

CHARLOTTE JENKINS
Chef, Charleston, South Carolina
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Interviewers: Sara Wood

Transcription: Shelley Chance

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[Begin Charlotte Jenkins Interview]

00:00:01

Sara Wood: Okay; and Mrs. Jenkins I'm just going to have you go ahead and hold this and clap the top of it for me.

00:00:11

Charlotte Jenkins: *[Claps]*

00:00:14

SW: Okay; thank you. And so Mrs. Jenkins will you start by saying hello and introducing yourself, telling me who you are and a little bit about your restaurant Gullah Cuisine?

00:00:26

CJ: Okay; all right, okay. My name is Charlotte Askew Jenkins. And I'm the prior owner of Gullah Cuisine which is 17-17 Harvest and 17 North, Mount Pleasant. I closed it about five months ago in October. And I'm now doing catering and private chef.

00:00:48

SW: And I remember a couple years ago I came to visit you in the summer in the restaurant and I spoke to you and your daughter and I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about why you decided to close the restaurant after so many years.

00:01:01

CJ: Okay; well two years ago, two and a half years ago I lost my husband and he and I worked side-by-side in the restaurant. And after he passed away you know things got a little, a little hectic. And also the business you know weren't doing very well. I was having problem making you know--financially. And I--I dealt with it for about two years, you know and I said well you know this is not going to work, so I decided to just close.

00:01:37

SW: And for the record will you tell me--your husband's name was Frank?

00:01:40

CJ: Yeah; Frank--his name was Frank Jenkins.

00:01:44

SW: Frank Jenkins, will you tell me a little bit--I know when I interviewed you, you talked a lot about growing up in Awendaw.

00:01:50

CJ: Yes; uh-hm.

00:01:51

SW: Can you tell me how that--how you ended up--I know it's a long journey but can you kind of talk a little bit about the cooking you remember growing up with and you--you were talking once about the first time you had to make a meal for your whole family?

00:02:06

CJ: Yes; I wanted to let you know also that in 2010 I--I had a cookbook published and I don't know if you're aware of that. But the cookbook tells a lot about my humble beginning. But I--well the love of cooking started at the age of nine. I was nine years old and my--my mother had to go visit her sister who lived in Charleston. And you know she was ill and she had to go and take care of her. So she talked to my father and I was there and--and my father said well who is going--who is going to cook and who is going to cook my meal? And so my mother said well oh Lawrence I don't know; you'll have to try to do the best you can. My father's name was Lawrence.

00:02:54

So I said oh, I stepped up and I said I'll cook; I said I can cook. And so she looked at me and--and that was it. So when she left I prepared a meal and the first meal I prepared was liver and--liver and onions with gravy and rice. And I had an older brother then who was very you know he was very sort of strict, I mean no nonsense, and he give me the biggest compliment. He said to my mother, he said you don't have to rush back 'cause--they called me at the time Lil Charlotte; he said you don't have to rush back 'cause Lil Charlotte cooked and the food was good and you know she--she did a good job. And that was an inspiration for me and ever since then I was cooking. And I cooked anything I could get my hands on--I was cooking. *[Laughs]*

00:03:46

SW: Do you have some favorite ingredients that are native here like in the Low Country that you really love working with in particular? Do you have some--maybe one or two favorite things that you really especially love to cook with?

00:03:58

CJ: Are you talking about spices or are you talking about vegetables?

00:04:00

SW: Both actually.

00:04:02

CJ: Okay; well I would say you know most of the vegetables like the vegetables that we grew like okra, that's one of the--okra I do so many things with it, okra soup, okra perloo, okra rice, okra gumbo you know. I do the breaded fried okra. Also back in the early ages we did--we would sauté, pick the okra from fresh out of the--out of the field, cut it up and sauté it with a little--at the time it was like fatback but you know this was a streak of lean and--or you know you do it with bacon now. And we served it over rice and it's delicious.

00:04:46

And there were other things. There were like green--green lima and corn, succotash, we did all of that. We used to plant garlic and basically garlic, salt, and pepper that was one of the main--the main dishes until we--you know I got into the other herbs like I like working with herbs like thyme and you know basil and stuff like that.

00:05:13

SW: And I remember when I was visiting you at the restaurant you had a little garden out on the side you were growing.

00:05:18

CJ: Yes; uh-hm.

00:05:19

SW: Do you grow herbs at home right now? Do you have--?

00:05:21

CJ: Well it's--it's gone right now; it's about to--about to get it done again and what I did is I have like a pot that I grow it in but I will do a bigger garden now that I'm you know--I have all the time and space.

00:05:38

SW: I'm wondering Mrs. Jenkins if you could tell me about how you met Frank? How did you and Frank meet?

00:05:44

CJ: Okay; Frank and I met--well you know when I graduated from high school in Mount Pleasant, jobs were very scarce for blacks. And most of the jobs they was offering blacks then was like domestic. And I figured that I did enough of that at home taking care of my family and I didn't want to do that. So I--I went to New York and I--I got a job in the medical field in New York. And that's when--and I met Frank, you know socializing, I met Frank then there.

00:06:23

SW: What was it like to move to New York after living in South Carolina for so long?

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CJ: Well it was okay. I had--I had a brother that lived in New York and one summer he had asked me to come and baby-sit for him. And that was like in the '50s. And my whole intake with New York was just not--you know it's not a place I wanted to live. It was like really? Well they lived in Harlem and then you know Harlem then in those days weren't all that. You know the one thing I couldn't accept was the dog poop and you know we didn't have that where we lived. And I--I couldn't deal with that. But so I stayed there for you know the--the summer period and then I went back.

00:07:02

But then after I graduated from high school and I went back it was a little different because I didn't stay in that area. Matter of fact, I stayed like on--like in Yorktown, places like that you know and that area. So I fell in love with New York. I thought that it was the best place. It was a melting pot. I mean you--there was all different nationalities of people which was you know very you know enlightening with me and then where I worked, I worked with all types of people with different languages and I thought that was very you know it was very good. I made friends. I learned you know--learned a culture, their food, so you know I--I've learned how to do like Philippine; I met Filipinos, Philippine, Spanish, Jamaican, all types.

00:07:51

SW: Did you bring that back with you? I mean obviously you know different types that you're talking about--different types of cooking have an influence on you. I'm wondering how you brought that back with you when you returned to South Carolina.

00:08:02

CJ: Yeah; well I brought that back by cooking for my family especially Italian for my family like you know like we all--you know we always got together as a family and ate. That's one thing my mother I think it was a great thing she did with us that had all her children come and eat together and this way you learn about what--how their day went and what they were doing in life. And so when I got back I exposed them to all of that you know, the Filipino, pancit, do the best pancit [*Laughs*], Italian, Italian cooking like parmesan was one of my favorites, you know and it was--and the Spanish stuff, a lot of--a lot of different foods.

00:08:49

SW: Can you talk a little bit about pancit? What is it and how do you usually prepare it?

00:08:53

CJ: Well pancit I thought it was very--I love it. It's made with--it's very--very thin noodles and you have to soak the noodles. And you do your vegetables, your carrots, onions in--you do your carrots and onions and you sauté that and then there's a special sausage. It's a--it's a sausage that is--I guess it's a Chinese sausage and then you do that sausage. And then you do--you could make it with pork. You can put all of those at one time; you can do pork, beef, and chicken and shrimp. So you do all of that; you sauté all of that and then you--your noodles are soaking. And so the--when all that is ready then you mix it all together and you add a little--you add soy sauce and--and it's a very good dish. I usually do it like when we have a little party or something like that.

00:09:54

SW: Do you still cook for your family? I know you have children and grandchildren, do you bring--do you all cook--do y'all have dinner together still?

00:10:00

CJ: Yeah; we do. We do; yeah we always have a little dinner. You know when somebody's birthday or any--you find some kind of occasion to get together and cook and eat, uh-hm.

00:10:11

SW: Is there anything that you make for them when y'all get together that maybe you wouldn't have made at the restaurant or maybe in your business now?

00:10:19

CJ: Well sometimes it all depends on what they want. A lot of times like right now we had a signature dish called the Gullah rice. So whenever you know I'm cooking they all want the--the Gullah rice and want my fried chicken, you know. And I do a smothered chicken which my mother used to do but she used to do it with a yard chicken which then was called free range chicken. And they love me to do that you know.

00:10:45

But with the--with the younger kids I mean they don't--like my grandkids a lot of that stuff my grandkids don't eat. So a lot of times I have to cook the things that they want. Now they--mac and cheese, they love that. So the mac--the mac and cheese and fried chicken we always include that in the menu 'cause this way we're guaranteeing the kids will eat.

00:11:03

SW: So when you--you and Frank, I think I remember you talking about this when I went to visit you--you and Frank came back 'cause you wanted to be closer to your family is that true?

00:11:11

CJ: Well yeah. The main thing basically was we didn't want my first born--I have two daughters and she was six years old at the time and we had discussed the--we discussed that we don't want--we didn't want her to grow up in New York. You know that wasn't a good place to bring up a child, so we decided that we would you know work towards moving. And that was one of the main reasons why we moved back because we wanted her to grow up here in the South.

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SW: And why was that important to you guys?

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CJ: Because the lifestyle there, the type of lifestyle that I felt was not good. There was so many--there was so many vices there that you know you have to be really strict to keep your child and matter of fact we had her in private school then. And it--and it was costly. In other words to--to get away from all of the vices and stuff you know you have to pay and--and it's costly. That means you have to put them in private school and putting them in some kind of activity 'cause we both worked you know so that she would not be able to--'cause basically a lot of kids living in New York City you know you have no--no--you don't have a back yard, you don't have no place. So they--the only thing they do is hang out on the stoop. You know it's--and that's like in the street and that's you know that was--we couldn't do that.

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We thought about maybe going into the suburbs and getting a house but then we thought that coming back home would be better.

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SW: And just to--to make sure I have this Mrs. Jenkins, you were working in the medical field. What were you doing?

00:12:55

CJ: I was a doctor's assistant. I was--I worked for the Comprehensive Healthcare Plan when we-- Well we--you go out into the--into the area where the--where--where children were like their--their parents were not able to--some of them didn't have any jobs. Most of them was on welfare. The kids weren't immunized. You know they didn't go see a doctor. So we would go into the home and get their name and find--**[provide an MD]**; we'd do an assessment and see what they needed and you know make an appointment with the clinic and make sure they get the immunization and follow-up with them, give them like a visit.

00:13:40

But it's a team of people that work; it's the doctor's assistant, the social worker, and--and the doctor you know work together. And you have certain--each at the time I think they had about five doctors you know and each--each of them get--get a certain amount of clients to work with.

00:14:02

SW: And just to make sure I have this on tape right now, Frank grew up here as well, right?

00:14:08

CJ: Yeah; Frank grew up on the other side of the water which is a place called Wadmalaw Island. So I was from--I grew up east of the Cooper and he grew up on Wadmalaw Island and actually I--you know we realized that our school, high school played--played each other you know but then I didn't see him then you know. He was a good football player. Matter of fact he won a scholarship playing football. And yeah; so you know but--but we didn't know. You know I know of the school and you know I probably would--may have went to the game you know when they--their school played our school but we didn't meet then. *[Laughs]*

00:14:48

SW: Where did he get his football scholarship?

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CJ: Well he got a scholarship and then he--he went to Morris College, but he didn't stay there because he didn't--he didn't--he didn't like it there. It was just you know the school--that school particularly I--well you know in those days it just wasn't what he thought it would be. So then that's when he went to New York. His mother lived in New York then so he went to New York, uh-hm.

00:15:15

SW: Okay and what was he doing there?

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CJ: Well he was in the Army. I think he--he went in--he was in the Army for--after, yeah after he--when he left school his mother told him, well you know you--you know if you--you're not going to stay in college, you got to--you know you got to do something, you got to get in the Army, you got to go to a different--. So he joined the Army, so he went into the Army. And then after he--I had met him--I met him I think probably about maybe six months yeah after he discharged from the Army.

00:15:44

SW: Wow; did y'all cook together when you were dating, like did you--was that you know both growing up here in the Low Country did y'all--did that happen in the kitchen at all when you--?

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CJ: Well yes; I mean actually it was one--maybe our second date, he--he cooked for me. He--he cooked for me and then you know I would invite--and then I'd invite him over to my house so it was like--. But then I don't know; I've never got a really another invite. It was always me cooking, you know but that first time he invited me and then it was always me cooking.

[Laughs]

00:16:18

SW: Do you remember what he made for you?

00:16:21

CJ: Steak. **[Laughs]**

00:16:23

SW: Steak?

00:16:23

CJ: Yes; steak.

00:16:24

SW: Was it good?

00:16:26

CJ: It was--it was good, yeah.

00:16:30

SW: Do you remember the first thing you made for him?

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CJ: No. *[Laughs]* I don't remember. But I remember that. I don't--I really don't remember. I think it probably was spaghetti. Yeah; probably spaghetti because you know that was something that I thought I was good with and I did that.

00:16:48

SW: I feel like that's pretty brave, too 'cause you hear about like people eating spaghetti on first dates or when people start dating and it's kind of messy.

00:16:55

CJ: Yeah; but that wasn't the first date. I don't remember what was the first meal I made, but-- and I remember when I did cook for him it was spaghetti. But then we would go out and eat. He would take me out to eat, yeah.

00:17:08

SW: Mrs. Jenkins when y'all moved back here when your daughter was six, your oldest daughter was six, did you both decide that you definitely wanted to do a restaurant together or did that--? I mean I'm wondering what happened--.

00:17:21

CJ: Okay; no, no. We didn't--we didn't thought of a restaurant. What happened was I--well he said you don't have to work you know. I became--well once I moved--as soon as I moved back here I became pregnant with my second child and you know he said that you know you don't-- you don't have to work. You know don't worry about working anymore.

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So after I had the second child I was bored and I said you know I have to find something to do. So my brother had a business; it's called Askew Auto Paint and Body Shop. And I went over there and I said you--you guys--y'all could use some help; you need a bookkeeper. So they said oh yeah; we sure do. I said all this stuff needs to be filed and whatever. So I--I talked myself into the job. So then I was working there.

00:18:09

So I worked there and then I--you know I said you guys know exactly what you're doing. You got a good business here. I said you know what; you need--we need to get people to know that you're here. I mean and to you know mingle with people, networking, so we--that's when

we started having parties and invite different people. And we--we started with you know a luau and stuff and then we ended up doing black ties and you know stuff with the food. And so one--one day I could remember one--one gentleman said to me; he says you know every time I come to your parties the food is always good. He said you--you know you should start--you should make money off this, you know. This is--this is--this food is good.

00:18:51

So I thought about that and I said hmm. And at the same time I saw this article in the paper advertising Johnson & Wales School of Culinary Art. So I registered and I enrolled and I was going to Johnson & Wales on two nights a week and Saturday and Sunday. And I went there until I graduated and working--you know working a full-time job. I told my husband and I said you have to be in charge of the children, the girls. They were like in their teens so they were--could do a lot for themselves.

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So I went to--I entered in the school and I went to Johnson & Wales and it was very well. I enjoyed it. I graduated in '88 and that's when I started catering and it was working and then the restaurant came and that was it.

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SW: What did you start--when you started catering what kinds of things would you make?

Would you do a little bit of everything or did you have some specialties that you really loved to make?

00:19:51

CJ: Well basically the--the--when I started catering, the thing--the norm thing then that people did a lot is they did a lot of potato salad, chicken, you know fried chicken, meatballs, and--and stuff like that. Those are basically a lot of stuff that they did. And dessert, they did like pound cakes, a lot of cakes and stuff.

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SW: And so how--so what year did the restaurant open, Gullah Cuisine?

00:20:20

CJ: Nineteen ninety--ninety five I think. Okay; '95 to--now it was a total of 20 years so I think it was '95, yeah, '95.

00:20:34

SW: And I didn't get to ask you this last time 'cause I didn't know it until after I talked to the--the Grant sisters up at Bertha's Kitchen, but was the building that y'all were in for so long was that Bobby Grant--Bobby Grant had something going before there? It was like--

00:20:48

CJ: Bobby Grant, I don't know; I know that--that building, there was several people who had leased it and I remember there was a club and I also remember it was--there was like a little saloon, like what you call those--really on the--yeah but and then there was a little small restaurant there also, uh-hm.

00:21:14

SW: Okay; so was Frank part of the--I mean when you were catering before you guys opened the restaurant was Frank helping you with that or was that--?

00:21:22

CJ: No, no; he didn't--he--'cause he was a fireman and then no he didn't--he didn't help. He was a fireman and then my sister did. My sister helped me in it 'cause you know it was--it was small. And he--he joined--he came aboard when I was--I obtained a contract from a Fortune 500 company and then that--what that entails of us being there and you know spending all week you know and so he came and helped with that. And that lasted for about three years.

00:22:06

SW: Did y'all just kind of like naturally find your rhythm together in the kitchen or--I mean in terms of the catering business like when he jumped in?

00:22:14

CJ: Okay; well when he jumped in we were--when he jumped in we were like running--it was almost like running a restaurant because we had to do--with this company they had--they had all of the VPs would come for three days, you know R&R and we would prepare breakfast, lunch, and cocktail hour, happy hour appetizers, and then dinner. So that was like running a restaurant you know. And he--you know he was instrumental on helping me with that.

00:22:46

SW: And I wanted to ask you too, you know in terms of the restaurant opening around '95 how did--how did that change things for you guys? I mean obviously you were doing a lot of business

with the catering before but how does it--how does it change for you when you go from something like catering to a full-blown restaurant? Did you feel a difference at all?

00:23:10

CJ: Well they were different because they were more work. And it was--it was great because basically the catering was you know at one point it was where most of this was coming from. And then all of the sudden we started having business. And we decided to do a buffet you know. And my goodness when we did the buffet that's when you know we really had all types of people that came. I think I must have got about five awards saying the best buffet in Mount Pleasant.

00:23:39

But so that was the--you know the catering and they both worked hand-in-hand. It was a lot of work. And we--we used to close on Monday and then we ended up started doing it seven days a week. You know and sometimes it was pretty rough because there were times when we have like maybe four and five catering jobs. And you know of course we always were able to get people to help but still with Frank and I the main people in there, we had to do the--the most of the cooking. So you know like I'd tell anybody the restaurant is hard work if you have to do it yourself. But to have someone to do it for you, you know you have to be a good manager and be you know be totally in control of it.

00:24:27

SW: Yeah; how did you guys decide on the menu? Were they--was it stuff that you guys had been cooking, catering, or did you--? I mean I'm interested in the inspiration for the menu because the restaurant is called Gullah Cuisine.

00:24:38

CJ: Yeah; the--the restaurant was called Gullah Cuisine because we wanted to do something within our heritage you know. And by doing that we feel like doing the food that we eat, basically the food that we eat, and so the menu was designed around that. You know the type of food that I grew up on, so and that was simple, but then I also realized that you know I'm not just feeding the Gullah people. I want to feed everybody so I would design the menu in a way as such as have something for anybody to come and no matter what nationality you are. You're--you're--you're--you would do it. And in the beginning we--we did; we cooked a lot of pork. We put a pork in everything, in most of our meals because that's basically the Gullah style.

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But as time went on and people you know began to change their diet and everything and the association with--with you know high blood pressure and pork so we removed some of that from our, you know from our vegetables. And it--it--people didn't like it but we--we did it because we wanted to be in compliance with what is good for health. We were promoting good health--healthy--healthy food.

00:25:55

SW: And Mrs. Jenkins I know I asked you this when I was visiting you and I know you--you and Frank had the cookbook. It was *Gullah Cuisine by Land and by Sea*.

00:26:03

CJ: Correct; uh-hm.

00:26:04

SW: I have it at home and it's beautiful. And I'm wondering if you could just talk a little bit about Gullah heritage for people who aren't from around the Low Country and may not be aware of it.

00:26:15

CJ: Well I think the way I would address that is that I think it's a heritage that I guess we had no other choice. It's like growing up with little or nothing you know. We had to make do with whatever we had. We grow our vegetables and also like even like in a community where we live you would have people who did fishing and--and people who have raised their own you know like pigs and they would do--they would slaughter it and then you know kind of share.

00:26:54

At one point we--we had--raised our own pigs and we would slaughter it so you'd have meat you know. And you know so all of--with all that you know we ended up just as--we'd go to Charleston to get the staple food like rice, grits and stuff like that. And--and so you, you know you go to the garden and you--you know you get your vegetables and prepare your vegetables. And then we had chicken and chicken was like--just like people eat chicken every time. We had a lot of chicken during those days because we would raise chickens. We raised chickens and ducks and we would--we would have you know chicken you know like most of the chicken--that's what we called free range chicken. That particular chicken we would like smother it you know and or fricassee it you know and--and it--you know it was just looking back at it, it was a very good and healthy life.

00:27:49

The vegetables was fresh. You know frozen food, I don't remember; I don't remember anything about frozen food. *[Laughs]*

00:28:01

SW: Mrs. Jenkins, do you think for you know--I know on Highway 17 you get you know a lot of people who are passing by or coming to visit who aren't from around Charleston or you know South Carolina. Do you think that--I mean I wonder--I kind of wanted to ask you this before but I didn't get a chance to; I wonder when you had your restaurant if you ever felt like in a way cooking was particular--these dishes if you were teaching people something about your heritage and if you ever thought about that when you had the restaurant.

00:28:31

CJ: Well I--I thought about when they come into my restaurant they are learning of my style of cooking and you know they ask me; and so I like this dish and ask and then I'll explain it to them. You know so I think yeah; I think a lot of people they're--there were things on the menu or there's things that we serve in our restaurant they have never tasted or never had before. So by exposing them to that yes; it is and you know my goal is to continue to teach. My goal is to teach--my goal is to try to get a school, a cooking school, well actually a place where I could do--could have cooking class. And you know I could teach them and stuff you know.

00:29:16

There's so many people from all over that's coming to Charleston--Mount Pleasant and the ones that don't know anything about the Gullah heritage or the Gullah cooking and I think it will be good for them to learn. And but I think it was a myth at one time that the Gullah cooking was unhealthy. So a lot of people probably shy away from that. But basically if you look at it, all

of the fresh vegetables and it's--it's a style of cooking; it's the way you're cooking. Back I think years ago in the beginning when people they used like lard, that--we don't use anymore. We use a vegetable oil and it--you know there's so much improved stuff now. They got a new oil that's called rice oil that is very good, less--you know less fattening and all that; it's very healthy.

00:30:11

So there's so many different ways you can prepare the food now, too--healthy.

00:30:16

SW: Do they make rice oil here in the Low Country?

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CJ: I don't--I don't know. I don't think they make it here, but I know the purveyors have it you know. Those big purveyors that--that sells institutional food, they have that.

00:30:31

SW: Do you use it--so do you use it in your cooking?

00:30:33

CJ: I have--I have used it when I had the restaurant I've used it.

00:30:37

SW: I just have two more questions for you; is that okay with you?

00:30:40

CJ: That's fine.

00:30:40

SW: Okay; how has your life changed since closing the restaurant and going back to your catering roots or--?

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CJ: Well it changed drastically because it's only been like five months and I'm not getting the catering you know yet because you know I'm working on a place where I can work in, so it's-- it's--it's really you know it's not--it's not there yet you know but I think it'll take a while. But so far I was just resting, getting into me; I didn't realize it. I used to work seven days a week and it was so much things that I missed. I--I--I didn't enjoy my home.

00:31:20

Now I--I could--I didn't realize you can walk out and the birds are singing. The birds wake me up. I mean it's just a total different view.

00:31:32

SW: And do you find that like when you take that time for yourself and have that space that you--you might even approach your cooking differently again, like it might bring new life into that as well, that you're not--?

00:31:42

CJ: Oh--oh yeah because I'm thinking strong. I'm--I'm--I'm writing down things that come to me of how I want to do and how I want to improve the menu and what I'm going to offer; oh yeah.

00:31:56

SW: And you know you've--you've lived here a good part of your life. You know you went to New York and you grew up here. Just being here today and after your history with the restaurant I'm just curious--I guess this is my last question for you Mrs. Jenkins today 'cause I could keep asking you more questions--I'm wondering what you noticed the changes of the Low Country--like when people think of Low Country culinary traditions, you know people, it brings to mind people normally say shrimp and grits and--and rice and okra, but is there anything that you find surprising that's changed in the Low Country traditions you know just being here and watching--watching the culinary landscape and your experience?

00:32:34

CJ: Yes; I've seen and I'm not saying it's a bad thing--I've seen that chefs now they take this--they take this Low Country food and they really do such amazing things with it. Sometimes it's--it's--they're taking it out of total context because you know if you work with something, I mean if you want to have it the way it--it originated then you know you--that's originality. But if you take something and you, you know you expand it to different--different styles of whatever you know you still call it that but it's--it's total different. And I found that a lot with southern food here with the--with the restaurant especially the high-end restaurant. And--and I have no objection. I'll go and I'll eat; you know I'll go there and I'll try it you know but it's different you know. It's different. And that--I guess that comes with changes--the world changes, everything changes. Maybe--I'll probably be gone but maybe in another 20 years you know who is to say a lot of this stuff will be--you'll probably just have the--the **[Laughs]**--I would say the liquid of it.

00:33:50

SW: Well just taking pills for food or something.

00:33:53

CJ: Right; yeah something like that. Yeah; it is--it is yeah.

00:33:58

SW: Is there anything else that you want to say Mrs. Jenkins that I didn't ask you? I know that I could keep asking you so many questions and I'm trying to keep these shorter.

00:34:04

CJ: Well I mean I don't have anything to say. I just felt that I had something good to offer and I want to continue you know. You know offering it and I just want to find a way how to do that you know.

00:34:22

SW: I guess I was thinking about this because I have--you know we talked a couple years ago and I was talking to other people who we're going to interview--like we talked to BJ Dennis and a few other people and I always ask people, who else should I talk to? And they all said you have to talk to Charlotte Jenkins.

00:34:36

CJ: Really? Oh okay.

00:34:38

SW: So I wonder if--if you notice--I know this is a hard question to answer because it's you know--it's drawing [inaudible] a lot but do you notice your influence on people having your culinary--you bringing your own traditions into a wider landscape of tradition? Do you notice your--do you ever notice your influence?

00:34:58

CJ: I realize. I didn't realize it until actually really recently that you know like people know, you know my--like they say oh you--you know they say you have a brand. You are--you know you are the Gullah lady. And I'm just beginning to realize this now. You know yeah your restaurant is closed but hey you will not be forgotten. Your name is all over. And it--you know and I'm--I'm amazed. I'm surprised. I'm happy you know; yeah I--I really--I realized--I was surprised about that.

00:35:30

SW: I notice that your email address is gullahlady.

00:35:33

CJ: At yahoo.com uh-hm.

00:35:35

SW: Do you--how do you--would you like to be known as the Gullah lady like how do you feel about that?

00:35:40

CJ: I have no problem with that. I've been called that for years, Gullah lady. **[Laughs]** They just address that to me for years, Gullah lady, I mean even when--when I go in the book signing with my cookbook or if I do it--do a tasting or whatever they say you know Gullah lady from Gullah Cuisine. So I think I have--I think I should have claimed--I think I'm--I have claimed that name; yeah I think--it has a good ring to it and I like it.

00:36:11

SW: Did you want to mention anything else about the cookbook? I know we didn't talk too much about it but do you want to say anything about the cookbook?

00:36:18

CJ: Yeah; I'd just like to say that in 2010 we came up with a hardback coffee top--table book and that sold out and then they did a second printing which was paperback and that's sold out and they're about to reorder again. So this will be the third printing, which I think is very good and--and to me the book wasn't--we didn't do that much promotion, you know and saying like locally or whatever. There weren't a bunch of promoting. Now I think that if someone would promote that book it could be all over you know. So you know you never know because I think that it--it's linked with a little history and to keep that around it will remind people of you know the old ways, the way it was and then--then there's the new way you know.

00:37:18

So that you should always have, you know; I think that's something that should always be there.

00:37:24

SW: Well Mrs. Jenkins I want to thank you very much for doing this today. And before we turn the lights down could you just say your birth date for the record?

00:37:33

CJ: Uh-hm; September 10, 1942.

00:37:39

SW: Okay; and I won't put that in there but it's just for the record. And today is March 5, 2015. I just wanted to mention that. Thank you Mrs. Jenkins.

00:37:47

CJ: Thank you; all right. So you would let me know when this will air.

00:37:53

SW: Yeah and I'll send you a copies too.

00:37:55

CJ: Okay; that'll work.

00:37:56

SW: I'll send you a copy--.

00:37:56

[End Charlotte Jenkins Interview]