

SAMMY HEBERT
Owner – Hebert’s Specialty Meats – Maurice, LA
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Location: Hebert’s Specialty Meats, Main Office
Interviewer: Mary Beth Lasseter
Length: 49 minutes
Project: Boudin Trail

[Begin Hebert's Specialty Meats]

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Mary Beth Lasseter: All right; today is Thursday, January 22, 2008 and this is Mary Beth Lasseter of the Southern Foodways Alliance. I am in here in Maurice, Louisiana to interview Mr. Sam Hebert of Hebert's Specialty Meats. Mr. Hebert, could you please introduce yourself, and tell me your birth date and what you do for a living?

00:00:25

Sam Hebert: Yes; my name is Sammy Hebert from Maurice, Louisiana and I own Hebert's Specialty Meats. I'm 49 years old--was born October 1, 1959, opened my business August 28, 1984.

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MBL: Can you tell me a little bit about how you opened your business and who you worked with?

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SH: I opened--we opened in August of '84; me and my brother was the original owners. He's no longer in business with me--retired three years ago. But we opened just off of--he and I both wanted to do something on our own and just decided to--we had a restaurant next door where we were deboning and stuffing chickens and selling them on the plate lunches. And it kind of started growing and people started ordering them, so we decided to start a meat market to do that and all

kind of other meats just to make a go at it and it ended up you know being successful. I come from a family of twelve kids, nine brothers--nine sisters and two brothers.

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MBL: How did ya'll have the restaurant or how did you come to have the restaurant originally?

00:02:04

SH: Actually my dad opened the restaurant in 1984--'74. My brother that was in business with me graduated in '74 and we all liked to cook and my dad decided to open a restaurant to give him something to do after he graduated because that's kind of how my dad was. He always tried to give something for us all to survive or you know make a--make a living on our own instead of working for somebody else. And I graduated in '77; didn't really like the--not that I didn't like working for my dad or I just didn't--everything I tried--I had a Water World business; I tried that. I didn't like it. The restaurant I liked it but it was too--too many--too much family involved, pretty much knew it was never going to be mine. So we--we decided--me and my brother after 10 years in the restaurant he--he kind of wanted to do something on his own also and me and him kind of did a little joint venture of our own and it--it worked out good.

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MBL: Can you tell me how you decided to open a Specialty Meats store?

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SH: Back then actually it just came you know what--what are we going to call this thing, and we you know got Hebert's and--and just started throwing around different--. And I came up with the

Hebert's Specialty Meats just by changing you know the state of the stuff that we were going to sell you know--seasoning and deboning, stuffing it; to me it was something special so I went with Specialty Meats and it's--. Now there's--you can look around everywhere; people change the names of their stores now to--and end with Specialty Meats because they want to try to get a piece of the cake you know, so--.

00:04:27

MBL: Piece of the meat?

00:04:28

SH: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

00:04:31

MBL: Had you ever worked with meats or butchered meats before? Did you have any experience before you came to the business?

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SH: Not really worked for anybody; in high school we had--called Ag Lab where we cut calves you know and hogs for people who would bring in to--it was a school deal where we would cut--cut and wrap meat and I did judging meat you know and--and FFA and stuff like that. That didn't hurt--you know it did help me a lot by knowing you know all the different cuts of meat and stuff like that.

00:05:12

MBL: Is that kind of program common here to the area?

00:05:14

SH: It used to be a real big deal when I was growing up. Now it's getting to where you know with all the regulations and everything you can't--they--they can't--people used to you know slaughter their own cattle and bring it to the--we had a meat processing plant at school where we would--you know we actually had a cooler, saws. We would do the whole deal--cut and wrap but now it's--it's getting to where you can't even kill an animal and bring it to the slaughterhouse now. You've got to bring it to them live and they kill it, so it's--it's changed a whole lot since back then.

00:05:52

MBL: So tell me where you get your employees and how you train them if they don't have your background.

00:06:01

SH: I get a lot of them probably through the school you know. If they're not going to go to college and they want a decent job and make a decent living and stay home--you know right close to home that's--that's kind of what I--. And--and you know I try to pay them as well as I can and--and I train them so they don't have to be trained or have any experience. I'd rather get somebody with no experience at all and train them the way I like it done instead of them working for somebody else and then come here and try to you know tell me how they're going to do it compared to I train them how I want it done and that's--that's how it works around here.

00:06:47

MBL: Can you tell me a little bit about the business and how many people you employ in your locations?

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SH: This is the only location that I own and you know train them--all my employees. All the-- the franchise locations are--they're pretty much--they do their own. I train them here to get started and then train a couple of their employees and then as he grows he just keeps training and the same way it works here. I--I--we usually stay around between 15 and 25 employees depending on the time of the year and--the holidays it's 25--28 people working.

00:07:46

MBL: And what kind of work do you do here? What things do ya'll make?

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SH: Oh my God; we have about probably 100 different entrees as far as for sausage. We probably make you know 15 different kinds of sausages, boudin, 10 different stuffed chickens, the same--turkeys, turducken(s), stuffed quail, rabbit, all kind of pork roasts, beef, steaks to kabobs, round steaks, stuffed tongue, all kind of chicken and sausage gumbo, duck and andouille gumbo, seafood gumbo, crawfish and corn soup, shrimp soup, crawfish pies, meat pies. It pretty much don't stop.

00:08:45

MBL: Now who are your customers?

00:08:48

SH: Actually I mean people will drive from all over to get you know--you've got good food you can--I mean if you stayed in the parking lot and look at the license plates, especially around the holidays, they come from Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, I mean they come from all over.

00:09:16

MBL: And what percentage of your business is here in the store and what percentage is mail order 'cause I think you do some mail order?

00:09:24

SH: No, actually I don't do any mail order; I mean people will buy it from here and send it out but as far as for me doing mail order, I--I don't do mail order. Pretty much all of my stuff goes out the front door.

00:09:38

MBL: Okay; can you tell me a little bit about the tradition of smoked meats in this area? It seems popular in this section of Louisiana in ways that it is not in other parts of the country. Do you have any idea maybe why?

00:09:56

SH: Actually smoked meats in this area is not as big as--it's like a line, the Interstate 10, north of the Interstate you go up to Ville Plat, Eunice, that's like the smoked capital of the world.

They, people [*Laughs*]-a lot of people say over there you smoke a rubber boot and they'll eat it. It's--it's--that is pretty true because they--they smoke anything--tongue, chaudins, all meats and south of the Interstate--don't get me wrong; we--we do sell a little bit of smoked meats but it's nothing compared to you know north of the Interstate. They'll have probably 60-percent of the stuff they sell is smoked, whereas down here you know it might be like five-percent of the stuff that we sell smoked and the rest is probably even--not even five-percent. I would say my stuff maybe one-percent is smoked and 99-percent is--but I sell so much different varieties of meats and entrees.

00:11:09

MBL: Do you think that can be attributed to local tastes or--?

00:11:13

SH: I think it's back in the old days they smoked it to preserve it more than--and it's just--how do I want to say--it's not a--well I guess it's just a tradition from the old days--it was either smoked or salted or you had to eat it fresh or it you know--it went bad, so--.

00:11:38

MBL: Can you tell me a little bit about your boudin?

00:11:43

SH: Boudin--kind of learned how to make boudin growing up. We always had boucheries. I mean that's--in the old days, you--you killed a--you killed your pig; you made all your sausage, boudin; that's just what you did. You made hog head cheese with the head and you made your

boudin, you made your sausage and you know you had pork chops and--and that's just what we did and--. People around here just love you know boudin for breakfast, boudin for lunch; it's just a good you know--you got your rice, your meat, vegetables; it's just a good kind of meal on the go.

00:12:31

MBL: Without giving away any--without giving away any secret recipes can you describe your boudin for me and tell me what's in it and what you eat it with, what you recommend people eat it with?

00:12:40

SH: What's in it--it's you start off with boiling bones, pork bones to make a stock and then you add your meat, all kind of pork meats, liver, vegetables, onions, bell pepper, celery and garlic, green onions, parsley, and you kind of grind your meat and make a--a gravy, meat concoction and add rice to it and just--just put it in a casing. And then you heat it up and eat it--eat it hot or with crackers, on a slice of bread or just by itself.

00:13:28

MBL: Now what kind of casings do ya'll use?

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SH: It's a natural hog casing.

00:13:35

MBL: And can you tell me a little bit about where you source your ingredients? Are you buying Louisiana rice or where are your meats coming from?

00:13:46

SH: Yeah; I mean all my stuff comes local. As far as for the pork, there's no processing plant; most of your big hog processors are up north. But all our--our rice is yeah Louisiana rice but the--the pork ingredients I would say comes from you know processing plants in say Seaboard in South Dakota, John Morrell's in you know--somewhere up north.

00:14:30

MBL: North in the State; North in the country?

00:14:32

SH: No; north--north--either side of Dakota--North Dakota, somewhere in that.

00:14:38

MBL: Can you tell me a little bit about a typical day here at the Specialty Meat Shop?

00:14:46

SH: Depending on what day it is we usually--we make boudin Mondays and Fridays. It kind of gets in a routine--you do this on Monday; you know we do chickens pretty much every day. Like boudin is Monday and Friday; sausage is Wednesday and Saturday; you know we stuff pork chops like Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Saturday is--is our biggest sale day just as far as for customer-wise; it's our biggest day of the week and then Sunday is a good barbeque day for--

we're open 'til noon, so we sell a lot of you know spur of the moment barbeque items--this and that. And then start back on Monday doing the same thing, getting ready for the weekend and just every day we do something different. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday we--we make burgers; Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, same as pies--like Wednesday we do pies, hamburger steaks you know. One of the days we do the burgers, meatballs, boudin balls; I mean it's just kind of just as supply in demand. As we sell it we make more.

00:16:15

MBL: Are these all packaged foods or are you selling them in the restaurant you mentioned earlier?

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SH: No; this is all packaged foods that we sell up front.

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MBL: Can you tell me a little bit about the turducken?

00:16:36

SH: Turducken was invented back in 1984, the first year we were in business; we were doing the turkeys--even at the restaurant before we started this. But an old guy came in with a--brought his--his own turkey, chicken and a duck that he killed in his backyard and asked us if we would debone the three birds and you know put a concoction together and put them inside the turkey with some stuffing and dressing and--and we did it. And I mean when we did it I--I came up with the name turducken, turkey, duck, chicken, tur-duck-en and it kind of stuck. And I don't even

know the old guy's name that we actually did the first one for 'cause he's the one that pretty much invented it and it's not--there's a lot of people that try to say you know they did the first one. But we have--you know a story that we've always--that's our story and pretty much that's how it happened and I wish I knew the old guy's name that--that came in and asked for that so we knew who really invented the turducken 'cause he's the one that invented it. We just did it for him and kind of took off with it.

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MBL: How long after you made one for him did you start producing them for the general public?

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SH: Well we did a few more that first year and then you know people started talking and that's how--how it works around here. In--in the food industry is the best advertisement if you do something good and you know one person will talk about it. If you do something bad well 10 people will say something about it. So if you do something good, people start talking, you just--it just kind of snowball effect(s) and now it's pretty much all over the country--the turducken.

00:18:35

MBL: But Hebert's Specialty Meats claims to be the first person to create it; correct?

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SH: Right; and I know--I know deep down all the other stories I've heard were you know every time he--a person claims to being the first one it's--it's a different story every time you hear it

and not you know--don't have no kind of date or who or when it was done, so--. And a lot of people give us credit for it and--and I think that's how it should be.

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MBL: How much of your business, what percentage is turducken sales?

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SH: I mean we sell about probably 3,500 a year but I mean we sell you know a whole lot more chickens than that or--you know just--but we do sell a lot. Probably out of our--our turkey sales, probably 25-percent are turducken(s) and the rest is you know all different. We got 10 other different stuffings where you know you don't have any turkey, duck, chicken. It's just turkey stuffed with either the cornbread dressing; that's really the--the biggest--turkey with the cornbread and all the other different stuffings.

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MBL: How much boudin do you make?

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SH: I mean we--we do about 1,000 pounds a week, something like that--1,200.

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MBL: And do you sell it as you make it or do you have it in a deep-freeze?

00:20:19

SH: No; we--we pretty much sell it you know. We freeze a lot you know--three links in a pack to--people to buy it and take home or we sell it fresh but probably I would say probably 60-percent we sell you know we--we will have some days where we sell a couple hundred pounds of hot boudin you know just the people that come in and eating it for breakfast or lunch or taking it to a company for you know just to give them a tray of boudin for breakfast or lunch.

00:21:00

MBL: If they don't buy it from you hot how do you recommend they prepare your boudin when they take it home in the packages?

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SH: You can either put it in the oven or put it in boiling water; when--when you--when the water comes back to a boil shut it off and take your boudin out and let it sit for a couple of minutes. Put it in the oven at 375 for 10--15 minutes. When it starts to brown it's--it's all you're doing--it's cooked; all you're doing is heating it.

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MBL: What do you recommend people eat boudin with?

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SH: A lot of people eat boudin and cracklings. We don't sell cracklings. A lot of people eat it with crackers or on a slice of bread with a little mustard. It just--you can eat it by itself. It's got like I said it has your rice, meat, vegetables.

00:22:01

MBL: Now do you eat boudin?

00:22:02

SH: Oh yeah; I eat boudin. I don't eat a lot of it because it's not good for my *[Laughs]*--for my figure but you got to watch that down here. There's so much good food that's the hardest thing about living here is keeping your weight down.

00:22:21

MBL: I will agree. Can you talk to me a little bit about your family background? Do ya'll consider yourselves Cajun?

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SH: Yeah; I would. I mean I guess just the way we were brought up. Our accent--I don't know how you'd describe Cajun if it's the way you was brought up or the way he--you know the culture. We were just raised poor. I don't know if it's--that's where the--you know how we always made a boucherie. We'd get--bunch of families together and you'd slaughter one pig and pretty much split it up between the families and you know eat it all in a couple days because back then there just wasn't a lot to go around. And coming from a family of 12 I mean we ate--we ate a lot of cousch-cousch and I don't know if you know what that is--

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MBL: No.

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SH: We ate a lot of cousch-cousch and cornbread and you know beans and rice and you know you--you had to stretch. We didn't have a whole lot of meals where we eat--we ate rib-eyes and you know it was a little bit of meat and a lot of fillers, you know--rice, bread, cornbread. But I don't know how you would describe a Cajun; I think a Cajun is pretty much--it don't get no better than that. You know they're--they're polite, they're nice. They might not be the most intelligent person in the world you know but he's--he's lived probably a--a rough and tough life. But I think that's--you know it has good value and respects pretty much anybody.

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MBL: For those who might not know what cousch-cousch is could you describe it?

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SH: Cousch-cousch is just cornmeal with water, make like a--say a biscuit looking texture and cook it on the stove in a black pot with a little butter. And you know it's flakey; it's kind of like cornbread but cornbread has flour in it; cush-cush is just cornmeal that kind of swells up once it's cooked and you eat it with rice--oh with rice [*Laughs*]--you eat it with--you know in a bowl like cereal--milk. I always ate it with milk and coffee.

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MBL: Now your parents clearly were the ones who taught you--your food likes. Can you talk to me a little bit about when they cooked or how you learned to cook from them or their traditions?

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SH: Yeah; I mean growing up we--my dad, I can remember he always did the--we had big barbeque fund-raisers for like the Fire Department, this and that and he would always cook the dressing. That's what he did and--and I pretty much learned how to cook you know rice dressing from that. I would go with him to the big fund-raisers; we'd cook the dressing for the barbeque dinners and I mean we--we always had Sunday dinner at home, the whole you know big--and a couple of nights that--during the week we would have you know a--when the family started growing up and leaving, we were still having you know like we have our big stuff on Monday night. The whole--everybody would come over and cook either you know crawfish etouffee or crawfish stew or something that--. We had crawfish ponds so we'd always pretty much cook something that we raised or you know killed some chickens in the yard or you know had a big gumbo or stew or--. And that's pretty much how I learned how to cook.

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MBL: So did you grow up on a farm?

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SH: Not really a farm but yeah we--you know a lot of people always say when I grew up I mean I did it all. I had to pick cotton. I had to milk the cows you know; we--we had pigs. You know we had a crawfish pond. We pretty much raised or grew everything pretty much of the stuff we ate. My grandfather had a--a, you know he would plant 40--50 acres of corn and we'd have to pick you know pick corn on the cob to sell you know for--put up corn in your freezer for the year, you know okra. We pretty much did it all. I wouldn't say it was actually a farm but we just raised stuff--not stuff to sell; we raised it to eat you know--the pigs, the cows. We milked the cows for our milk. You know chickens; we'd have the eggs to eat. We'd kill chickens. I wouldn't

say it was a farm but I'm glad I was raised the way I was because I was brought up to you know--you pretty much survive--you could survive on your own. Now days I don't think people could survive on their own if they had to.

00:28:28

MBL: Did your--was your family originally from the Maurice area?

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SH: We actually moved to Maurice when I was a--a year old. We were--my dad was from Leonville, which is between Cecilia and Port Barry and met my mom and got married. Well they lived in Leonville for a little while and then moved here 'cause that's where her family was from and been here ever since--48 years.

00:29:04

MBL: And your other 11 siblings; are they still in the area?

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SH: Pretty much; I have a sister that passed away four years ago, a year younger than I, and my dad is deceased now three years but everybody is here except I have one sister that lives in New Orleans. Everybody else is here and you know in this Maurice, [*Laughs*]--right, right here close.

00:29:37

MBL: And can you tell me a little bit about your family and your children?

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SH: I have four children--three boys and a girl. I have a 23 year-old son that works here in the business. I have a 21 year-old son that's in construction and I have a--a boy and a girl that's twins that's going to graduate this year--17. And he's working here and she does a little work for me, so I think he wants to work in the business also so I'll have two kids--two boys for sure that's going to hopefully continue the tradition.

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MBL: And can you tell me a little bit about how you taught them and--and how you teach your other employees your methods for--for the meats?

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SH: I have pretty much recipes broken down where you can't--I mean everybody cooks different. I try to teach all of my employees to always produce a--a good product where if the way I look at it, if--if I wouldn't buy it I won't sell it. You know if it doesn't--if it doesn't meet my taste I just don't sell it so--and I try to teach all my employees the same way that you know if you eat--I'm not saying if it--if it doesn't look good don't sell it. If it doesn't taste good don't sell it 'cause honestly in the produce world, if it's not pretty it's not good. In the meat world, you--you pretty much want to buy the ugliest piece of meat there is 'cause that's going to be the best tasting meat there is because if it has a little marbling in it it's not as pretty as you know a steak with no marble in it. You see that nice pretty steak with no marbling in it, well it's not going to be near as good as that ugly one; I'm telling you. So that's--that's kind of how I--I teach all my employees and kids how to put out a good product and you will be successful.

00:32:04

MBL: Can you talk to me a little bit about how you developed your recipes? Did you go back to family recipes or did you create them as you worked?

00:32:11

SH: Yeah; no we--we started off--started out with pretty much nothing and had to produce all our own recipes and seasoning. You know we kind of mixed and put this together and like our seasoning we used--when we first started we put a little salt, put a little pepper, put a little garlic and that was it. And kind of as you learn you say well shoot; it's going to be a lot quicker if you shake one jar instead of shaking five different jars to season one thing. And so we kind of put all this--put all our seasoning together and made a--a blend that we used for all our--all our stuff, you know as far as for cooking and seasoning and put so much of this and so much of that and--.

00:33:05

MBL: Do you make your blend in-house or do you give your recipe to a company that makes it for you?

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SH: No; we have a company that makes it--blends it for us. That's--you--you just try sign a confidentiality agreement with them and they make it and--. We sell it to our franchisees; they buy our seasoning from us.

00:33:27

MBL: How--who are your franchisees and how do you decide who gets to use the family name in other businesses?

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SH: Well we have--we actually have three different franchisees. We have--in Houston there's three--three stores, the same guy, Chris Cattlett that owns those three stores; we have a store in Long View, Brain Marcott and we have a store in Tulsa, Ed Richard that's--actually the way the franchise works is if somebody is interested in a territory you know they come and see me and--and if we can you know make a deal where I think it's the right person. It's got to be the you know somebody--it'll have to be somebody that I can pretty much call a partner because we have to get along pretty much like brothers for them to be able to succeed and you know do everything that I teach them and they have to want to work. And so that's kind of how it goes; if--if it's not the right person I don't think right off the bat, I just don't even--you know I could--I could sell probably five or six franchises a year if I wanted but I'm not going to sell a franchise to somebody that I don't think has it in their heart to you know make it or run their own business and be successful.

00:34:54

MBL: Can you tell me a little bit about the Tulsa store? Was the community there familiar with boudin already or did you have to introduce it to that?

00:35:03

SH: Tulsa is probably the--the most different you know--Houston and Long View there--there's a lot of Cajuns or Louisiana people that moved there that you know pretty--they know about

boudin and they know about Hebert's. Tulsa is a totally different world. They got--you pretty much had--had to train them to eat spicy foods or even seasoned stuff. They just--they just you know bland potatoes and you know they didn't know what boudin was. We had to pretty much train them how to eat it and what to do with this and that--chickens, stuffed chickens, seasoned meat. They were like well what are we supposed to do with this? You cook it and eat it and it's good. *[Laughs]* But they're coming around.

00:36:06

MBL: Is the franchise owner from this area? What gave him the idea to open a store in Tulsa?

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SH: Yeah; he was from Lafayette. Worked for a copy company in Tulsa for eight or ten years and every time he'd come home he'd have to bring chickens back to Tulsa, so he kind of wanted to get out of the copy business and stepped into this and that's how that happened.

00:36:31

MBL: The restaurant that you talked about earlier that originally opened is it still in operation?

00:36:44

SH: Yeah; it--it opened in 1974. The name is Soop's Restaurant; that was my dad's nickname. That's how he got it. But it's still in business. My sisters--I have four or five of my sisters that--well actually seven--seven of my sisters that work there. One of them kind of runs it and the others just follow along.

00:37:17

MBL: Do you know how your dad got his nickname?

00:37:20

SH: Yeah; well--well when he was young they called him Superman and it just started for short they called him Soop cause he was--growing up he was real strong and you know I guess did it all so they called him Superman and just Soop stuck with him.

00:37:45

MBL: I'm not sure if the microphone is picking it up but there is a lot of busyness outside of your office this morning, lots of rattling of pans. Can you tell me what's going on today and what they're making out there?

00:37:56

SH: Well today they're--in the back we're deboning chickens, making crawfish pies; in the front they're cutting pork chops to stuff and the kitchen is cooking alligator dressing and cooking something for lunch. We cook lunch every day for the employees. One of the girls up front is making jalapeno stuffed potato stuffing to stuff chickens. Doing kabobs--just stuffed the--filled up the front box as people come in and buy and restock.

00:38:40

MBL: So today is not a boudin day, correct?

00:38:41

SH: No; the boudin well we make boudin tomorrow and we make boudin on Monday and Friday.

00:38:53

MBL: For your employees since you train them with your recipes, how long do they stay with you usually?

00:39:00

SH: They--they stay--I mean I've got some that's been here since--my brother-in-law has been here--we opened in August and he started in--he was a farmer and got out of the farming and he started in October of the first year. He's still here; I have people that's been here 18--20 years. They're pretty loyal. I mean probably about 10 years ago I started having them sign a non-compete agreement that way with all the things that I've trained them and all my recipes and stuff they can't just go out and go on their own and sell it or--. That's--and just--it's really honesty; you got to--you got to trust them and hopefully it all works out.

00:40:00

MBL: Now this morning I noticed that there's construction going on to expand the space. Can you tell me a little bit about that project?

00:40:09

SH: Yeah; I'm just adding onto my front, widening my retail space, making it a lot more convenient for my employees and my customers to have a reach-in freezer up there where the more you can display stuff the more people especially food. If they see something they like

they're going to buy it and if they can't see it just won't buy it. So I'm kind of expanding that just to build a--increase sales and make my employees and myself--work a lot easier on us and customers.

00:40:51

MBL: How was this location chosen originally?

00:40:56

SH: Well we're from--we were from Maurice so that's why we did it here and then when we did it you know it had a population of maybe 500 people. Maurice, you know a lot of people thought we were crazy opening you know a meat shop in a little town like this. But I keep going back to no matter where you are if you have a good product people will drive and--and it's pretty much a proven fact that--. I mean I still outsell--the Houston store has three locations with you know where there's 4,000,000 people in Houston or whatever and I still sell--outsell him with my one store, so it doesn't matter where you do it. Sooner or later he's going to pass me up but he's--he's still--does well but you know we've been here so long people are so used to you know--there's still people that will drive from Houston just to come--'cause they want it out of the original. They don't want it at a franchise store; they want to come to the original, so--.

00:42:09

MBL: What do people do here in Maurice? What is this community like today?

00:42:15

SH: It's still a small town. It's bigger than it was when we opened but it's still a small town. Everybody knows everybody's business. People--you got to kind of watch what you do 'cause people are going to talk and people are going--you know but that's the good you know Cajun small town--. I really like it you know. People are going to talk and--but as long as you take care of your business and put out a good product, the more they talk the better it is.

00:42:54

MBL: Do you think your children will stay here?

00:42:56

SH: Oh I'm pretty sure a couple of them are going--I mean it's--I always tell them, I mean you can go out and do something on your own but if--I'm not going say you have to do this but if you want to do it it's pretty much a goldmine you know waiting for them to take over and as long as they do it right you know I don't have a problem with them taking over and as long as they don't think that you know I'm going to hand it to them and just--they can sit down and it's going to run itself. It doesn't; you have to--you have to stay on top of it.

00:43:39

MBL: How many more years do you think you'll work here?

00:43:42

SH: Well I'm 49; I'm--I'm hoping I can retire before I get to 60--55, 58 I'd like to just sit back and enjoy the retired life hopefully.

00:44:02

MBL: I'll let you get a drink of coffee. I've had you talking all morning. [*Sammy Hebert sips hot coffee at his desk.*] Before we wrap this up do you have any final thoughts or anything that I haven't asked you that you'd like to tell us about?

00:44:14

SH: Not really I mean--I'm glad I opened this business. About the only negative thing that I could say about a meat market is the holidays where--where people you know--busy world; they--they expect everything you know like they should have ordered it. Well they--they come in and think that you know we should have an overabundance of stuff--of chickens or whatever for them to just come in and pick up. But it's just so much work involved; it's just so much at one time. If you could spread it out you know the whole year, but it's not. You--you can't enjoy the holidays anymore; Thanksgiving and Christmas, I can remember it's not as bad as it used to be when we first opened. We didn't have that many employees. You--you know you worked 16--18 hours a day and I pretty much slept through Thanksgiving and Christmas and just didn't get to enjoy none of the--. That's the only negative thing I can say about this business as far as everything else I love. I love you know seeing people come in and you know saying how much they enjoyed my food and this and that. And--and it makes me feel good whenever--even just like this; somebody comes in and interviews you know pretty much my product because you know somebody told them how good it was or you know being--we were in the *Wall Street Journal*; that made me feel real good. We were on *The History Channel*; we were on *The Travel Channel*, you know just--it makes me feel good because there's a lot of people I know that didn't have the chances that I had and--. But I guess the best thing is you know when you--when you own your own business and you're that successful you know it--it makes you feel good.

00:46:48

MBL: To back this up, describe to me how you like to eat your boudin.

00:46:53

SH: The way I eat my boudin I just take a link and cut it in half and eat it just out of the casing. I eat the casing and all; some people don't eat the casing but it's--it's all edible. You just you know just take a bite and--. Don't get me wrong; I like it on a slice of bread but I--with--with a little mustard; that's just from the old days. That's how we ate it--a slice of bread with a little mustard and boudin; that was--. But I don't eat it as much as I used to because of the--got high cholesterol now so you can't have that--all that fat and pork.

00:47:46

MBL: Do you find that people buy it less because of health concerns these days or people just--they eat it and it's so good they don't care?

00:47:50

SH: Yeah; I mean I know there's one guy that comes in and he says he--he can only eat it once a month, so--because he has cholesterol, so he--every month he comes in and gets him a link just to--you know you have that craving for it and you--. Every once in a while it's not bad, but I don't think many people care about the--the fat or the calories; they just--they got to have it.

00:48:27

MBL: Well thank you very much for sharing your time with me today and I look forward to touring the plant.

00:48:33

[End Hebert's Specialty Meats]