to come there is more religious than anything else. That's why it's a big religious island because St. John wrote the Revelations there and the monastery has been there for thousands of years. And it's just—that's where people tour—why they come over there to tour.

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RF: Is it a mountainous island?

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JK: I'd say yes, it's pretty mountainous. He could show you pictures of it.

00:14:22

RF: Okay; we'll look at pictures. And is there a fishing industry on the island? Are there fishermen?

00:14:26

JK: I don't think there's a fishing industry. I don't know if any real industry that they have there, because I talked to one of the—in talking to one of the former partners with my dad used to work here, right before I came, he moved back to Patmos and I talked to him on the phone a couple days ago and he said one of the biggest problems they have is they don't have a big—a real industry on that island. The biggest industry they have is tourism. And tourism is not real—for a lot of reasons, lately in the last few years, has been down. And not so many people want to go just to see a religious island. They want to go to islands to have a good time and fun and, but—.

00:15:11

RF: Well, what is the cuisine like on the island? What's the food culture like?

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JK: I'd say mostly fish. They have—the beef is imported. They may have—they—of course in Greece, you know, the meat cuisine is lamb mostly, because that's history of Greece. They have the lamb, but they don't have a lot of beef there; it's mostly imported. But fish, I'd say, would be the basic diet there.

00:15:43

RF: Umm; so back to the start of the restaurant, you said there was a hamburger stand before it was the Mayflower in '35. Do you know when the hamburger stand was built?

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JK: I don't know.

00:15:57

RF: Well let's—what did the original menu look like in '35? Was it—did it resemble what the menu is like today; what—do you have any idea?

00:16:06

JK: Well, actually the menu was more diverse in that my dad had chop suey. He had different Chinese foods on there. He had some soul food on there; more than I have now. He's got—he had a more diverse menu than I have now. It's more—this is more specialized seafood now than it used to be. It's still is a seafood restaurant but it's more specialized now than it used to be.

00:16:40

RF: Okay; who was doing the cooking when it started? Was it a family member? Was it someone outside?

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JK: Yeah; it was my uncle started and then he was the main cook back there. My dad said they brought—when my dad first came to work in the kitchen there which my great-uncle taught him. They had brought a couple of cooks from New Orleans were there. They were French cooks and so they could hardly even speak English. But they spoke fluent French. And they tried to work with them. But mostly it was the family members that were doing the cooking.

00:17:16

RF: And how long did it last? How long did the family members do the cooking and to transition to—?

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JK: I'd say my dad was actually was seventy-five years old when I first came in the business so really he was way past retirement. And he probably quit actually doing—I mean he managed the kitchen but actual cooking was probably done; he was probably sixty years old the last time he actually did the actual cooking, even though he managed the kitchen. Because he developed a lot of dishes that we still serve today.

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RF: So did your father end up marrying a Greek woman? Who was your mother?

00:18:01

JK: He married a Greek woman from the island, same island that he came from. Actually he did not know my mother at the time that they lived on the island. My grandfather on my mother's side owned a restaurant in Tallahassee, Florida. It was a seafood restaurant. It was about 250 seats, nice-sized restaurant.

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RF: What was it called?

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JK: I don't—I think it was called the Seven Seas. It was—the reason that when my father met his future bride, her parents were in Tallahassee and they moved to Jackson because my daddy

married my mother. And my grandfather gave up his large restaurant in Tallahassee to come—to be close to his daughter.

00:18:55

RF: So he closed the restaurant or sold it?

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JK: He—either one; I can't remember which one. But he had a good business in Tallahassee, but the thing about I had a restaurant business in both sides of my family, my mother's and my dad's.

00:19:07

RF: And what is your mother's name?

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JK: Jane—J-a-n-e. And her last—her maiden name was Vavaris, which was, like I said, they came from the same island.

00:19:18

RF: Did she have a role in the Mayflower? Did she work at all here?

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JK: She was only a cashier here; that's all she did. She didn't actually have any, as far as kitchen work, she did not do anything in the kitchen. She did work the register and also worked the crowd. *[Laughs]*

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RF: What do you mean by that? *[Laughs]*

00:19:40

JK: Well I mean she—the people, the customers, loved her. She was very good in customer relations, PR.

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RF: What do you think it is about Greek men and running a restaurant? It's a question I've come up with and asked over and over in this city?

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JK: I can't tell you how many times I've been asked that question. I have no idea. I don't know; it's just I—all I can say is God-gift. I don't know but it's been good for me. I didn't think it would be because when I first came here peaks and valleys in all businesses; we definitely were in a deep valley when I came here in 1990. One of the families that had been here a long time when my dad decided—he decided to get out to retire at an early age because the business was not good. But we persevered and the business since 1990 has either tripled or quadrupled. It didn't happen overnight. But it did happen over twenty years.

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RF: Did you make any changes to the menu or to the business?

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JK: I did improve the menu. I put menu items on the menu that my dad sometimes had recipes for items that were not on the menu, that he selected good customers that he would serve as. And I took those recipes and put those on the menu. I took the items on the menu that were not selling, were just, you know, they weren't—there wasn't any reason to have them on the menu because people didn't order those anymore. They were outdated. And I just streamlined that and it seemed to help.

00:21:30

RF: And speaking of, kind of, business and the ebbs and flows of business has the Mayflower always kind of existed with downtown because it's in the middle of downtown? Does it kind of live on downtown's business and how downtown is doing?

00:21:47

JK: Well I think the reason that the Mayflower has existed downtown because the reason for our existence today is a lot of families that started coming to the Mayflower years ago brought their children. And now their children are having children, so those children are bringing their children. So generations of children have kept the Mayflower going. Being in the same location for over seventy years, it's like a tradition that they thought—they felt like they should keep it up, keep coming to keep that historic—that they felt like it's—that we've, you know, kind of guaranteed.

00:22:36

RF: So as families moved away from Jackson to the suburbs or to other small towns they would keep coming back in?

00:22:42

JK: That's correct. Not only from suburbs, but people that left Jackson and moved out of town, or surrounding states, even those people still come back here. They know to come back to this location because that's where we've always been. And we've somehow survived—. Turn it off just a minute. We survived in spite of downtown.

00:23:19

RF: What do you mean by that?

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JK: With the degradation of downtown, people moving out of the city and going to the suburbs and so forth. Downtown is not even a minuscule of what it used to be.

00:23:34

RF: Right; and you can't help but notice all the construction, which, as I understand, has been going on for a long time and—

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JK: This construction has been going on about eight or nine months now. It's torn the transportation avenues for downtown. People don't know which way to go or what—don't want to get in the traffic, don't want to get in the construction, just finding an excuse, because they—it kind of keeps people away. So I understand that.

00:24:05

It's hurt us; but for some—like for some reason we're still able to survive.

00:24:11

RF: I have to ask one more question about downtown because we're in the middle of downtown but also the—America right now is reaching the fiftieth anniversary of all these kinds of Civil Rights movements and protests. Some of them are happening in downtown Jackson. Are there any stories where—well first, was the restaurant—did it take until '64 to be integrated or was it integrated beforehand? Do you know at all?

00:24:36

JK: I really don't know of that answer because I wasn't involved with the restaurant at all. I was going to college at that time. So I really didn't know. But as far as the restaurant: has always been open; being Greek owned and Greek founded, we're kind of like a non-WASP business and—. You know what I mean by WASP?

00:25:01

RF: Right; well you're not Southern in the—.

00:25:04

JK: Right. So, what I mean is that our heritage has really kept us non-discriminatory, as far as I, you know, that I know. Because the Greeks and Italians were both discriminated and my dad tells me when he first came to this country, along with the Jews. So my dad went through that kind of discrimination himself and he knew what it was all about.

00:25:31

RF: Did he ever tell any stories about that, about how it was hard to—?

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JK: Well, yeah, he came because he said he was in a country that he was not fluent in the language, because he was fluent Greek and knew the fluent Greek language, and he had never went to school to learn English but he did know broken English. And that was definitely a liability for him to open a business in America.

00:25:57

RF: How do you—just one more question about your father. How do you remember him? What—how did he dress? What was his voice like?

00:26:05

JK: Well, pretty much always business-like. He—I don't think he'd ever—he could really ever open up and be a loving father like—I always considered him a loving father, but he was always like having to—because he was on his own for so long and he had to send money back to his sister and his mother to try to help him, he was kind of like a provider at a too-early age, so he

always had to be adult-acting more than he was like, you know, loving and caring and so forth. But he was a very caring family man. Family came first, along with church.

00:26:50

RF: So when he kind of offered you the opportunity to join him in 1990, did you waiver at all? Were you all in right away? How were your feelings on it?

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JK: I think I was all-in at that time because I would want to open my own business and I really didn't have an avenue in my profession so it gave me the opportunity in his profession.

00:27:08

RF: Okay.

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JK: And then I just wanted to see if I could—actually it was a challenge. It was a challenge to see if I could keep our business—bring it back to what it used to be.

00:27:18

RF: What was happening in—did—was economics down in 1990? Was the customer base leaving? What was happening in '90?

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JK: I think it was a big time that there was a downtown exodus. That's really when it started in the downtown; a lot of the retail stores were disappearing out of downtown, which made less customer flow in this area. And that's I think one reason—one of our family members decided to retire early because he saw negative and no optimism at all. And I thought I'd give it a shot.

00:27:59

RF: Did he offer you any advice when you started working here or did he just say, "Follow along with me"? Did he tell you what to do? How did that work? I mean working with your father is something I could never do—I mean working with my father is something I could never do.

00:28:11

JK: Actually I never thought I could do it because my father was very stern. He was—he would not waiver. He didn't want to work with you. It was either his way or the highway. And I—the main thing that I learned at first is to do things his way. I could—I would first have to learn to do his—first his way because I couldn't change anything if I didn't know what he was doing to start with. So that's why—for the first three or four years that's what I did. I just followed—as a puppy dog followed him behind and then I tried to go through and change a few things that I thought that needed to be changed.

00:28:49

RF: So I want to ask about some menu items.

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JK: I'm going to have to go back here a second.

00:28:54

RF: All right; so I want to ask a few questions about food. Let's start with the Comeback Sauce. Can you describe, for those who don't know, what Comeback Sauce or Dressing is and what do you call it here?

00:29:04

JK: We call it Comeback Dressing.

00:29:06

RF: You call it Comeback Dressing; okay, and how would you describe it?

00:29:09

JK: Well, I take that back; we call it Comeback Sauce.

00:29:11

RF: Okay.

00:29:11

JK: Comeback Sauce. I'm going to actually quote another publication that called it a "Bastard Thousand Island Sauce." And that was from the publication of—the publication escapes my memory now; I'll think of it in a second. But it's a sauce that—apparently it's indigenous to the

Mississippi area founded by Greeks. Most Greek families—family-owned restaurants in the Jackson area have this comeback sauce.

00:29:58

It was—I—my understanding is it was first founded by the Rotisserie family—Dennerly family that owned the Rotisserie Restaurant in Five Points in Jackson. And from there it spread to Nick's Restaurant in downtown—. [*Phone Rings*] Then it was—the brother, the younger brother Nick, started Nick's Restaurant downtown [*Phone Rings*]—. Golly! And then other Greek restaurants developed the comeback sauce, their own version, which was the Mayflower, the Elite, Crechale's, Primos, Paul's Restaurants, so it was founded in this area by Greek families.

00:31:05

RF: How would you describe the taste of your version and I'm not looking for ingredients or secrets but how would you describe the taste? How—maybe how it differs or what—?

00:31:12

JK: They all have their specialized recipes; they all generally taste the same. Everybody is—I say everybody, as a general rule the customers that come to the Mayflower say ours is the standard. Why it's the standard I can't explain it. It's a mystery, because it's generally made the same by everybody. With me not knowing the recipes of other Comeback Sauces I can't give you a decisive answer on why they're different.

00:31:54

RF: What do your customers put it on and how much do they consume when they really love Comeback Sauce?

00:32:00

JK: It's amazing what they use it on because I've seen people put it on French fries. They put it in their baked potatoes. I've seen them put it on rolls. I've seen them actually put it on our seafood. So, on—of course we put it on—for the salads. It's amazing what people put it on but everybody likes it.

00:32:26

RF: Let's talk about the seafood. I think it's what you're most famous for. Can you tell us how you prepare your seafood and maybe what the range of the seafood, the fish?

00:32:39

JK: My dad always dealt in the Gulf of Mexico saltwater fish. We don't basically do any fresh fish like trout or any of the fresh fish—freshwater fish that people use. We do speckled trout, founder, snapper, cobia, redfish. Gulf of Mexico saltwater fish. My dad came up with a special seafood sauce that is basically margarine or butter, Worcestershire, and lemon juice, with special seasonings. It doesn't really mask the flavor of the fish. It enhances it. And a lot of people use sauces that will mask what they're putting it on. That's it.

00:33:35

RF: What do you eat here?

00:33:37

JK: What do I—?

00:33:38

RF: Yeah; what do you eat here? What's your favorite thing to eat?

00:33:41

JK: [*Laughs*] I eat everything that I order here. I've tried; I've eaten—I eat the scallops, I eat the redfish. I leave the snapper, which is a more expensive fish, for our customers. I eat the flounder. I've eaten everything here that we—most restaurateurs don't eat their own menu items, but I do.

00:34:06

RF: And why? Why do you feel like you should or want to or—?

00:34:12

JK: Well, first of all it's good for you. Fish is good for people. And I think my dad had a diet of fish that he ate here every day. He lived to be ninety-one years old. I think that's a recipe for success in anybody's book. So, I emulate what my father did.

00:34:35

RF: What do you see as the future of the restaurant, of the Mayflower?

00:34:42

JK: Well I have a son and I have grandsons, and I'm hoping maybe one day somebody will decide they want to extend the life of the Mayflower Café. It's up to them, not me.

00:34:57

RF: Is it what—is your son in the restaurant business now? Is he—?

00:35:00

JK: No; my son has been with Nissan Corporation for eleven years. He's a parts procurer for Nissan. He has mentioned that he is somewhat interested. He's about thirty-eight years old. And I didn't get into the Mayflower business until I was forty-two, so it's about the same age.

00:35:23

RF: Did you convince him to not join you or not go into the restaurant business when he was in his twenties and looking for a path in life?

00:35:35

JK: It's a hard business. It's probably one of the hardest businesses to be involved with. Being a family business it even makes it harder because you have to work with family. But I didn't encourage him one way or the other because people need to make their own decisions. And I'm waiting to see where his decision will be.

00:36:07

RF: And your grandson who I've been talking to today, would you [*Laughs*] I mean he's here within ear shot; would you convince him to ever go into a restaurant business or not?

00:36:16

JK: My grandson who is here today, Nicholas, his father is a physician. Nicholas has always been—wanted to be a physician, and I think if you want somebody—something that badly and you've lived and breathed it and been around it, then you need to do what your heart tells you to do. And I think he needs to be a physician.

00:36:38

RF: Maybe just one more question. Why do you think the Mayflower has existed as long as it does or why do you think it means so much to the town of Jackson and the people of Jackson?

00:36:51

JK: I think the Mayflower is unique in that it is a tradition that people can symbolize a past greatness of the City of Jackson. It represents something that Jackson is proud of over the years; it's something that's existed and lasted as long as the Mayflower has. And I think they want to see it survive, in spite of all the difficulties that it encounters.

00:37:26

RF: Do you think the restaurant will reach to be a century old? Do you think that's in the cards? Do you think it's possible?

00:37:32

JK: I think it's possible; anything is possible. *[Laughs]*

00:37:39

RF: But you want to see it happen I'm guessing?

00:37:40

JK: Absolutely; I want to see it happen, yes.

00:37:43

RF: How long do you think you'll work before you yourself retire? Have you talked about it? Is it mentioned?

00:37:49

JK: Right now I haven't decided—talked about retirement. Actually I'm hoping around age seventy. I'm sixty-six now.

00:37:56

RF: Okay; all right, well I want to thank you for this interview. It was really great.

00:37:59

JK: Good; thank you. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to talk to you.

00:38:03

RF: Thank you, sir.

00:38:05

[End Jerry Kountouris — Mayflower Cafe]