

Bobby Mueller
Louie Mueller BBQ—Taylor, Texas

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&
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[BEGIN INTERVIEW]

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Gavin Benke: All right, this is Gavin Benke on July 25, 2007, and I'm, um, in Taylor, Texas with Bob Mueller of Louis Mueller Barbeque, and just to check levels and to get things started, if you wouldn't mind, Mr. Mueller, uh, stating your, um, name and—name and birth date, and then we'll move on from there.

Bobby Mueller: Bobby Mueller, July 16, 1939.

GB: All right, great, thank you very much. So, uh, before we get into specifics about how barbecue is made today, if you could tell us just a little bit about the history of the place, like who started Louie Mueller?

BM: It was started by my dad, who—that's the name—who was Louie Mueller, and it was back in 1949. It was an offshoot from the grocery store—the meat market and the grocery store. It was done so to get rid of, you know, meat and stuff, to keep it going, and that's—and as it turned out, the barbecue pit outlasted the, uh, grocery store

GB: And about when did that happen? When did you guys stop the—

BM: They closed the grocery store in 1974, and then concentrated fully on that. We moved in this building in 1959, our present location.

GB: And then be—before then, where was the place located?

BM: It was in a parking lot next to the barbecue—next to the grocery store. It was a screened-in type shed. That worked from there

GB: And what were the reasons for the—for the move?

BM: Uh, just too much charge business, and not enough cash business. And just, you know, just grocery stores and stuff just can't—had a lot of bad accounts, and finally gave up the fight
[Laughs].

GB: At the same time, that's also when you guys decided to go over to barbecue entirely?

BM: Strictly, yes. Uh-huh.

GB: Uh, ok, great. And can you maybe talk a little bit about—about this building?

BM: The building was built in nineteen, six. So, it basically is the same age as my dad, uh, as a coincidence I guess. But then it served as multiple things over the years, from—they say at one time when it was vacant, they played girls basketball in here in the twenties, and that was verified by an old high school teacher of mine because she said she was the coach. For a bunch of years, it was a grocery store and then it was a typewriter repair shop and then we moved in '59—been here ever since. The addition over there was added in 2000. So, that's pretty much it.

GB: OK, great. OK, thanks. When did you actually become involved in the business?

BM: In October 1974, that's when I took over here.

GB: That's about the same time then that you all stopped selling groceries.

BM: I bought my dad out then for the barbecue pit and, uh, came on over here and worked over here.

GB: So, was the idea to stop selling groceries yours or your father's?

BM: No, his. He wanted to retire, so that—that was the deal.

GB: OK, thank you. And then, did you learn to barbecue from your father?

BM: Uh, no, my father never struck a match in here. The fellow that was here for years by the name of Fred Fontaine, he basically—watching him and, uh, just doing and seeing other things, and just—and then just by doing, you know, over the years, trying this, trying that, see what works and what doesn't work.

GB: And did you start with that in the seventies when you took over? Or had you learned how to barbecue before that?

BM: Oh, no, no. I got started in the seventies, cold. I just—that was when I first started.

GB: And what were you doing before that?

BM: I was running the meat market over at the grocery store. That's where I was then.

GB: So you've always been involved in the business?

BM: Yes, except for times at school and times in the service.

GB: OK, thanks. So, why don't we talk a little bit more about, uh, maybe the specifics of the actual--actual barbecuing? What kind of wood do you all use?

BM: We use post oak. It's a good hard wood. It gives meat a good flavor, and it's something we, you know, started with—always have been with. You change woods, you're going to change the flavor of the meat, so pretty well stay with it.

GB: So, you've never moved off post oak?

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BM: No, no sir, sure haven't.

GB: Have you—have you changed your supplier of wood over the years?

BM: Oh, yeah, we've had a couple of them die. But it basically—it comes from the same part of the country, though, and the same wood, so.

GB: And I guess while we're talking about suppliers, what about suppliers for your meat?

BM: Meat—pretty much with the same people for several years now. It's right down there, called Brien—O'Brien Meats, and they're right down the street from us. We also use Taylor Meat Company. So, just mostly local here as far as meat goes.

GB: All right, and then In terms of sausage, etcetera, can you talk a little—

BM: We make our own.

GB: And that's always been the case, as well?

BM: Yes. Ever since day one, it's always been made. First through the meat market, and then came over here, brought the sausage stuff over here, you know, with us. So, and we've always done it.

GB: And what about the—what about the sides?

BM: That was just something we developed in '74—we only had potato salad. We came over

here, and we've added slaw and beans. And so, it just—recipes developed over the years, had a basic recipe from, uh, people, and just a combination to see and then up—up it to, you know, portioning and make it for bulk, figuring it out that way.

GB: About when did you all start adding the slaw, the beans?

BM: October '74 when we moved in here.

GB: So, '74 is a big year for Louis Mueller.

BM: A lot of changes made that year, not to the pleasure of the fellow that was running it at the time, but it worked, over the years, so.

GB: So, in terms of the guy who was running it at the time, can you talk about the—the person that was running the barbecue—

BM: He was a jewel, he really was. He had a good following. He kept a pretty good business going. He just get set in things, like I guess we all do. And, uh, but no, he retired when he was sixty-two, and then he passed away, oh, about ten years ago, I believe it was. But all-in-all he was a good guy, he really was, got a lot of publicity.

GB: Was he the one, was he with your father from the start?

BM: Yes, he was not—well, he was at the grocery store to start, and someone else was running the barbecue pit. And when this guy had decided to quit and go into business for himself, then Fred, like I did, he went over there and went over there cold—just learned by doing, so.

GB: So your father actually bought the barbecue business from—from someone else?

BM: No, he started it himself. He started it, but he was never in, like I said, the daily operation of it. He always had a barbecuer, someone, a manager working it, you know, doing the cooking, and etcetera.

GB: But you yourself actually do a lot of the—

BM: Yes, and that Lance back there, young man that's with me, too, between us, and the ladies help where they're needed too.

GB: All right. And then in terms of Fred and having a following and all that kind of, um, stuff, you mentioned you added sides when you took over. Did you change the way he actually cooks at all—the seasonings or any of that?

BM: Mmm-hmmm. I didn't cook as hot and as fast as he did, and, you know, get it as done as he did. I use a lot more pepper than he did. I make the—that rub I use, I get it on there pretty thick. It helps seal the juices in.

GB: And what about the sausage? Did you change—

BM: Oh, well, no. That sausage—Fred never did anything with the sausage. He cooked it, but that was it. The sausage, I played with it over all the years. And I, just—I'm still playing with it, you know, trying to change the formula up a little here, a little there. We've added jalapeno—make a jalapeno sausage now and a chipotle sausage. But the basic seasoning's still the same, just pepper's added to that.

GM: OK, and then, in terms of the sides, where did those recipes come from?

00:09:43

BM: The potato salad is based on my mother-in-law, kind of, the way she made it with mayonnaise, little mustard in there, and the dill pickles rather than sweat pickles—mayonnaise rather than Miracle Whip or salad dressing, no onion. And then the slaw, that's just something—tried this, you know, with the vinegar and a little bit of sugar and this, and finally went back and settled the way it is now, after trial and error, salt and pepper, carrot, a little carrot in there, and mayonnaise and just that way. Beans, uh, basically a combination of what—my dad used to cook beans because he did a little cooking at the house; my wife, some of her—the way she did it; and then I spotted somebody adding chopped onions into it and cooking it, and I thought, “Hey that looked pretty good.” So, just over the years get it, and then figured out how to get it, you know, the bulk part of it, the number, commercial-size servings.

GB: OK, so they've—so, the recipes have changed over the years?

BM: Oh, yeah, but always, well, we feel for the better *[Laughs]*. Hopefully.

GB: I'm sure. Have you guys ever thought of adding more sides?

BM: No, that's enough for us, now. We—that—and we never got into the pastry end of it either, or have the pudding, we do have a little ice cream for dessert. But, uh, maybe that day—maybe that will change one of these days, but not in the near future, I don't think.

GB: OK, and what about the drinks? What about—what do people usually drink when they come here?

BM: Uh, we got tea, lemonade, of course, water, and then a variety of sodas. And, we have beer available, but beer's not really a big item. It's mainly I think because it's a lunch crowd we get. It's tea, and the soda water of choice seems to be Big Red because they seem to think it goes with barbecue for some reason.

GB: That's—

BM: And the tea, of course, and lemonade.

GB: We've heard that a couple times from different places, that Big Red is a big item. Do you have any theories why?

BM: I don't know. Several years ago there was, I think somebody—*Texas Monthly* or some magazine did an article or—and I think there was a picture associated with the article that was a bottle of Big Red there with the barbecue. And I don't know whether that's what started it, or some just some word of mouth, you know, just how things get—I just really don't know. Just my theory *[Laughs]*.

GB: Do you—what do you usually drink when you have it?

BM: Me? Just, I drink water. Because I'm usually just—what I eat is just usually just during the sampling time deal.

00:12:56

GB: All right. You just mentioned that lunchtime was a big time for you guys—

BM: That's because we're basically midday—we open at ten and we close at six, but we're mainly the, you know, lunch through, you know, early afternoon or early evening. We tried later hours, but it just doesn't. So, this is our hours that we're set with.

GB: And what sorts of customers do you get? Who eats here?

BM: White collar, blue collar, travelers, just a potpourri of individuals. Just, we get all—we draw all of them. About eighty percent of our business though is out-of-town people. They come from the Round Rock, Austin area, Georgetown, moreso than the local business, because most of the local people work out of town, and so they're not around during the lunch, you know.

GB: That's, uh, that's actually very interesting. I'm sure some of that comes from the amount of press that—

BM: We've had good publicity—we've been very fortunate on that. So, uh, and well, that really is what brings them in, I believe.

GM: And about when did that media attention start?

BM: Oh, gosh. A little bit in the sixties, had a little bit, seventies a little, and then I think it must have been the eighties into the nineties, and then it's probably peaked out toward the end—right around 2000. And it just keeps building each year, and it's been just average this year. We've been fortunate enough to have people come through, just like this. And summer seems to be the time when all the barbecue, uh, people are writing about it, doing this, and little projects that they do come through, you know, but we've been fortunate.

GB: And certainly you guys—I saw a food network segment on you guys not too long ago, as well. Has all the media attention been good or are there certain misconceptions that get out there about you guys?

BM: Oh, we've been fortunate. Pretty much—all the things we've gotten have been good so far. Of course, you keep your fingers crossed, there's always that one person that won't like it, or find something wrong. But all-in-all, I've—not so far right now that I've seen anyway, it's been

OK. You know, it's been all right.

00:15:47

GB: OK, and earlier you mentioned earlier that your wife has helped out with the sides. And I've noticed in a lot of the stories very often you're photographed with your wife or mentioned with her, how involved is she in the business?

BM: Not that much anymore other than the bookkeeping now. She, uh, her back has gotten real bad, so she can't stand very long, so she keeps up with the books, and that's just about that, and offers advice. Nothing wrong with that, so. Day-to-day operation, no, not anymore.

GB: And then, what about your children? Are they involved in the business at all?

BM: Not really, no. One son was for a while, but he's moved off to—he's up in the panhandle now, he's working for a restaurant chain. Daughter isn't, she's a freelance photographer. And then I've got—oldest boy is in management consulting, he's got his own business, so. Although, he is showing a little interest, he wants to make sure this place keeps going, that's his deal, so.

GB: So the ownership will stay in the family?

BM: Yes, basically, yes

GB: But right now you're the only—

BM: My wife and I, yeah, we're the—right now, we're the—and whatever the case passing, the majority will stay in the family. I'm sure however they'd do it would add somebody else to it etcetera, if necessary.

00:17:28

GB: You mentioned, actually, when you'd made some changes, you mentioned that you don't cook as fast. So, one question that's definitely—about how long does it take to make your brisket?

BM: Depending on the size, and—depending on the size of the brisket, it's four to six hours on the average because I like to get—try to get that deal where they're still not overcooked, still good and juicy, but yet they're not tough. And, sometimes it works good, and sometimes you have a problem. Sometime you send something out that's not as tender as the person would look it, but I think most of the time that we hit it pretty good.

GB: And about what time do you all start?

BM: Weekdays between four and four thirty and Saturdays it's about an hour or two earlier because cooking kind of in shifts on Saturday, like start off then, still by two o'clock in the afternoon, still cooking a batch of meat. It'll be the last of it the last of it coming off then, and that way we pretty well make it through without selling out.

GB: So, is Saturday big business for you all or is it—

BM: Friday and Saturday, yes—Saturday preliminary. I mean, Saturday has gotten to be the bigger of the two, yes.

GB: All right is it—so, what about the weekday business?

BM: It's holding pretty steady. You—it's just you're subject to, you know, whether the people are traveling or, you know, whether they're going to come here for lunch or whether they're going to go to the hamburger joint behind us, or whatever. It's just, whatev—all-in-all, though, our lunch hours hold up pretty good.

GB: OK, great, and, uh, I guess as well, with all these sort of cooking techniques, um, can you tell us maybe a little bit more about uh about how you season, or?

BM: Uh, only thing we use is just got a little pot there that put pepper—black pepper in, put a little bit salt in, put some more black pepper in, just mix it up real good, and that's all we use. Just rub it in the meat, the brisket, pork, the ribs—pork ribs and stuff or steak that we use, don't rub that, that's just normal seasoning, but brisket is rubbed and rubbed down good.

GB: And you are actually one of the barbecue joints that serves steaks as well. When did you start introducing—

BM: Always that, we've always done that. Actually, that's—the boneless brisket, as far as we're concerned, didn't come in until the sixties. Everything was sold, uh—because it was coming

from the meat market, everything was sold like the roasts and steaks, that's what was handled. And the brisket at that time was a brisket rib. That was cut, that—and then people kept asking for the boneless, “How come? How come?” And finally, you know, you give into them. If you want to stay alive, you go with what people are asking for. And uh, so, then we cut it down, did the boneless brisket, some steaks, some beef roast, the pork ribs, and now we've gone on in to—because of demand, boneless turkey breast, chicken breast, even half fryers, etc., that stuff, boneless pork loin, because it's what people more and more ask for.

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GB: And so when that happens, when people start requesting different items, do you have to go out and figure out how you're going to cook it and prepare it and find suppliers and all that?

BM: Well, you buy it, yeah. And then you just throw it on and watch it. You just learn to cook it, or, you know. It's—the pork loin is an easy item to cook. Boneless turkey breasts are a little bit on the hard side, because they are lean. You know, there's no—so, you've got to catch them where you don't dry them out. The breast is still juicy when you're serving it, so.

GB: And then I guess out of, out of all, when did you guy start adding the turkey and the chicken and all that?

BM: Turkey, well, chicken we started, aw, probably in the late eighties and nineties, just on weekends. And then, just until recently, started handling it every day, the half chickens. We used to take—took the chicken breast, boneless turkey breast in the last two or three years. It—you know, people really insisted, so.

GB: And then as long as we're talking about uh the different items, let's talk about maybe what your favorite is, and—

BM: Uh, I just—anytime don't really have a favorite I guess, I just, because I just, excuse me, nibble on everything. I like sausage, I guess, because that usually has a different flavor every time, and the brisket. But all-in-all, all of it I like.

GB: OK, that's good. And, uh, one thing we should definitely talk about is the distinctive Louie Mueller sauce, which is known as being almost like an au jus.

BM: It's just a mixture of salt, pepper, uh, tomato ketchup, and, uh, margarine, and bouillon, and just mixed up and it just—it's not a heavy, heavy—it's not sweet, no sugar or anything added to sweeten it, and nothing added in to it to thicken it. It's just that way and it—it's just something that came about over years, you know.

GB: So, so that's also changed over the years?

BM: No, that's pretty well stuck with that. And once it was done, and it's pretty well been the same. Sometime it might be a little, not noticeably thicker, maybe a little bit, you know, not the heavy sauce, but it might cook down a little thicker than normal or than we usually serve it. But all-in-all it remains about the same texture all the way through—consistency.

GB: All right, and is that certainly what you find—what keeps a lot of people coming back?

BM: Uh, That's what we strive for in everything we serve, you know, all of it just to be consistent and not an up and down deal, one time good, and the next time eh, you know, and try for just every time, and get as close as we can every time. That's just—and I say, it's hard to do, especially in weather like this. Since we use no artificial means, heating or anything, no gas to start the fire, we don't use gas to cook, or anything for it. And when your wood's wet like now, it's wet because you can't get it enough and try to say ahead enough. So, you're cooking a little longer, and you've really got to be careful because you can, you know, pull it a little too soon. And it's just not as—it's not an easy time, not a fun time right now. We need dry weather
[Laughs].

00:25:08

GB: And certainly this is, uh, for the record, one of the—one of the wettest summers this area has ever had. Are there are any—sort of, what measures have you all taken, uh, to—to kind of keep the wood from, uh—

BM: We try to keep a couple days ahead, but this has been impossible this year, you know, this summer. It's like in the wintertime, we got to back it—well, all the wood is brought in well ahead, and it's stored in the back to keep it basically dry and try to keep a dry supply in at all times. But, this way—same way with this, it went for a while and we were able to keep it dry, but finally it just—you get overwhelmed, it just won't stop long enough to dry out.

GB: And certainly this summer is unusual. Can you remember other times that there was

something—?

BM: Never. Not—not like this. I remember in ‘57, the last—what they are comparing this year to, when the lakes rose up, you know, basically over night. But that was in May, it ended in May, it wasn’t drug out through half the summer like this one has been. And evidently it’s going to be the rest of this month and probably next month before we’re clear. I’ve never seen anything like it, no.

GB: And have you found that this sort of thing has hurt business or effected business?

BM: Well, yesterday it did, because that shower—the way that thunderstorm hit right at lunchtime, it didn’t go. Before it was going, we were getting a good start on it, and then after people came in, but not right it and we’ve been fortunate, and we’ve been doing better than I thought we would, so—so far anyway. It’ll start hurting some of the construction people, they’re not going to be getting much of a paycheck, and they won’t be spending a lot on barbecue I don’t think *[Laughs]*.

GB: As long as we’re talking about customers and business, one of the big features of this building is certainly the wall of business cards. It looks like some of them have been up there for years now, can you talk—

BM: That board went up—people used to just stick them on the wall, but in the—right after we came over, we brought some of these boards over from the grocery store, and people started

taping them on there then. And there's been a bunch of them that—it gets humid as the dickens in here in the summer time. It'll—they'll fall off, and although you'll try to get them back up and everything, but they get lost. So, but all—there's some of them that have been there since—since we put that board up anyway.

GB: And is that—?

BM: No, I just said, “You’re just going to have to go back underneath there and look.” You can see some you can’t even make out what they are anymore.

GB: And has that now become a tradition for some people to go and—

BM: Yeah, they do, and they'll go look if their card is still up there. It seems to have become a focal point. It's a focal point for cameras and everything else, too. People take—very seldom miss that board over there. We've been fortunate that way too, that people leave their card here.

GB: And, you actually mentioned that some of the cards came over when you all changed locations. And, uh, let's talk about—

BM: No, no, the board we've got them stuck on, not the cards. That pegboard is what we brought over, and then—because they were just sticking straight on the wall. And that wall won't hurt hold anything because in weather like this, it will—not as bad now, since we added the other side, but that wall will sweat. You can see at times see the grease—how the paint—how the

grease would run down the wall because they'd be sweating so bad. It doesn't sound very appetizing, but they do sweat *[Laughs]*. Because it is concrete there, they are concrete walls.

GB: And if we could go maybe back to the—to the move from locations. What happened to your old pit there? Is it the same pit, or do you guys—

BM: Uh, well, uh the brick pit back was built here. That one came over, the one that he's over playing with there. And that—the one on the other side, we just built four or five years ago when we built this. There's another pit back there that's a metal pit like that one. But, uh, all these pits, those two have been with us since we've been—the brick pit since '59 because it was built in here, the metal one since before then, and it made the move over here.

Carly Kocurek: Oh, wow.

BM: And the tables, they've been here—except for that bench and that bench, but these tables are all originals that were in here that we brought over here or set up in here. And those little square two-seaters, those were in this side, too.

00:30:32

CK: How did you move the pit, like how?

BM: I wasn't here when that was moved, but they, uh—that back end was—you could get it through that back end back there before because that's where the wood is where—that little room back there, that was built on. There was a fire back there, and when they repaired, when they

rebuilt from the fire, they added on that back room. But these—that pit over there was put on before the roof was put on, used a crane and dropped it down in there, so.

GB: In terms of the newer pits, who built those for you?

BM: A manufacturing place out there, Babaco, maybe Babco? Industries, they built that new one over there. They did a good job, too. They're a local—they're a local ironwork here.

GB: And did you specify that the pits had to be like your old pits so you could continue to cook the same way?

BM: Oh, well yes. They're—it's bigger than this one, the new one is, but it's built on the same premise. A firebox, and let the heat draw. And it's actually a step better than this one is here. It's—it's got two different—it's got the where you can adjust on the chimney, and also on the firebox down there, you can adjust the firebox down there. So, it's actually better. And, if you catch it on fire, you can close it real quick, and it doesn't get up the chimney *[Laughs]*.

GB: And, then maybe just for the record, uh, what about the first pit? Who built, uh, the, uh, original pits?

BM: That I don't know. That's, uh, I don't know who it was. I was in—when we moved over here, I was away at the time. I was in school at the time. I was in Fort Worth. I really don't—just some of the local bricklayers, and I'm not sure who did. But, when it caught fire here a while

back, a couple of years ago, we had to rebuild it then, then it was just local people and using firebrick inside and repairing it, and then had to put all new grills inside because they melted. It got that hot in there.

GB: Would you like to maybe tell us a little bit more about the fire?

BM: It's pretty much—we try to keep it clean, you know, the bottom clean, but for some reason, grease will build up in the bottom, and it can get hot. And you'll be going then something will just—and I don't know what there is, internal combustion or whatever you call that thing, but you'll be going along and what you get is basically a grease fire. What it does, it heats up so fast, and the air, it'll pull up the suction—it'll go right up the chimney and everything. It stays in the pit. The pit—it doesn't get out into the—other than the smoke, it doesn't get out in the building. It stays confined. And, it'll go in there, and creosote and everything that's built up in those chimneys, and they'll, they'll catch on fire, and it's hard to get out of there. Otherwise it'll just clean, unless it's bad like that one. It just got—I don't know how it got that hot. I've had them on fire before, but never, you know, never burn like that.

GB: About when was that?

BM: Five years ago. I guess, six maybe five, I guess it was.

GB: And how did that disrupt business?

BM: It didn't particularly that day because we had to clean up and everything, but still had that pit over there and had this one. Took a lot of walking to get everything cooked between the two of them there, while that one was being—and after it was put back together, new grills and everything, had another week or so to season it out, take—took grease from one and mop it, start it on fire and then mop the grill in there, get—get the—get it seasoned so it didn't taste like metal on that.

00:35:08

GB: And is that, is that something you always have to be on the lookout for—is watching out for grease buildup?

BM: Oh, yes, and like I said, we clear it about—clean the bottom out about once every month, six weeks or so, just got to be careful not to get your fire too hot, and anything, you know, that'll stop—you've just got to watch what you're doing. Usually they've caught on fire, it's because they've been in a hurry and trying to get something done too quick. Doesn't solve a thing, just slows you down.

GB: All right, um, I guess we were talking about all the pits you guys have running at the same time. About how much wood do you go through, say, in a day or a year?

BM: Uh, approximately a cord, a little over a cord a week, and, uh, on a regular basis. Sometimes it drops off a little bit in the wintertime because—unless it's really going on a whole lot, don't get in on the other side. Started it up again here in a few weeks but, uh, just usually because it's so cold in this building, don't have a whole lot of luncheon business, because it's

downright cold in here in the wintertime, as it is hot in the summertime—just not very well insulated.

GB: Um, OK. And, um, I guess, uh, sorry *[Laughs]*, um, we've covered a lot actually. All right, let's talk about maybe Louie Mueller's role in the community. This is right on the main street here. What do you think this business has meant to Taylor?

BM: We bring a lot—we bring a lot of people to Taylor. And we've noticed on Saturday, people that have eaten here, we'll see them later walking up and down the streets to these antique shops and places. And we definitely are an attraction to the city. And I was pretty close to probably the number one attraction. I wouldn't go that far to say it, I don't want to sound like a pompous ass or something, but we pretty much are. You know, we're the reason a lot of people come here.

GB: And sort of continuing along that line, Taylor has a rich Czech heritage. Has that played a factor at all for Louie Mueller?

BM: Ah, German and Czech and Hispanic, too. In fact, that's a lot of—a lot of the stuff was, uh, probably where the barbecue and where *[Indiscernible]* hands and things that, especially on Saturdays they'd come in from the fields and eat and that farming community for all those years, and that's just kind of how, you know, it evolved. So, that has had a lot to do with the barbecue business, definitely.

GB: And then, uh, about how many, uh, how many, uh, employees does it take to keep this place

running?

BM: Uh, right now we've got four. I've run it with two. Depends, you know—when I've had to. There was a while there, two or three years, my wife and I and somebody cleaning the tables, and that was about it. But, we've got a good crew here now, and it's going pretty good.

GB: OK, thank you. Um, all right, I guess a really general question, but what do you think the future holds for Louie Mueller Barbecue?

00:39:35

BM: It looks rosy. I think we'll be around for a while—hopefully, anyway. Lance has really taken on to it. He seems to be interested in staying, so there'll be somebody here that knows what's going on. And he's catching on, so no problem—don't have any problem with leaving it and leaving him alone here with it. It's alright.

GB: Um.

CK: I just wanted to ask—did you ask what type of wood? OK. And did—also, I had a question, the Vaughn Brothers poster—

BM: That was their last, uh—that was one of the shots—they didn't use it for—that was their last album. They came through, we were the last stop. They didn't eat, but it was about five o'clock in the afternoon when they came through and took that shot. They were not in a very good mood, so—

CK: Sorry?

BM: I said they weren't in a very good mood—been a long day for them. And it was right where that thing is sitting, that's where they were then, that's where the picture was taken, so.

GB: Have other musicians throughout the years come by here to eat?

BM: That and a few movie people when they're in—shooting around here, like Don Johnson and Robert Duval and, um, ha, mind goes blank—uh, Charlie Sheen's brother

GB: Emilio?

BM: Emilio, when he was in here, I think he shot a couple of movies around here, and he used to come in pretty regular when he was around. And, uh, trying to think, *The Rookie*, uh, not Randy—Dennis Quaid been in here—to eat as well as shoot. A couple of scenes were shot in here, or one from *The Rookie* and, uh, just, various, kind of—it's not something—you see them, they come in. Uh, Rip Torn, basically up to the point until his mother passed away. Then we don't see him that much because he was originally from Taylor and his mother lived here for years, and, uh, basically I guess that's about it. Been a lot of uh, uh, minor characters. We get actors that'll come in, and all the crew, we've always done well by the crew, especially the transportation guys. They all—they used to eat in here all the time. We still see them when they're anywhere, you know, anywhere around that they can get in, they'll come here.

GB: And then you mentioned that some scenes from *The Rookie* were shot in here. Have there been other, uh, scenes shot in here? The Vaughn Brothers obviously took some photographs in here as well.

BM: And that, uh, that was done by a commercial up there, uh, Lone, some beer company. It's been several years ago, and then they got away without putting it down *[he's gesturing to a fluorescent ceiling light that's been painted black]*, but uh, the *Flesh and Bone*, uh, was shot in here, that was—and then *The Hot Spot* was shot in the parking light right out there. They built the set, uh, car lot was set—was out there. And, uh, then behind us there was, oh, one shot here a couple summers ago, and I can't remember the name of that, *The Life of David Gay*, *Gray* or whatever that was, was shot—there was a scene or two shot behind here, the hamburger place back there. And a Quizno's ad was shot here a year ago in our—using our front end *[Laughs]*. The barbecue sandwiches they were pitching at that time. But just, it's been kind of a potpourri, there's been some up and coming—or young guys, musicians come in and shoot around for their first album release or this, you know, and I don't think any of them have gone on to big success anywhere. We've been pretty open about people want to come in and shoot a video, as long as they just stay out of the way, you know, and clean up after themselves.

GB: Is that something—usually, do they usually discover the place, or do they come in with an idea and already know about—

00:44:43

BM: Most of these places, there are movie people, they're scouts, and they come around and, uh,

these productions for these videos of, uh, record companies and stuff, they use scouts on that, too. And, they come, and there's been a couple of kids just come through, just liked it, and saw what they wanted, and asked if they could, and "Yeah, go ahead." One of them, pretty good while to convince me, but I did, I'm pretty glad I did. And, then I've had students, I've had—from universities, I had two different years they were finishing projects, they came in here did their video in here for their what is it television deal, that they were Radio/TV majors, I guess, communications I guess you call it now.

GB: And then, moving on to a different thing, can we talk about the flag out front? I saw on the Food Network segment you planting the flag, if we could—

BM: Well, my dad started that, uh, the year before. We put it out on holidays and everything. And prior to "1776," the big celebration of the United States, he said "I'm going to start flying it every day, just so we get in the habit of doing it," and it's stayed that way since. And, it's basically a sign. If it's there, we're here, if it's gone, we're you know. So, it's out there every day.

GB: I think that about wraps things up. Is there anything I forgot to ask or that you wanted to add?

BM: I think you pretty well covered everything *[Laughs]*. Believe so. I can't think of anything, no sir.

GB: All right. Well, Mr. Mueller, thank you very much for speaking to us today.

BM: Thank y'all. I appreciate it. If y'all need to do anything else, just go ahead or whatever.

CK: If I could get some portraits of you actually, that would be—

BM: Oh, OK.

[END]

00:46:58