

Gerri & Stephen Grady
Grady's Barbecue - Dudley, NC

* * *

Date: December 7, 2011
Location: Grady's Barbecue - Dudley, NC
Interviewer: Rien T. Fertel
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
Length: 39 minutes
Project: Southern BBQ Trail - North Carolina

[Begin Gerri & Stephen Grady-Grady's Barbecue]

00:00:02

Rien Fertel: All right; this is Rien Fertel for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It is the 7th of December, 2011, just after 9 o'clock in the morning. And I'm at Grady's Barbecue in Dudley, North Carolina continuing in the fourth week of my North Carolina BBQ Trail. And I am sitting here with Mr. and Mrs. Grady. I'm going to have them introduce themselves. We'll start with Mrs. Grady.

00:00:30

Gerri Grady: Hi; I'm Gerri Grady. My birth date is May 28, 1944.

00:00:38

Stephen Grady: Steve Grady; birthday March 26, 1935.

00:00:45

RF: All right; and how long has Grady's been in business?

00:00:49

GG: This is going on the 26th year.

00:00:53

RF: So twenty-six years in business and Mr. Grady, you were just telling me a story about how you got into business because you had a lot of jobs before this. You haven't always done barbecue; tell me about that.

00:01:05

SG: Well I farmed and sawmilled for many years. And well, my brother bought this place and my wife helped the first day, so they didn't like it and she [Gerri] did so we ended up buying it. I think they lasted one—two days. After that, so we soon will make it twenty-six years. That's— that's about it; it hadn't been that hard for us.

00:01:41

RF: So it hasn't been that hard for you?

00:01:45

SG: It's tough work but not—not hard.

00:01:49

RF: Mrs. Grady what did you do before twenty-six years ago?

00:01:54

GG: I was employed at the hospital as a Technician, Nursing Assistant.

00:02:01

RF: And what do you remember—and you helped out those first two days when his brother ran the place?

00:02:04

GG: Sure I did; uh-huh.

00:02:07

RF: And what did—what was it—what did your brother, Mr. Grady's brother open it as? What was the name? Was it Grady's?

00:02:15

GG: Yeah; it—it was the same thing, yeah, yeah.

00:02:18

RF: And this building was it a barbecue place before?

00:02:20

GG: No; they had renovated. Steve would you deal—tell him what all it was, this building was?

00:02:26

SG: Well it was originally a store; from that a pool room and back to a store, so it—then it was closed down right much.

00:02:37

GG: Pool room, service station, and they renovated it. My brother-in-law and his wife, they renovated it and day one they decided they was opening the doors at eleven o'clock and day one, quarter to 11:00 they looked at me and said, "We don't want this." And then I was serious; I said, "You got to be kidding. All this work you put into this." "No, this is not for us. This is for—why don't you and Steve take it?" And, you know, I just shrugged it off.

00:03:12

But then my brother-in-law talked with Steve seriously about it. He was really serious. And Steve asked me; he said—he said, "Do you want [*Laughs*] the barbecue place?" I said, "Yeah." But you know what; you got to be careful what you say yes to because unless you're really committed [*Laughs*]—. But I have been committed and he's committed to it. But there's a lot of work involved. But I've always cooked about all my life. My Mama run me in the kitchen ever since I was about eight or nine years old. I used to go in with big long lips but she taught me how to cook. So from that day to this one I try to cook like my Mama, my Grandmama and my mother-in-law. She was the number one cook to all three—all three ladies. But I enjoy it; thoroughly enjoy it so cooking in here is just—it's nothing new.

00:04:02

The only thing that was new was cooking for a big crowd [*Emphasis Added*], cooking for the public, I should say, and Steve, I'm sure he'll want to tell you about—about day one and me and the hushpuppies. [*Laughs*]

00:04:20

RF: Yeah; we have to hear about that now I think. [*Laughs*]

00:04:22

GG: He'll tell you about that. [*Laughs*]

00:04:24

SG: Well, we talked about it and I said I have always known how to cook a pig. I can't even remember when I learned how. But I always helped my Granddaddy and Daddy and all. And she said I can make the slaw and cook the bread. That will be no problem. So they had started that first day with a little black pot about twelve inches and so needless to say that first day we opened, everything went out without bread.

00:05:00

GG: I couldn't keep up.

00:05:01

SG: Couldn't keep up. We opened at ten o'clock and by 12:00 we had sold the whole hog out and most of it went out without bread and a lot of it without slaw. So it was a success and a disaster at the same time.

00:05:16

RF: So—so what happened to the bread, to the hushpuppies?

00:05:18

GG: Well I got it done whenever, but it was a slow process. **[Laughs]** But since then we've been—we've been blessed to get deep fat fryers so we could cook numerous pieces of bread at a time but this was just a little small iron skillet. And I couldn't keep up. So that was really a challenge. But now we—we got deep fat fryers and we can cook numerous pieces at a time, you know, so it makes a difference. We had to learn; we had to learn.

00:05:50

RF: Any other stories from that—that first day or that first week in business?

00:05:55

GG: Oh that's about the highlight I think right there.

00:05:59

SG: I think the biggest thing about it, Angie came out of working in an office with air-conditioning.

00:06:04

GG: That's my sister-in-law, our sister-in-law.

00:06:06

SG: And I—Gerri was laughing about it because you know she said about twelve o'clock about the time they got ready to open the doors she said that stuff she had around her eyes was running down her cheeks. **[Laughs]**

00:06:17

GG: So—so I learned from that. I can't wear no heavy makeup. [*Laughs*]

00:06:23

RF: So no makeup in the kitchen?

00:06:23

GG: Well, it's up to you but you don't have to apply it heavy because the sweat won't let you keep it on. That's the point you know. That's—a kitchen is hot. You want to look nice but I guess you have to be Plain Jane for a while, you know.

00:06:40

RF: What do you think was so hard for your brother-in-law? If he knew within hours—or your brother-in-law, he knew within hours that he was out.

00:06:47

SG: He said it was smoke. He said it was smoke.

00:06:49

RF: Said it was smoke?

00:06:51

SG: Yeah.

00:06:51

GG: Well we—he had somebody cooking it but he was out there in it with him. You know, but he said, “No, that’s not for me. It’s not.” And he was serious. Yeah; so—so here we are. They set it up for us and since then Steve has renovated and added this area here, [*Gestures*] seating area because at first it was just a carry-out.

00:07:12

RF: Oh it was only a carry-out?

00:07:14

GG: Just a carry-out right there.

00:07:15

RF: How long was it just carry-out?

00:07:17

SG: Huh?

00:07:17

RF: How long was the restaurant just carry-out?

00:07:19

SG: We kept it that way about a year weren't it? And then I started work on it and—

00:07:25

GG: He made the bathrooms, more bathrooms, and a seating arrangement.

00:07:31

SG: This was a shell out here and so it was kind of hard to get a permit. I couldn't have got it this close to the road except the shell was already there, so I could—I weren't going to expand the building. I was just going to close it in. And so that worked out pretty good.

00:07:51

Since that time on the bread deal we—we've got it now to where we can cook—when we got big orders we go out in the trailer and that's where we got the donut dropper set up. We can go out there and just turn out 100 pieces in fifteen or twenty minutes. So it's no problem to keep up with the bread no more. And we've learned quite a few things in—over the years. We learned how to—what was it; the year before last at the Fourth of July we did 750 outside plus what came in the door that weekend, so we—we can handle 1,000 on a weekend now right—easy.

00:08:36

GG: I think we've—we've done [*Laughs*]*—*we've maneuvered pretty well. At least we got some more experience. But we had to learn.

00:08:44

RF: How long did—so you opened in 1986, correct?

00:08:46

GG: July—July 4th—July 4, 1986.

00:08:50

RF: Well you opened up on July 4th too?

00:08:51

GG: Yes; we did, uh-huh, July 4th.

00:08:54

RF: Was it really busy that weekend?

00:08:57

GG: Yeah; because we were the new—new store in the area [*Laughs*], a new restaurant in the area, so we really was.

00:09:05

RF: And—and both of you, you know, were cooks. You were familiar with barbecue. You're familiar with the kitchen and cooking—

00:09:14

GG: I was familiar with barbecue, too.

00:09:14

RF: So how—oh, you were familiar with barbecue, too. But how long did it take to get really comfortable into the restaurant and—and know you've been able to—would be able to feed hundreds of people a day?

00:09:24

SG: That took a couple of years.

00:09:27

GG: Took a couple years, yeah. We had—we had to find our way, maneuver.

00:09:32

SG: How to—

00:09:33

GG: It was a great experience for us too, to learn how to handle more than five, ten, or fifteen people you know.

00:09:43

SG: When we started into the catering, I remember the—what was it the first—second time we went out we forgot to sweeten their tea? *[Laughs]*

00:09:51

GG: So see, we had—we made boo-boos, too. *[Laughs]* You get in such a rush it—it comes—it's understandable I'm sure. But he went to the store nearby and got sugar, and we sweetened that tea, so that the people could have some sweet tea for their meal. And we were right there on the—on the scene you know to feed them, you know.

00:10:16

SG: That was—that was definitely embarrassing.

00:10:17

GG: Yeah; we didn't mean to do that.

00:10:21

RF: While we're on the subject of tea, I was in the kitchen earlier this morning and you were brewing the tea on the stove top. And I don't think many people do that anymore in barbecue places.

00:10:28

GG: They probably don't.

00:10:29

RF: Tell me why you still do that and how—how you do that—the process.

00:10:33

GG: Well we get so many compliments on the tea and that's our way of—of brewing it and sweetening it, after it's done. They—they like it. They crave it, you know; I shouldn't say crave it but they love it, you know. So that's why we go that route, the old-fashioned—we're old ourselves. *[Laughs]*

00:10:56

RF: That's what I was about to say is that you used that word this morning when I was asking about the tea, it's *old-fashioned*. Can you say more about that—what that means to you?

00:11:05

GG: Well I think what I mean is—is that you brew it. I mean we—we use—

00:11:15

SG: Well you tell some people that you use Lipton Tea they don't believe it. But it's what you do with what you got; that's the whole catch to the thing.

00:11:22

GG: Yeah; I think there's—there's probably other processes were they use a syrup. I don't know. I've heard that they do; I don't know.

00:11:25

SG: Most of them.

00:11:27

GG: But we don't. So that's why we brew it.

00:11:30

RF: What other things are done the old-fashioned way here?

00:11:35

GG: Um, the vegetables that we cook, black-eyed peas, steamed cabbage, boiled potatoes. We peel potatoes from scratch daily. We cook the black-eyed peas from scratch. The steamed cabbage is cooked from scratch. The—you know, most of our vegetables is cooked from scratch which you might say your slaw is made fresh daily. So we just go that route.

00:12:02

RF: And why—why do you keep doing it that way?

00:12:06

GG: Because we get so many compliments and that's the only thing I guess we know is hard work. And we just start from scratch; it comes natural to us.

00:12:18

SG: And the barbecue is done the old-fashioned way. It's basically the way my grandfather did it except he dug a hole under—in the ground and put the pig over it that way. That took too much wood even when I was helping him. So first few times I did it, I did it his way. But then I changed. I started sitting me some blocks up on top of the ground. I didn't put cement in them but just put them in there and found I didn't have to cover the hole up when I got through, and put a piece of tin in the bottom and get it, left overs up, brush it off; you couldn't hardly tell you was there.

00:13:03

So and then I seasoned it like he did only I, you know, with any good cook you got to add your own little touch to it. So I do it pretty much the old-fashioned way and little changes here and there.

00:13:22

RF: Do we need to take a quick break? Okay; we're going to pause for one second. Okay; so, Mr. Grady, you were just telling me about your grandfather. What was his name and where was he from?

00:13:33

SG: His name was Waller—Waller Matthew Grady. He's from Seven Springs. In the early days I never did know much about his Mama. I—he has a lot of people; they don't want to talk about the slavery part but he said he grew up around Seven Springs. And at the age of ten—eleven, he—I remember him telling me he worked at Seven Springs Hotel back then. I asked him, “What did he do at that age?” He said he tied the horses up, carried the luggage in and make the fires and that kind of stuff. So I said to him how much pay did you get? He said he didn't get any pay. He had something to eat and a place to stay. And he said his brother hired him out, so—. That's about all he would say about it. He lived to get about seventy-five.

00:14:39

And I began to learn some things that he didn't tell me since, you know—all the brothers that I knew about was his younger brothers, but I understand since then he had some older

brothers. It was a girl in here the other day; she was telling me about she was a—a distant cousin of mine. She'd been tracking the family history. Them older brothers was half white. I think they—the slave master bought himself a woman for the purpose of—instead of a wife, I reckon. But so I reckon that's why he didn't talk about it.

00:15:21

RF: And—and would he be doing barbecue on where he lived? Who—who was he barbecuing for?

00:15:30

SG: Well, when I was a boy my grandfather had his own little grate. He was the barbecue cook of the neighborhood like, you know, anybody wanting one cooked they would get him to come cook it, you know, for them and that kind of stuff. So he—he cooked barbecue; yeah. And Daddy could cook one but Daddy didn't like to do it. And he wouldn't hardly do it if he could get around it. So, but he'd cook one maybe once or twice a year.

00:15:59

And way back then everybody used to cook a real small hog, mostly a little family gathering or something. And they—they thought you couldn't cook one over fifty—sixty pounds.

[Laughs]

00:16:11

GG: That's small.

00:16:14

RF: What was your father's name?

00:16:14

SG: Oscar; his name was Oscar.

00:16:18

RF: And where did you all grow up and live?

00:16:22

SG: On the other side of Seven Springs around close to LaGrange in a little place they called Buckleberry down in there. So I think they—his mother's peoples came from Buckleberry down in there. You might find around LaGrange that there was Suttons, quite a few Suttons around LaGrange. It was a big plantation, and you might find blacks around LaGrange with the same—same last name but they're no—not related, quite a few of them.

00:16:58

RF: And so they would—would they do—they'd do these small whole hogs for pay for the neighborhood?

00:17:03

SG: Yeah; well it weren't a whole lot of money going around back in those days, you know. Peoples way back there instead of pay you, it was kind of like a favor here and a favor back later and that kind of stuff. Weren't much money going around. Even when I was a boy, if you got a

chance to work for somebody barning tobacco or something what was it—two dollars and a half, three dollars a day, ten hours, so it weren't much money going on. Most of the time it was you—you would—your daddy would send you to help the neighbor and the neighbor would send his children back to help you and that kind of stuff. So it weren't no money going around much.

00:17:47

RF: And do you remember helping your grandfather and father cook hogs?

00:17:52

SG: Yeah; from early age—I mean, the best I could remember around Daddy's house, he—when you were big enough to walk you were big enough to work a little bit. *[Laughs]* You could do something. And he got a little better as he got older, but I remember in the young days be suckling tobacco and the little children would be around the bottom where he'd have to bend down and you get that suckling down there. And so you start work early—three or four years old.

00:18:33

So I don't even remember how young it was when I was—recall myself helping Granddaddy cook a pig, so I always knew how to cook a pig. That wasn't no problem.

00:18:43

RF: Mrs. Grady where were you born? Where—where are you from? Where were you born?

00:18:48

GG: Seven Springs, in North Carolina.

00:18:54

RF: And what did your family do?

00:18:56

GG: Farm; they farmed too, so I'm a farmer's daughter, too.

00:19:00

RF: And you were saying that your grandmother and mother also were really great cooks.

00:19:05

GG: And my mother-in-law.

00:19:07

RF: And your mother-in-law.

00:19:08

GG: His mother.

00:19:08

RF: Oh okay; who taught you to cook? Did they?

00:19:11

GG: Yeah; they sure did. I listened to what they had to say and my Mama started me and she was an old-fashioned cook. She cooked like her mother. And it—it just—that was it—just my way of getting started.

00:19:27

RF: What—what was your mother's name and what were your favorite memories of what she cooked? What was your favorite things that she cooked?

00:19:34

GG: Uh, she could cook—I don't know, everything; chicken pastry, chicken salad, baked—she'd bake a pot roast or just anything she set her heart and mind to. The grilled cake, old-fashioned cornbread that she used to cook on top of the stove, I—I loved that. And she—she used to do some smothered chicken, spare ribs, ribs, you know, from the—pork ribs that is and she just—old-fashioned. That's the only way she knew too—turnip greens, collards.

00:20:15

RF: And what was her name?

00:20:16

GG: Sally Flannigan Kornegay.

00:20:24

RF: What—how was your maiden name, what—how is it spelled?

00:20:25

GG: K-o-r-n-e-g-a-y. Some people say “Kornegay” [pronounced ‘Carnegie’].

00:20:31

RF: And you said that you knew some about barbecuing before you came here. Where did you know that? How much did you know? What was your experience?

00:20:38

GG: Just about like him, cooking the whole hog in the yard [*Laughs*] and dug a pit in the yard, dug a hole in the yard and put wire down and you laid your pig down there and you got your coals and put your coals under the pig. So I—I got used to it like that and chopping it up too.

00:20:58

RF: So—so where did you two meet?

00:21:02

GG: Uh-oh. [*Laughs*] Oh me; it’s funny but I always tell everybody he watched me grow up. How about that?

00:21:12

RF: So you grew up close to each other?

00:21:14

GG: Well, not really.

00:21:18

SG: We moved up here, I was about twelve or thirteen and she was about six or seven. And we rode—rode the same school bus so we—so we always knew each other. And it just happened to work out that we got together. Her marriage failed and mine did too, so we ended up getting together.

00:21:47

GG: So he ended up plucking me. I tell everybody he ended up plucking me. He watched me grow up and plucked me.

00:21:55

RF: How long have y'all been married? When did you get married?

00:21:56

GG: About twenty-six years.

00:21:58

RF: Oh, so you married right around when the business happened?

00:22:02

GG: Uh-huh.

00:22:02

RF: Ah, so you were newlyweds—

00:22:02

GG: Yeah.

00:22:04

RF: —when you opened this. How was that? I mean starting two things at once.

00:22:09

GG: Fine; it worked out good. *[Laughs]*

00:22:14

RF: And why did it—how did it work out good? How—you know, how does this all come together so well?

00:22:18

GG: Well, I've always been used to working, hard work; so has he.

00:22:26

RF: And this was kind of a retirement job for your husband. Was it also for you and what did—oh, we know you worked in the hospital before. Was it—did you quit that? Were you still doing that when you came here?

00:22:35

GG: My position was terminated because I had back ailments so they terminated my position so they told me. That's why they let me go.

00:22:47

RF: How was it retiring to get another job? How does—how does that feel?

00:22:52

SG: Well it's—it's good when—when it don't get overloaded, you know, because—.

00:23:00

GG: You tell yourself your body parts need to stay in action. Your—your hands, your thinking cap, the whole works; your body needs to stay active. So you tell yourself this and this makes you apply yourself daily, which is good because it keeps us on the move and on the go.

00:23:20

RF: And does it stay fun?

00:23:21

GG: Yeah; there's some fun involved. Yeah, especially when you forget what you put down and stand there and forget what—what you're going to do. **[Laughs]** You say, “Oh, old age is after me.” We make a laugh out of it.

00:23:37

RF: So and tell me what kind of barbecue you do for the people who are going to read this and listen to this.

00:23:42

SG: Well they call it Eastern North Carolina barbecue. And—

00:23:47

GG: Which is vinegar based.

00:23:48

SG: Nobody do it like Eastern North Carolina. But everybody in Eastern North Carolina still has a little bit of different ways they do it.

00:23:57

GG: That's for sure. They got—they do; they really do.

00:24:01

SG: Everybody seems to think theirs is better than the next person and some of it's right and some of it's not. But we think ours is the best. Wilber probably thinks his is the best. McCall's probably thinks his is the best.

00:24:17

GG: So you really can't blame; you know you really can't blame. You got to have some faith in yourself, especially when it comes to your own taste, so—. That's—I guess that's having freedom of speech, freedom of whatever.

00:24:32

RF: And so tell me what makes yours the best or what do you do that—that is—that is special here in preparation? And this is whole hog we're talking about, correct?

00:24:42

SG: Right; I think it's—

00:24:45

GG: The long hard hours.

00:24:46

SG: —I think it's your taste as being able to put the right ingredients in to make it come out just like you want it. I think that's the whole bottom line right there which basically all of it is the same, but it don't all taste the same. So, I think that's the catch to it is knowing how to season it where most people would like it. And this one lady told me I was blessed with the—to be able to season food the way peoples want it just about without putting anything on it. So that—that—I think that would sum it up pretty good. It's—it's all basically the same but it don't taste the same, so—. That's the whole catch to it.

00:25:31

GG: Because everybody's taste is not the same. You know, what's good to me might not be good to you—simple.

00:25:39

SG: I try to do it so, you know, even if I like a little more salt figure, well, you may not like a little more so I don't get it to suit my taste completely. I—I like to leave it where you could add a little bit—even a little more vinegar, sauce or whatever; you add a little bit. Don't never over-do it. And that's worked out pretty good.

00:26:05

We was down there to this wedding Saturday night and there was 200—and I reckon thirty-five or forty peoples came up and complimented on how good it was. So that makes you think you're pretty much on the right track.

00:26:21

RF: And—and so talking about customers and customers' tastes I want to talk a bit about where we are. We're—we're in Dudley, North Carolina, correct, and we're kind of at this crossroads of two highways. And we're—we're—I mean, this is rural. How do people find y'all? Who eats here?

00:26:42

SG: They—I think you—if you read Bob Garner, I believe it was, said, “You got to start looking for it. You can't come out and just accidentally find it.” So you got to know what you're looking for. And so far we've had a lot of free publicity and they usually find us. They do fairly good; we don't want too much work. We just want enough to get by. *[Laughs]*

00:27:08

GG: That's true.

00:27:11

RF: So—so people hear about you and—and then come visit is what you're saying?

00:27:15

GG: Yes; we've had them to fly in from—when we were published in *GQ Magazine*, the year 2000, we just had them fly in from New York just for lunch. We were real impressed—have been impressed and we still get them from all over—California—.

00:27:31

SG: And had two people here from England.

00:27:33

GG: Yeah; we did. Two came from England and that was—that concerned the Food Channel also. It's just been interesting. We're grateful.

00:27:42

RF: We need to take a quick break. Okay; so sir, I want to ask you what's the importance of—of pit-cooked barbecue, of doing it that way still.

00:27:55

SG: It's the—I think it's the slow cooking. You want to cook it at least six hours and I think that's the whole catch it to right there. You can cook it faster but you won't get the same tastes, so you want to cook it slow enough to—I think the word would be slow-roasted pork is the—is the name for it. And that's—that's what makes it better barbecue.

00:28:32

But and with gas, I don't care how slow you cook it, there's a difference. I've tried it because everybody wants to do work a little easier but this one is one of those that don't pay off. So when you switch to gas you switch the flavor.

00:28:54

RF: And what's the importance of whole hog and—and not shoulders or—or butt or—?

00:28:58

SG: Well you take the—all right, the ham is mostly dry. Shoulders is somewhat better but then you get the bacon part, where it's mostly fat. And that's where you're going to get the flavor from—right there. Mix it altogether and you got the whole different taste. It's—well, every part of the hog tastes a little different if you take time to examine it. You know, the pork chop is a little different from the taste of the ham and the ham is a little different taste from the shoulder. And of course this side, the bacon part is—is different, so all of it is a little different. And you mix it all together and you get a whole hog different flavor.

00:29:49

Now the people that cook the shoulders might say the opposite, but that's my theory.

00:29:55

RF: And you were telling me earlier, when we were—when we were in the pit house, that—that you've always had two jobs and even now you have—you have this job and you—you sell cows right?

00:30:08

SG: Yeah; a little bit of farming right on. That's farming is hard to get out of your blood.

Although you lose money you keep doing it. [*Laughs*]

00:30:16

RF: And your wife just used the word *hard work*, and this is just hard work. The barbecue business is hard work but you—but you love it. Why is staying busy so important? Why is working hard so important to you two and—and not retiring and—and just you know being at home? Or what takes hard work? As a young man, I want to work hard and I look up to y'all; I admire your—your work ethic, so what—what do you tell young people or anyone about working hard?

00:30:46

SG: The human body was not made to stay still. It was made to move. And I think you will find that now that even people say you got to exercise and keep the body in shape. And so, why run for nothing when you can work and make a penny or two maybe? So that's—that's the difference. You've got to keep the body moving. If you don't it'll shut down on you, so I'll—I'll soon be seventy-seven and I'm in pretty good shape right on—you know. So I think you got to keep moving if you want to live. That's one thing you hear on television when they're trying to sell their—their drugs; they say a body in motion seems to stay in motion and a body in rest seems to stay at rest. I think that's—that's pretty good.

00:31:43

RF: And what does hard work mean to you?

00:31:45

GG: Staying busy, which is good; I'm used to that—applying yourself and making sure if things turn out all right to the best of your ability and this business requires hard work. That's why I said that, you know. Coming up on a farm I'm used to it—being in the fields, helping to harvest the cucumbers or whatever, you know, picking beans or whatever. But that's what I mean.

00:32:25

RF: So what happens with Grady's? What—what's its legacy? Do you have—do you have children from your previous marriages that work here? What happens?

00:32:38

GG: We—they—they come in and help us sometimes but this—they got their own thing, so they're not interested in this being their life. So it's just us.

00:32:53

RF: And—

00:32:54

SG: When we get tired of it we'll just quit. That's it.

00:32:58

RF: You'll just close it down?

00:32:59

SG: Yeah; that's the plan so far.

00:33:01

RF: And—and is there a—do you ever talk about that? I mean, I know was reading the *GQ* article from 2000 on the wall that you mentioned and it said that you only had a year or two left in you and now this is eleven years later.

00:33:13

GG: Well, when you get an ache or a pain and you wake up with an ache or pain that's one of the things you think about—can I go a little bit longer, you know. But we're thankful that we're doing as well as we are.

00:33:26

RF: So will you—how will you decide? Will you advertise that or will you just decide one day that it's—that it's over? Have you thought about that?

00:33:35

SG: Well, my plan next year is I'm going to take a vacation.

00:33:40

RF: When was the last time you had a vacation?

00:33:42

SG: It was '82.

00:33:46

RF: You need a vacation.

00:33:47

SG: If we got a chance to go anyplace to amount to anything. But after we got this place there's been no vacation. You know, we take a few days off but just to get out and go places and do nothing or—I don't know. I think I want one maybe a month, two months, three months; I want to drive—the last time we drove I—all the way to California and we went through Las Vegas and Grand Canyon, Austin and all right through there and came back. We went across one way and came back around the East in the—that was enjoyable. But that's the last time we was—at that time we were sure we were going to do it again pretty quick. But that didn't come up.

00:34:33

RF: And what was in '82? And so what are your plans this time for your vacation?

00:34:38

SG: I want to go all the way to Seattle, Washington, the northern route. And I want to get into Canada. You can get lost in Canada. We've done that one time, but—and then come back across

flat border country. And when I get tired just stay right here for a few days or a few weeks or maybe a month and then move on. So that's—when I go on vacation next I'm just going to put a sign on the door *gone on vacation*. I ain't going to say nothing about coming back. And if we get back, rest up, go back to work maybe 'til we die. If—if we don't never feel like going we won't never go back.

00:35:27

RF: So what does Grady's mean to this community? When this place disappears or closes what happens?

00:35:34

SG: They can go to the other places. [*Laughs*]

00:35:40

RF: It's that easy. [*Laughs*]

00:35:43

SG: It won't cost us nothing. They can go anywhere they want to. I mean most of the people nowadays just are not going to work this hard. And day behind day—you got to get up before day and sometimes stay up all night and I have stayed up three days without going to bed. I try to avoid that now. But I have done it. The last—the last year when I was going to leave [**Unintelligible**] down here and we were going to stay a while and came back and stayed gone about a couple hours and came back and he had the whole—there was a fire lit and I knew he

was fit to burn up. And I don't know; he's—they don't—don't seem to be able to grasp it you know like they're supposed to because if they ever catch a fire just it's done. You can't put it out. You can put it out but I mean it's—you got to throw that way; it's gone.

00:36:44

RF: So, I just have one last question: Is barbecue in your blood? Do you love doing what you do?

00:36:50

GG: Yeah; I do. I'm thankful, very thankful that things are as well as they are. I appreciate the response from the public and friends and family. We're just grateful that things has worked out for us as well as it is. We—we know that the God is in the midst. And it's good to have a job. That's the way we look at it each day. With the economy like it is, like I said we're grateful.

00:37:22

RF: And yourself, sir?

00:37:24

SG: I like it but I could do without it. *[Laughs]* But she loves it so we'll stay right along as I feel like going. I—I like it except, you know, sometimes when it gets—gets too many orders and you got to stay up for two or three days, I don't like it so good then. But most of the time I like it.

00:37:53

RF: Okay; well I think it's time for business. We're opening—we're about to—. But I think this is a good place to end the interview, so I want to thank y'all very much. This is—this was a wonderful forty minutes that we spent together. I want to thank y'all.

00:38:18

GG: I hope—I hope we helped you in some way. It's been nice talking to you—fun.

00:38:24

RF: I hope it was fun for you too, sir.

00:38:26

SG: It was. I enjoyed it. I—I try to enjoy every day as I go along. The days that—the days that last—this day is the last this day. You won't see this one no more.

00:38:42

RF: All right; well thank you.

00:38:43

[End Gerri & Stephen Grady-Grady's Barbecue]