

JUDY DRACH
B's Barbecue — Greenville, NC

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Interviewer: Alan Pike for the Southern Foodways Alliance
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[Begin Judy Drach Interview]

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Alan Pike: Okay; this is Alan Pike on Wednesday, June 10, 2009. I'm here with Judy Drach--Judy Drach at B's Barbeque in Greenville. And Judy, if you don't mind, can you start out by telling me your name and your date of birth?

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Judy Drach: My name is Judy Drach and my birthday is Monday [*Laughs*], June 15, 2009.

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AP: Okay; Judy did you grow up in Greenville?

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JD: Yes; lived here all my life. I grew up about probably two miles from our restaurant here and my mom lives probably about four miles from here going towards Falkland area and I live on the other side going towards the Farmville area--been here for--forever.

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AP: Can you tell me about--can you tell me about growing up in Greenville?

00:01:01

JD: It has definitely changed; when I grew up we farmed. My dad farmed, so we were used to just nothing but countryside, tobacco, corn you know just worked on the farm with my dad. Now Greenville is just unreal how much it's grown. The little two-lane roads are now four-lane bypasses. There's you know--the Hospital has--has just grew leaps and bounds; they've got heart centers and the Brody School of Medicine. The College has grown tremendously; it's just really different but there--there are still some areas that I remember looking the same--just different people you know there now. But they started tearing down a lot of the older parts and just rebuilding, so it's grown--a bunch.

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AP: So you guys--did you grow up farming tobacco?

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JD: Yes, sure did--sure did; and my dad farmed probably 'til I don't know--maybe I was a freshman--eighth grade maybe, eighth or ninth grade, and health reasons, we lost our farm and we actually lost our home; we lost everything kind of like with the economy now days. And my dad decided you know we would just do something different and B's was a little country store ran by Mr. and Mrs. Meeks and we knew them growing up. So we ended up actually living in my aunt's home. She was building another house and it just kind of all worked out good, so we just lived there for a while until my dad got his feet back on the ground and we started B's. And we've been here ever since.

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AP: When was--when was that; what year was B's started?

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JD: Probably I would say senior in high school, so '78--'79.

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AP: Was it called B's when it was the country store or--?

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JD: No; it was called Meeks' Grocery is what it was, so--. And it was just a little store; it you know sold any and everything you--you could want, and kind of a hangout when you know the store was closed after-hours. A lot of the men in the neighborhood would congregate down here and--so when we first opened our store, B's, you know it was kind of the same way. We actually stayed here 'til 8--9 o'clock at night and we had regulars that would come and eat and then we'd have some that would just come and just hangout and sit with my dad and talk. And we actually had a man that used to come and play the guitar here at night and then we got a jukebox, so they would all come and have one too many drinks and--and sing. And you know so it--and--and then business started taking off really good, so a lot of that started dying down. And we started going from one pig to like you know six pigs and then from that it just kept growing and growing and growing. And when we first started we had other items on our menu, like pastries, beef stew, and we'd do like a Monday thing or you know Thursday or--and it just got to chicken and the barbeque was just really going crazy. So we decided we started weeding out you know hamburgers, hotdogs, all that stuff until what we have now, which is just the barbeque and the chicken and then the side items, so--.

00:04:58

AP: So was it kind of like a store with--with a food counter for a while or did y'all basically go straight into a restaurant after you started B's?

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JD: Basically in a restaurant; I mean we would sell like chips you know--Lance, Nab's--chips. We actually had bottled drinks like you used to have a long time ago. Then as it grew and we progressed and--and Greenville and other businesses progressed you know they were like well you need to have a fountain, so you know we went to Pepsi fountains and you know just a lot of things started changing. But it's been what it is now for probably the last I don't know 15 years you know just steady going strong in what we've got. And the building hasn't changed; I mean nothing is really any different.

00:05:47

AP: So why--why barbeque when you guys started off or was it just--I mean I know you said that was just one of the pieces of meat but why did--why was barbeque kind of your main focus and why do you think it became the main focus?

00:06:04

JD: Well I think that was my dad's idea; well I know it was my dad's idea but you know my dad even when we farmed, he would do a lot of cooking. He cooked fish stew and deer stew and pigs and I think it's just a Southern you know tradition that when you had a big gathering you know there was people cooking hogs. So he you know I think he just thought nobody would want any fish stew you know even though it was good

[Laughs]. So he went and you know tried the barbeque and then the chicken of course came later, so--and like I say it was real small so it was just Tammy and my younger sister and myself and my mom and my dad and the guy who actually does our chicken cooking, his grandfather, they--my dad and him were really good friends. So they were the main cookers and choppers and we were kind of the main workers and Donna when--when she would come home from college; she was in college at the time at Appalachian so--.

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AP: Is that Arthur's grandfather or--?

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JD: Yes; uh-huh.

00:07:19

AP: What was his name?

00:07:19

JD: His name was Arthur also--sure was, Arthur House. Now Dexter just went to school with us and we knew him from farming when my dad farmed. He worked with us on the farm and he lived right down the road where they've tore down now and put the nursing home and the hospital and stuff; he--he lived with his grandparents. So once he started working with us on the farm it was like you know he just kind of became--my dad just kind of took, you know started looking after him. So he treated him just like family; so when we started you know Dexter came with us. And he

actually was the cleanup guy; after school he's you know come in and fill the drink boxes, clean, you know the pits, and all that, so--. And as everybody got older you know it just kind of went from one hand to the other and now he is our--our hog cooker and chopper.

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AP: So where did your dad learn how to cook pigs, do you know?

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JD: I would probably say his dad.

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AP: So it just kind of passed down?

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JD: Yeah; yeah and he's from a large family. He had nine brothers and sisters and they all lived close in the area except for one that was in the Service and--and ended up staying in Norfolk but you know they still get together like twice a year, so they're still a pretty close family but--. I think they--yeah they grew up working on farms and raising pigs and all kinds of stuff, so I think they were used to it.

00:08:58

AP: So did they pass--did he get the sauce recipe passed down too or is that something you guys have perfected as you've gone kind of thing?

00:09:04

JD: Actually my daddy perfected it; he did. That was his--his thing and he would always laugh because somebody would come in and say William--you know that's his name, but of course a lot of people called him Bill, which is what the B's came from.

00:09:18

AP: Okay.

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JD: He--they would say I made your sauce, you know so daddy would--would taste a little bit of it and he'd go [**Gestures**] you're getting there you know 'cause he would never tell you, you know what went in it. And then of course mama knew so as we worked more and started dealing more with the food and that type of stuff mama showed us how. So we know and we joke and say when people ask us you know how do you make it, we're like well you've got to marry in the family or we won't tell you. [**Laughs**] It's not as hard as it seems, but it's the same way with our chicken. We'll have people come in and say I-I grilled my chicken just like you did and it just don't taste the same you know. What's the difference? And I don't know; I don't know. I can't tell you other than maybe it's the--the quality of the chicken or the quantity of the number that we fix versus cooking one on a grill you know. So I don't know; it's been very good to us--it has. We--we've been really blessed by it, and never would have thought it--never in a million years. You know my--my dad started to open it and my mom was like oh Lord; you know [**Laughs**] here we go again, you know some idea that's going to just go to the wayside. But it--it's really done well by us--by all of us, so--.

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AP: Well can you describe the sauce? I don't need to know how to make it or anything like that but what--can you describe what it tastes like or--or--?

00:10:58

JD: Well--

00:11:01

AP: If somebody had never eaten it how would you describe it to them?

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JD: The first thing I would say to them is it's a vinegar-based sauce which is familiar with Eastern North Carolina from maybe Chapel Hill, Raleigh, back you know Lexington some way. Their sauce is more of a ketchup-type-base. I would tell you that; I would tell you it's not--it's not too sweet you know and it's not too vinegary you know so--and then I'd tell you, you've just got to try it. *[Laughs]*

00:11:38

AP: Let's see; what's it like working with your family and what was it like working with your family when your parents were still running it?

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JD: Well you know it's always a power-struggle. Mama is always right; daddy is always right. *[Laughs]* But it's fine; we get along fine. My sisters and I--a lot of people ask you know--'cause on Mondays when we're off we're together. And they say aren't you tired

of each other? You know what are y'all doing together today, you know and that kind of stuff but we get along. I mean you know once in a while we'll just kind of have a little blow-up but we're over it; you know we get over it. And most of the time it's over something really stupid so it didn't matter anyway. But we're--we're very close and I have three children of my own. I try to instill in them the same--and I don't know unless you come from a family where everybody has to pitch in and everybody has to work and nothing is really yours; it's always *ours*. I don't know if you could really understand what I was saying and you realize that when it's all gone the only thing you're left with is your family. And so it becomes real important.

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Now my kids, I have two boys and one girl, so I don't know if the sexes **[Laughs]** is what causes such a big difference in them but they're--they're pretty close but not anything like my sisters and I, so--.

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AP: Is this--is this your daughter that's working here?

00:13:25

JD: This is my daughter; yes, this is Jesse. She is a junior at East Carolina. And I have an older son, David; he worked with us while he was in school and he graduated in heating and air and refrigeration. So now he's working a job with--with another company and then my youngest son will start high school next year. He was my--oops, but--. **[Laughs]**

00:13:53

AP: So--so you got all your kids working here. Is this something that you would want--would you want them to continue the business or--?

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JD: Yes; yes. As a matter of fact my oldest son I think really if--if we were to say Dave, we're tired, we're ready to turn it over, I think he would jump on it tomorrow. Now my daughter--maybe not; I mean she'd pitch in and help, but you know. Tammy, my youngest sister also has two boys and one is 14 and one is 10, so they're a little young but her oldest one I think would--would be very interested also in working and keeping it going. My husband would love to take it and just run wild with it. **[Laughs]** But we--you know we're like no; we kind of like things the way they are. I mean it--in some ways it's--it--it helps us keep our sanity for one; it--it helps us appreciate more our customers and the business that we have. I mean sure we'd--we'd like to have you know a nice new fancy building and you know eight or ten more people working so we can have a day off and that kind of stuff, but to us when you--when you start doing all that then it's--you know it's like any other restaurant and that's not what--what we wanted it to be. That's not what my dad wanted it to be; he wanted it to be ours. He wanted it to be something we were proud of, something we wanted--as much as he did and I--I think we all have learned that.

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Now when we were younger you couldn't have told us that you know; we wouldn't have understood it but now you know my husband, he says all the time, let's--let's open one in Washington, let's open one in Raleigh, let's--and you know I answer to that and other people that have actually came in and said we want to start you in a franchise; we want to buy you, you know and franchise you--and we just look at them

and say you know mama and daddy just didn't have enough children. All they had was three; I'm sorry. That was it, you know [*Laughs*]. We're just--I can't go there and run that one and Tammy run this one and Donna run this one and it be--and it be the same; it just wouldn't be.

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AP: So is that part of why you guys have stuck with the whole hog when a lot of people are starting to do shoulders and butts?

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JD: Yeah; you know a lot of people will say if you do the whole hog you end up with a lot of waste and you do. You know there's a lot you have to pick out. But I'd like to say because of the way that Dexter does it you--you cannot, you know you don't--you do have waste but you maybe wouldn't have as much as if somebody were to like grind the barbeque, you know. Being hand-chopped he's able to pick out what's not good and what is, and you saw Tammy's husband this morning--Bobby. He was filling in for Dexter because he had an appointment somewhere he had to be but--so Bobby also you know has a hand in--in it sometimes and he's mainly just there when you know we need something and Bobby will run and go fix it.

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My dad's health got kind of bad, before he passed away; he passed away in July two years ago and he--so Bobby did a lot of stuff here, you know. If the floor needed repairing or the ceiling or whatever, Bobby chipped in and would do that so--. Like I say we look after one another pretty good.

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AP: Sounds like everybody pitches in--one big family.

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JD: Yeah; yeah that's the way it is. It's just not enough of us. [*Laughs*]

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AP: What--what does it mean to you guys--everybody I've ever talked to about this place it seems like B's is a big part of the Greenville family. What have you got--what does--does that mean a lot to you guys? Can you tell me--talk to me--talk about that at all?

00:18:00

JD: Oh yeah; yeah it means a whole lot you know. Now we're--we're kind of getting in the process, like I say where Greenville is growing and--and that kind of stuff and they're talking about widening the roads and you know doing away with some stuff. We--we have a lot of people that have come in and you know they're--they're really sincere and they mean it when they say please--y'all please don't shut down. You know we've heard rumors that y'all are going to close; the road is going to mow you over, you know this kind of--. Do you need me to call somebody; do you need me to go stand on the courthouse steps? And you know I really think they would; I really do. We're--we're like no, but if we need you, you know we'll let you know. We have--to my knowledge--not ever had a single customer to ever come back and just say you know--well some people would and some people wouldn't--but just come back and say I--I--I didn't enjoy it. Our atmosphere I think contributes a lot to it, you know 'cause you--it's

not many places you can go where you can just go and sit next to a man in a three-piece suit that you've never met before or sit next to a family or a farmer or you know a college student or whatever and get to meet them and eat with them and you know so it's like when they come in here they're--they are family. They just mingle together and--so it--it means a lot to us. And the college has--has supported us for a long time and so has the hospital, so we got some pretty strong backing if the road does decide to come through or something you know. We'll have--half of them say girls I can put you in a business over, you know somewhere else or we'll take up a fund and we'll buy you a new building somewhere over here you know. I just don't really think it would be the same.

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AP: Is it this Highway 43 that's--that you're talking about?

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JD: Yeah; yeah they're--they're talking about widening it and the State people have come and talk with us and the--what are they--the Department of Transportation, and a lot of them eat with us, so you know they've made the comments several times, you know we're going to do the best by you we can. We're going to try to you know work with you the best way--we can so I got tickled because they actually started cutting the trees down across the street probably about three--four weeks ago, and they told us they were going to start and they said, and we're going to not--you know try not to get in your way and all this other kind of stuff. Well about 10:30 they had cut down three or four trees; people started driving up and parking [*Laughs*] where they were cutting them down. And they were like--and the guy comes to the window and he said we can't

move our equipment you know. And I'm like I'm sorry. And he goes is it like this every day? And I went pretty much. And he said okay; well we'll just take a long lunch then. I'll get in line. **[Laughs]** So he did.

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AP: So many people made a big fuss about it. **[Laughs]** They weren't playing around.

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JD: Right.

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AP: Well I noticed that today. It's--I--you know I had heard everybody say you know the cars line up and down the street and there's nowhere to park and it's--it's sure true.

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JD: Yeah; it's true. It's true and on the whole though most--most time everybody is really civil about it you know. They just--it just seems to work you know once in a while. Like well matter of fact today we had a lady come to the back door and said there's somebody in--in a Ford blue car or something and it's got me blocked in. Can they move? And the first thing I said well is it Alan? **[Laughs]** And Donna and Tammy were like no; his car is silver. But--but you know once in a while we'll have somebody come in and you know say--ask to be--to move or whatever but pretty much they come in all at once and it's like they leave all at once. They just got it down pat you know. I don't know.

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AP: Well I noticed some--I did notice some folks coming in the back door today getting orders. Is that kind of the regular crowd or--?

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JD: People that probably placed orders earlier in the week like this weekend will be high school graduations and usually those types things, like ECU graduation is unreal. But they'll come by and place orders and so sometimes we'll tell them you know just pop your head at the back door so we'll know you're here and we'll shoot it out to you that way 'cause it's just easier. A lot of times they'll load up that way and--and they don't have to wait you know just don't wait in line you know all that long time, so--. They'll come to the back door.

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Now this--this Friday and Saturday I think we figured up we have like six hogs sold, other than what we need for us to sell in here in--in orders and 56 pounds of barbeque and I don't even know how many chickens. I mean it was like 20 gallons of slaw, 25 gallons of potatoes you know and all this to be ready for--for orders that are people graduating. We'll be crazy Saturday evening; Saturday evening when it's done we'll be like oh God. **[Laughs]**

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AP: Well I know you guys--well I guess first the question would be why close early and just--I know it takes all night to cook the pigs but--

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JD: Right.

00:23:53

AP: --why close--why close early and not put more on during the day and have dinner service?

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JD: Because it would take too long. You know if we waited 'til--well let's just say--and it has happened--we've run out of food at 11:30 on a ballgame day. Way too early, and we knew it, but we cooked to the capacity of what we could do you know whereas if I throw another one on, well by the time it gets ready it's going to be 7--8 o'clock at night. Who is going to come eat then you know? And I guess after a while--because like I say when we first opened we did have an evening trade, but as they started coming earlier and more it just started running out a little earlier you know. It started being like well at 6:00 we didn't have any food left and then 5:00 and then 4:00, you know so but if you threw one on at 9:00 in the morning you know it would be 4--5 o'clock before it was ready and it's been this way for so long now that it's like every--like you said earlier, everybody kind of knows it. So it would take a while to build it back up. I'm sure we could. But then you know are we going to want to be here that long?

[Laughs]

00:25:16

AP: A 12-hour day is enough. **[Laughs]**

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JD: Yeah; like I said my mama and daddy only had three kids. **[Laughs]** So and we're not nearly as young as we used to be but--.

00:25:28

AP: Yeah; well--well what do you think--what do you think--I know you said you wanted the family to carry on B's but what do you think is the future of like North Carolina barbeque with all these national chains coming in with their Memphis style and the brisket and--?

00:25:45

JD: Well it's not good; stuff like that is not good. **[Laughs]** No; you know everybody has a preference and we talked a little earlier about the people who are watching their weight or you know low-carbs or whatever and they can't eat the skin you know heart issues type things. Pork--pork is supposed to not be good for you if you have heart problems or gout or arthritis or any of that other kind of stuff. You know my question would be well is that other stuff good for you? **[Laughs]** You know I'm sure there's something in it that somebody would have something to say about. I'd hate to see this style barbeque just end; I would. Parker's is our--another restaurant here; Abram's just came here probably--it hadn't even been a year and you hear people talk around town and they'll say you know girls, their barbeque is nothing, but they like their chicken--their fried chicken, which is another Southern style food you know. So I--I hope somebody will keep it going you know. Parker's is similar to ours in the respect that it's pork; it--they grind it instead of chopping it. They're more like I don't know--they're prepared for bigger orders, bigger business you know freeze-it type stuff, you know

what I'm saying? Well we're not and we don't really want to be **[Laughs]** 'cause we just don't think it's as good.

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AP: Fresher is always better.

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JD: Yeah; yeah so I don't know. You know I just--I hope somebody does--I've not found a place between here and Raleigh; you know they say there's a place in Raleigh. Unfortunately when I am off I don't go to a barbeque place. **[Laughs]**

00:27:55

AP: Right. **[Laughs]**

00:27:56

JD: You know I do have people that will come in and say they did you know. They'll say I tried that place in Goldsboro or whatever and it's horrible you know and then you'll have people say well it was pretty good but the slaw was horrible, you know and stuff like that. But--and they may say the same thing about us; they're just not telling me, but--. **[Laughs]**

00:28:17

AP: Tell me about--tell me a little bit about the Weight Watchers thing.

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JD: We had--and this has been I couldn't even tell you how many years ago 'cause over the years we've had so many nice things you know happen with us; we've been in that *Business Magazine*. Mr. Glaglich did us on ECU--that food thing he did. You know President Bush when he was here you know so it--it's been a lot of good stuff, but a lady who does the regular paper for us, *The Daily Reflector*, she does articles about you know what's good for you and what's not. And even before they did the chicken she came and she eats with us and she done the barbeque. And it was talking about--is pork good for you and all that, so she actually analyzed our barbeque. And she said it was as healthy for you as chicken is because of the way it's prepared and it's--it's actually *the other white meat*. It's--it's lean and--and the sauce and stuff was real--even though it was thin, it was a thin type sauce you know so it wasn't caked on like ketchup type stuff, so we--we got a really good thumbs up from her. So it wasn't long after that a lady from Weight Watchers came and she was doing a pamphlet on local foods that could go on a Weight Watchers menu and she took our chicken and--and analyzed it and you know it was like third on the menu for best Weight Watchers food, so--. And you know as we said earlier too; a lot of people who don't prefer pork they really like the chicken and I think it's the only place in Greenville where you could get--get it that way. And then you go and you order barbeque chicken and a lot of people will give you that tomato sauce in the oven type barbeque chicken, which I like but it's not the same as this.

00:30:30

AP: Right; so do you eat your barbeque every day or chicken or something?

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JD: No. *[Laughs]* No; once in a while I'll eat. If we go on vacation and we've been gone a while you know it's so funny. We'll get back and it's like we didn't have a single thing good to eat while we were gone you know and we'll eat you know barbeque when we get back. Matter of fact, this coming Sunday, my dad's family will be here at the restaurant for their family reunion and all of them are living except for two--my dad and his sister--but and they have like four or five kids and then they have grandkids, so it will be a lot of people here and that's all they'll eat is barbeque. *[Laughs]* And me and Donna and Tammy will be like did y'all bring any spaghetti or anything different? *[Laughs]* No; just barbeque. *[Laughs]*

00:31:27

AP: Oh so it sounds like you don't really eat anybody else's barbeque around here either though--but you know about it.

00:31:34

JD: I know about it; I know about it. No; I--I don't. I don't. You know one time we were in Virginia and we passed this little barbeque place and I said to my husband, I said let's pull in and try it. And he said you've got to be kidding. I'm like no; let's just pull in and try it. Well it was something like a mustard.

00:31:58

AP: Oh yeah.

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JD: And I was like okay; let's don't do this again you know. *[Laughs]* Uh-uh.

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AP: No taking too many more chances like that?

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JD: Yeah; yeah but you know it--it's--it's been like I say very good to us and then we--we--you know we've had a lot of restaurants come out like people who have tried. I think it was two brothers, a restaurant over on the other side of town, Boss Hog's, and some of them are pretty sneaky like Boss Hog's, and I hope you're recording this. Boss Hog's you know we had no idea who he was. And he came out one morning and started asking us about you know questions like how many hogs do you cook and who did you get your cookers from, you know what--and the guys out back cooking you know they're just answering questions. And he comes back like two days later and comes in and you know wants to know how you make the slaw; he--you know was asking them all, well how do you make you sauce and all this stuff. Comes in like two days later and walks in the back door and looks at Tammy and introduces his self and says I'm opening a barbeque restaurant and--and I want you to come to work for me. And Tammy is like I don't think so. **[Laughs]** You know and we'd really appreciate it if you would leave now. You know but they--they sneak around and they want to get like your recipe; they walk around, 'cause you know you've been here with us today so you've seen us all day and kind of what we do and if you're really paying attention you know it won't take a rocket scientist for you to figure out how we make our slaw, what we--you know how we make our potatoes so--. And it--it took--I think it took that for me and Donna and Tammy to realize you know people aren't just--they're not very nice you know.

00:33:51

AP: And take credit for it.

00:33:51

JD: Yeah; I mean who would have ever thought--'cause that would be like walking in Applebee's or something and then watching the man fix your ribs and then going and opening a business, you know. And then we had another incident with a lady who did a painting. She came out and did a painting that--

00:34:10

AP: Is it that one there?

00:34:13

JD: No; this lady was very nice. Excuse me; let me rephrase this. She came and picked a--took a picture, took it home, made a watercolor, and made prints. We're in here working and the lady come in and goes I bought one of y'all(s) pictures at the Hallmark. We're like we don't have any pictures at the Hallmark. Yes; you do. I'm like you're kidding. So I leave from work; I go and make a special trip to the Hallmark at the mall, walk in, and sure enough--B's Barbeque all over everything--painting, I mean prints, pictures in frames and no frames, little calendar books, bookmarks, all this stuff. And we're like--I called my mom and I said mama, you're never going to believe this. And she says buy one and bring it home. So I bought one and acted like I was not affiliated with B's at all. Brought it home and my mama called a lawyer and said **[Laughs]** you know is this--can you do this, never--never giving any thought to it.

Nobody would even think of doing it you know. Or at least come to me and--and Donna or Tammy and say I've got this idea; this is what I want to do and for every-one I sell I'll give you a dollar or whatever you know. And in other words at least ask.

00:35:43

AP: Yeah; sure.

00:35:43

JD: But she didn't and--and so I think that was the whole principle behind my mom and dad pushing the issue because they're not really you know you owe me type kind of people. So anyway the guy comes to her and tells her you know she can't do this and da-da-da. So they had it drawn up that she could only sell what she had already printed and then after that she could not make anymore. But--and then like two days later she comes out here with a great big picture, huge picture of B's and says I want you to have this. And my daddy said I want you to shove it up your ass and leave. **[Laughs]** So--so we never saw them again. **[Laughs]** So anytime somebody takes a picture now we're kind of leery about--what are you going to do with it, so--? But we hate to sound mean you know, so like when this lady was painting across the street, she was actually painting on an easel. I went out and I talked to her. And I told her, I said well you know you might should have asked you know. You're really not supposed to--to--and she was like I didn't know; I had no idea. I'm so sorry. And she told me--she was upfront; she said I'm painting this for a silent auction for the Children's Miracle Network. And of course then we were like oh by all means; go ahead, you know. So she did and she actually brought us one. She said I did two; I did one for them and one for you and that was it.

00:37:27

AP: That's a nice painting. I like it.

00:37:28

JD: And it's very nice--very nice. And I understand one of our regular customers purchased the other one. [*Laughs*]

00:37:35

AP: There it is; kept it in the family.

00:37:36

JD: That's right. [*Laughs*]

00:37:41

AP: Well what do you think about people who have a lot of interest in--in B's not in that way but kind of in the way like what I'm doing and people like you said--I know you guys have been written about in some newspapers and in these barbeque books and stuff--what do you think about people really getting interested in barbeque and thinking about it and talking about it more than just you know that's the barbeque place down the street that we like to eat at?

00:38:03

JD: Well it's very flattering. It is; I mean you know when you see your name in you know *Business Magazine* or *Southern Living*--we were in *Southern Living* and you think

golly *Southern Living*; isn't that national or something you know? And then of course we were in the *USA Today* and that was international, you know and so that was like--that--that's really an awesome thing for that. Actually I had a friend who was in Germany in the Service and he--he says I got on a bus and I just happened to be sitting there just fiddling around and waiting you know to get off and I looked down and I saw this *USA Today* and I said well that kind of looks like Donna, Judy and Tammy. And he said and I picked it up and sure enough it was y'all so he wanted to call you know and say great. But yeah; it--it's very flattering. There are a lot of good people here in Greenville that have really kept us going and supported us and what amazes us though is every day we see new people. And you know we're like where did they come from? You know with Greenville growing like it is too you know the same way when we ride around we see all these new townhouses and stuff--where are these people coming from, you know and where are they working; what are they doing? Because you know for so long it was your regulars and you may have seen that today you know--a couple people in line it was like are you going to have your usual you know or something like that? Or sometimes we'll have them fixed before they ever come in or we know them by name--you know a name basis, so those are the people that have been here since I've been here, so--. But yeah; it's really flattering and like I said I hope if it's not us--if it's our children or another family you know I hope they--they will keep it going with progress you know and the way people tend to move forward and to me a lot of times it's more like moving back, you know everything maybe outlawed before too much longer. **[Laughs]** You won't even be able to drink a Mountain Dew without getting a ticket or something but you know--or you're going to die from a heart attack if you drink this. I don't know but for now it's all good.

00:40:36

AP: Well I was talking to Arthur earlier when he was cooking and he--I was asking him about had y'all ever had a big fire back there and he said yeah. Can you tell me about that at all?

00:40:46

JD: Oh yeah.

00:40:46

AP: And what--and can you start by telling me about what it was like before the fire, what the pits and stuff were like before the fire and--?

00:40:52

JD: Actually it was--it was about the same size; it was shaped different. You know it was like square you know more like a barn--square. But Dexter, he had ran home--it had snowed and it was [*Laughs*]--yeah and he lives right down the street. As--as long as Dexter has been with us he has never lived no more than like a mile at the most to--from--from B's 'cause you know he does all his cooking at night. So he--sometimes he'll come and he'll start the coals and get them hot and then he'll go back home. And then he'll come back and put the pigs on you know. He'll stay with them for three--four hours or whatever and then he'll turn them over and then he may run back home for 30 minutes and then come back. Well that happened to be what he did and did not realize that the coals were a lot hotter than what he had thought and the grease had dripped down and it started a little small fire. And of course him not being here, he could have probably put it out with the water hose very easily but he was not--so he--

he drove back up and the whole side was on fire. I drove up to work; it's snow on the ground and Donna is standing out there with the whole fire department [*Laughs*]. And we're like oh no; so I think that put us out of commission for about two days. My dad jumped--jumped out there and you know sometimes you just do what you need to do and you don't wait for--who you might need to wait for that might take you three days to get here, so he just kind of threw it back up real quick. And actually the--the roof of it is a--one of those carport things you can drive under.

00:42:51

AP: Right; right. [*Laughs*]

00:42:52

JD: So you know my daddy was very smart--very, very--he was--yeah; he could just do some stuff and you would think I never thought of that. I think Donna inherited that from him; she's really creative too. But yeah; he went and got one of those and then he--put these boards up and da-da-da you know so and the next thing we knew we had a pit.

00:43:16

AP: Did y'all have those brick pits back there before or was it always the big metal ones like you've got now?

00:43:21

JD: It's always been metal yeah; and they actually were made by a guy that lives right down the street here and they actually need to be repaired and cleaned, but we don't

know how in the world we'll get them out of there. **[Laughs]** So we'll worry about that another day.

00:43:40

AP: Well--well how many pigs do you usually do on those every day?

00:43:43

JD: We average anywhere from eight to fourteen a day and that's the capacity. Fourteen is--is what we can do.

00:43:51

AP: And that's Tuesday through Saturday?

00:43:53

JD: That's Tuesday through Saturday, uh-hm.

00:43:54

AP: And then how about chickens? How many chickens?

00:43:57

JD: Chicken, we average probably anywhere from 300 to 400 a day.

00:44:06

AP: What about football Saturday? Do y'all do anything special for football or you just--?

00:44:09

JD: Gosh; we just pray. *[Laughs]* No; you know we try to support East Carolina. We--we--we can in no way support them like they have us, but like when they have the Pirate Club thing there's--twice a year we feed them which is just the alumni people you know so it averages being anywhere from say 50 to 100 folks and we take the catering over there to the stadium and we'll feed them. But yeah; it is hilarious and some Saturdays we'll get out here and Jesse being an ECU student we all dress in our ECU attire which is normal most of the time but we try to go a little overboard you know with the bows and what have you. But sometimes in line we'll start chanting Purple and Gold. *[Laughs]*

00:45:09

AP: Okay. *[Laughs]*

00:45:09

JD: But yeah; and they'll come and they are so nice. It's just like tailgating actually.

00:45:15

AP: Tailgate out there?

00:45:16

JD: Oh yeah; there's a couple that you know will just pull up and drop their tailgate, that--that whomever, the mom and the dad or whatever will wait in line and get all the food and you look and they're out there throwing the football. And you're thinking oh

my gosh; you're going to get run over, but yeah; they just--it's just like--like I say being at the ballgame. And they really--and then what's funny is we'll get--sometimes we'll get like if you're playing Southern Miss or something we'll get some of them at the window--or some of them in here, and then some of the ECU and vice-versa you know and so we'll try to get something started you know. It's like at the window and all that he said y'all are going to lose. And they'll start hollering back and forth at each other but it's always in good--you know good sportsmanship. Sometimes they actually come in together you know. They're--they're I guess friends from past relations and they'll come in and they'll have--one will have on one whole attire dress and the other will have on the other and you know we'll look at them and say okay which--one of y'all is messed up you know or something but--. They're--they're a lot of fun; they're fun.

00:46:29

AP: What time do you usually get people rolling in--in the morning?

00:46:32

JD: Today was slow, even though it's picked on up it started out slow. Ballgame days there are people here no kid you Alan, there are people here like 5:00, 5:30, 6 o'clock in the parking lot waiting--waiting for us to open that door. We open the door and there can already be a huge line. Some Fridays it's that way even though it's not a ballgame day and then it seems to vary like if on a Tuesday we're really busy one week--the next week it'll be a Wednesday and Tuesday will be good but it won't be as busy you know. Like yesterday, we were swamped. Of course the heat had a lot to do with it but maybe we were moving slower. But you know it--it--it's pretty interesting to see the folks and mingle with them in line; they're funny. A lot of them are real funny and they're really

good. I've never had anybody actually cuss me out or you know try to hit me or pull me through the window or anything like that when I look at them and say I'm sorry. They just got the last you know barbeque sandwich or something and--you know they're like--they're really--you can tell; it's like they're really just--oh my gosh what am I going to do? You know and you're like I'm so sorry. And--and the person who got it most of the time is like--sorry. **[Laughs]** And they go running off. **[Laughs]** But no; I mean there has never been any confrontation that I'm aware of anyway among the customers or you know to us about running out of food, so--. And you know sometimes we'll have--like if it is a ballgame day you know they'll--they really more or less--they really--they'll come to the backdoor and they'll come in the door even though we've got the sign up and then they'll be like are you for real? You really don't have just one barbeque sandwich? You just don't have like one you know? And we're like no; we're for real--we're not lying. **[Laughs]** So but--that's us every day.

00:48:55

AP: Well it sounds exciting.

00:48:56

JD: It is.

00:48:56

AP: Is there anything else you want to tell me about--any other funny stories, crazy folks that come in or--?

00:49:04

JD: Nah; I just--I could keep you here all day actually. Nah; I mean you know it--it's nice. We hope it continues and you know we--we are going to take the road people at their word and we just want to keep the word out that we're--we're not closing. I mean even if the road construction which will hinder a lot but you know come anyway. And it may be that we may be here even later when that starts happening because so many people can't get in here at one time because of the construction. So you know don't--you know you might want to ride by at 4:00 instead of 2:00 you know. We--we might still be here with food. We're usually here anyway but with food.

00:49:56

AP: Are you going to keep doing things the same way?

00:49:59

JD: Yeah; yeah.

00:49:59

AP: No changes on the docket right now? [*Laughs*]

00:50:04

JD: Nah; no changes. You know everybody says you need to go up; you need to go up on your prices. I think we've been up a total of probably four--maybe four times in the last 30 years that we've been here. It's not something we like doing; it's not something we want to do you know. Of course you never know with today's you know gas prices--whatever, but we--we kind of like it just like we are.

00:50:36

AP: Where do y'all get your pigs from?

00:50:39

JD: We actually get them from two--two wholesalers. We get them from Brewer Meat Company which is near Robersonville and Bailey which is near Smithfield--that's--I think that's right--that way. We started out doing business with Lakeview and we would still be doing business with them but they sold out. So, and that--that was where we were just with them strictly and that was it; we got them from and we got our chicken from Scruggs out at Rocky Mount strictly with them--nobody else--and then one day my dad said it's good to have some competition. So he started looking and we ended up--now we have two chicken people and two pig people. And we keep our produce local here in Greenville. So, and it's you know--it works fine. Of course people think--a lot of people think we go out and pick the green beans [*Laughs*].

00:51:46

AP: You do that on top of everything else you're already doing? [*Laughs*]

00:51:48

JD: Yeah; we do actually peel the potatoes by hand which is you know a lot of people won't do that anymore. But I have a friend who always--when she calls me she's like what are you doing, peeling potatoes? And I'm like yeah. And she's like when I got my restaurant I'm buying the frozen taters. And I'm like shut up. [*Laughs*]

00:52:15

AP: Can you tell me about the rest of the sides? I haven't asked you about your sides.

00:52:18

JD: Yeah; we always have green beans. We always have potatoes. Like I said we peel those and they're like in a ketchup type base and coleslaw and to me, you need to eat coleslaw. To me that is the best thing we make. And we--we make that by hand also; so and it--like I say it's not a very hard recipe. But to me it--it makes it; I mean I just as soon eat more slaw than--than barbeque when I eat it. And a lot of people are like that. But that basically other than fries and you know we just buy those from a guy already-- I don't even know what kind of brand they are, where we get our paper products and stuff. We get our fries and salt and that kind of stuff. So it's--you know it's not a huge operation [*Laughs*] by any means but it's all we can handle. [*Laughs*]

00:53:24

AP: Well can you describe the pit for me just for the record?

00:53:29

JD: Yeah; I mean like as in--what do they look like?

00:53:34

AP: Yeah.

00:53:36

JD: They're a huge metal cooker, like a grill that you might--would have on your porch, but 20-times bigger. One grill we have with our pigs I think it can hold eight. And that

means like eight whole ones, so it would be like 16 sides if you were to split them, and the other one will hold six. So it's really huge. And--and like I say Dexter fires the coals at night and--and in a big old metal coal-barrel which is almost like an old trashcan you would have seen but it's square, welded together, so it won't burn and lights all the coals. And then he transfers the coals under the cooker and lets them get at a temperature where he's ready to put--put the pigs on. It's huge; it's a little bit different than fixing hamburgers on your grill at home **[Laughs]** but it's the same--really the same--yeah it's just on a bigger scale.

00:54:47

AP: What time do you guys usually get in here? I noticed--noticed y'all seem like you've been here a while when I got here this morning.

00:54:52

JD: Well now Donna and Tammy are; I have to give them the credit. I am the lazy one. **[Laughs]** No; for the longest time since I had the first children and that's actually when my mom kind of got out of the business somewhat; she baby-sat. She wanted to keep her grandchildren. So I--I lost my train of thought. No; I would be the one to take them to school every morning. And then now of course when Tammy had her oldest one and--and my youngest one are the same age, I would take them to school. So I usually wouldn't get here 'til around 8:00. And Donna and Tammy though, they get here at like 6:00--6:30. And some--some mornings I laugh because I listen to Donna and she'll say I was late this morning; I was late--I was late. And I'm like Donna what happened; what time did you get here? I got here at quarter after 6:00. I'm like holy crap. **[Laughs]** I was rolling over. **[Laughs]** But yeah; but they get here--they get here almost too early--

almost too early, but I think they enjoy that time together you know before we open and everything gets hectic and we kind of have to holler at each other, you know and don't really get to tell each other what we did the night before or you know we're all big *American Idol* fans which if you see up on the wall there that picture?

00:56:25

AP: Yeah; I saw it. I was actually telling Tammy or Donna one of them earlier--I was talking to them about it 'cause I saw it and I was like that's the *American Idol* guy. And I said I went to college with that--that guy from Chapel Hill, Anoop, who was on there.

00:56:37

JD: Oh did you really?

00:56:38

AP: Yeah.

00:56:38

JD: Okay; so you know somebody famous too. [*Laughs*]

00:56:40

AP: Yeah; I was like awesome. I'm like I did the same thing; I was like I know that guy.

[*Laughs*]

00:56:45

JD: Yeah; yeah, so yeah so we like--you know we like our time and then in the evening--and don't tell mama 'cause she might get upset, but in the evening time after everything is done and when we've finished peeling the potatoes, and we're smokers--sorry; we'll--we'll get everything done and we'll kind of like sit in here or stand in here thinking about you know what we've got to do tomorrow and what we're going to get ready. We're trying to get our list together and all this other kind of stuff and as soon as we get everything done we do the crossword puzzle. **[Laughs]** That's like the highlight of our day to see how stupid we are. **[Laughs]** Yeah; we'll do the crossword puzzle and the--and the crypt-o-quip in the paper and we just feel like--and we're pretty good. And when we get the puzzle done you know we just feel like okay we've worked--we've worked our body, we've worked our brains; it's time to go home. **[Laughs]** Yeah; so--but yeah--yeah.

00:57:48

AP: Well what's your favorite part about working at B's with your family, or just what's your favorite part about it?

00:57:54

JD: Well being with my family and--and getting to see the people, meet the people. My--my husband worked at a Trade which is now Wilco-Hess for golly--many, many, many years and it was--it was funny because it was one of those incidents kind of like me with B's. Everywhere you went you saw somebody you knew and everywhere he'd go you know it was like Dave what are you doing tonight and all this? Well he's been out of that business now for probably six years and I think every day you know he'll say something about I hadn't seen so and so and--you know and you just do; you--you miss

when you don't see the people. And they miss you. You know when we close for a vacation like we will--we close twice a year--July and in Christmas and you know people will come back and they're like what have you been doing? You hadn't been here, you know--'cause you just know everything and they're like I say the regulars that come in, we know where they live, we know where they work, we know their children, you know and what's going on in their lives and--and when you're gone it's like catching up with old friends when you get back. So yeah; but the people--the people make it, you know. We have some that you want to oh gosh here they come again you know or it's your turn--I had them last time **[Laughs]** kind of thing, but on the whole there's very few of them. Everybody here is pretty easy to wait on and you--you--you know you'll see them out in other restaurants eating and that's the first thing they'll say. What in the world are you girls doing here? Why in the world ain't y'all eating at your place? You know y'all(s) food is better you know. And we're like but we didn't want barbeque. We're not open today, you know so--. Me, I love the Olive Garden. You know whenever I can get the chance to go out and eat that's--glass of wine and some pasta; that's me. **[Laughs]** But yeah; it's--it's--and you go on vacation or you go visit family or friends and that's the first thing they'll ask you. Did you bring me any barbeque?

01:00:21

Yesterday I had to take mom for a test at the hospital and walked in and I mean I bet from the time I got to the desk to the back of the room where there was--I know I had 15 people ask me, why didn't you bring me a barbeque sandwich? Why didn't you bring me--you know. I'm like I'm sorry **[Whispers]**--I'm sorry; I'm sorry. I'm going to take mama to the doctor. I have to go now you know and so--. **[Laughs]** Yeah; it's nice. You don't get tired of hearing it.

01:00:53

AP: I've noticed a lot of people in scrubs in here today too.

01:00:55

JD: Oh yeah; yeah and you don't. It's like somebody will come up to us--especially new people that we haven't seen before and they'll tell you. They want to tell you. And that's the thing too about it's--I don't know if it's the atmosphere or what but when you come in and somebody is new that's the first thing they'll say. I heard about you from da-da-da and I'm all the way from Ashville, North Carolina. And you're like oh really? And you know what are you doing here? And they're like I'm here. My daughter is going to college or whatever and they'll actually tell you my name is Bill, you know or whatever. And when they get ready to leave they'll come back up and they'll go it was everything I heard it was, you know. It was great food girls--fantastic, loved it, and as we always say, we never get tired of hearing that--never. So we know we do daddy right when--when they say that, so--.

01:01:51

AP: Yeah.

01:01:51

JD: But and that's our history pretty much. We're--we're here and we're going to stay here and it's been good; it's been real good to us. We're not millionaires by no means; a lot of people think we are, but we're not--by any means [*Laughs*] but we are very comfortable and--and I think all of us are very happy and content with the way things are.

01:02:18

AP: Well great. Well thank you so much for your time.

01:02:20

JD: You're welcome Alan.

01:02:21

AP: It's been an awesome experience.

01:02:21

JD: I enjoyed talking to you and I will take you up on work Saturday [*Laughs*] if you're back this way.

01:02:32

AP: Okay; okay, well thank you.

01:02:33

[End Judy Drach Interview]