

**POPE AND JUDY HUVAL**  
**Former Owners – Webster’s Meat Market – Cecilia, LA**

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Date: February 19, 2009  
Location: Webster’s Meat Market  
Interviewer: Mary Beth Lasseter  
Length: 78 minutes  
Project: Boudin Trail

**[Begin Pope and Judy Huval Interview]**

**00:00:01**

**Mary Beth Lasseter:** This is Mary Beth Lasseter with the Southern Foodways Alliance. Today is Thursday, February 19, 2009 and I'm here at Webster's in Louisiana. If you would please; introduce yourself and tell me what you do for a living.

**00:00:17**

**Pope Huval:** I'm Leo Huval, better known as Pope and I'm a Deputy Sheriff in St. Martin Parish, a local Parish and we own the store here, my wife and I, named Webster's Meat Market in Cecilia. Actually we are now the--we were the owners. We sold it to one of our sons, Shannon, but we are the--more or less the operators.

**00:00:41**

**MBL:** And your lovely wife?

**00:00:42**

**Judy Huval:** And my name is Judy and I'm the Pope's wife. *[Laughs]*

**00:00:49**

**MBL:** I like it.

**00:00:49**

**JH:** And I do all the cooking. He does all the talking but I do all the cooking.

00:00:56

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit if you will about your history, your family, and how you met.

00:01:01

**PH:** Well we--we went to school together, the same school in Cecilia, elementary, primary school all the way through high school and we were high school sweethearts at--when we became seniors. You know how senior girls, we would--we graduated the same year but girls are a little bit more advanced than boys. So she was kind of interested in the older boys, but when they left school and she found an interest in me, bless my pea-picking heart, and we started going out and voila. We were married in 1960 and have been happily together ever since.

00:01:33

**MBL:** And is that your version of the story?

00:01:36

**JH:** Partly [*Laughs*]; he's right about that. We didn't get really to--we were friends, you know in eleventh and twelfth grade and we started going out but for the next two--three years it was mostly off. So then we decided to have it on again; then we got married.

00:01:55

**PH:** It's been on ever since.

00:01:56

**JH:** But he was going his way and I was going my way most of the time. But that's how it was in those days. *[Laughs]*

00:02:02

**PH:** You found the truth. *[Laughs]*

00:02:06

**MBL:** Now you were parting ways; were y'all going off to school or just other interests in the same town?

00:02:12

**JH:** What was that; I'm sorry?

00:02:14

**MBL:** You said that y'all were going your own way. Do you mean y'all were--?

00:02:17

**JH:** No; in the same school, the same area, the same dance hall, the same teenagers, but I mean we didn't--it wasn't a steady dating you know.

00:02:23

**PH:** We wasn't steady going out. Sometimes we'd just--I'd pick her up and we'd come to the dance.

00:02:25

**JH:** Special occasions.

**00:02:26**

**PH:** She'd go sit with the girls; I'd sit at the bar with the boys. We'd dance with other folks. We'd have a good time all night. At the end of the dance--time to go home; I'd drop off Judy and go home. We did that for quite a while but we were sweet on each other. We just didn't want to go real steady I guess you might say. But eventually we found out that--what the truth really was. We really wanted to be together and we are; we were--I guess we still are.

**00:02:52**

**JH:** [*Laughs*]

**00:02:54**

**MBL:** Tell me about your family. A family of boys I understand Judy--?

**00:02:59**

**JH:** Yeah; we have all boys--five boys and in the five boys in my third pregnancy we had a set of twins. So we have five boys, five sons, Tod, Rowdy, Shawn, Shannon, and of course Jonathan and we have five grandsons and we have two daughter-in-laws. [*Laughs*]

**00:03:19**

**MBL:** Get the girls in there.

**00:03:21**

**JH:** Yeah.

**00:03:22**

**MBL:** What do the boys now do for a living?

**00:03:25**

**PH:** Todd works in--lives in Dallas and works for Fed-Ex. He's a Manager of a plant there, distributing plant. Shannon--one of the twins owns the store; his twin brother works for a welding supply company--distributing, and our second son, Rowdy is a teacher. He teaches at a middle school in Lafayette Parish. And our youngest son died in 1982; he was nine years old.

**00:03:54**

**JH:** And of course Shannon is the--now the owner of Webster's. He's one of the twins.

**00:03:59**

**MBL:** Older twin or younger twin?

**00:04:01**

**JH:** Huh?

**00:04:01**

**MBL:** Is he the older twin or the younger twin?

**00:04:04**

**JH:** The younger.

00:04:07

**PH:** Yeah; that's correct. He is the youngest.

00:04:08

**JH:** He's forgetful.

00:04:12

**MBL:** Let's talk a little bit about what you did--what your occupations were when you first got out and got married prior to coming to Webster's.

00:04:24

**PH:** Well I lived on a farm; I was born and raised on a farm. When I was 10 years old it was just crop farming and truck farming and cotton and stuff like that back in--when I was young. Then in about--when I was about 10 or 12 my dad started a dairy farm. We operated that until I graduated from high school. I worked on the farm and when my dad got older, my brothers had all gone, and my sister, so I bought the farm from the rest of the family and operated it until about '72, '73--early '70s. And then I--the land that I used for farm--some of my farm besides what I owned was sold, so I had to get out of the dairy business. I did a few different things since then; I've worked for a finance company for a number of--large number of years and also owned a store and a--a drive-in, a little drive-in business, drove a school bus--did a lot of different things but mainly it's been the dairy farm, the finance business and then we bought this store in '96.

**00:05:30**

**MBL:** Can you tell me a little bit about your family background, your parents' names and--?

**00:05:38**

**PH:** My dad was Aldus Huval; he was born and raised in the area. My mom was a Guidry-- Helen Guidry. She--her family originally came from the Donaldsonville area, Ascension Parish or Assumption in that area, and they moved--her dad moved down here in the Breaux Bridge area back in the--probably Depression Era or earlier--earlier than that. And her and my dad met at a dance hall; go to the dance and that's where they met and danced and eventually became-- became a marriage and--.

**00:06:17**

**MBL:** And how many children did they have? What are your siblings?

**00:06:22**

**PH:** They had seven. I had five--five brothers and a sister and I was the youngest brother and then my sister was the youngest of the--of the children.

**00:06:31**

**MBL:** So you're number six?

**00:06:31**

**PH:** I'm number six, right.

**00:06:35**

**MBL:** And Judy, tell me a little bit about your family background--your parents.

**00:06:40**

**JH:** My parents, my father was Lawrence Angelle. He came from a family of seven--six brothers and one sister and my mom's name was Ada Hebert. And I'm the only child but my father passed away when I was like three years old. He was killed in an accident and my mother raised me, mostly by herself until she met someone else when I was about 10 and he became-- Mr. Berard became my step-dad. And my mother was from a family of 12, all born and raised right here in Cecilia. And that's--that's about it.

**00:07:19**

**PH:** She had 10 sisters and two brothers.

**00:07:20**

**JH:** Ten sisters and two brothers and my dad had five brothers--six brothers and one sister. And as a matter of fact, we were all born and raised right here in Cecilia.

**00:07:32**

**PH:** All close to each other; yes. The families--our parents' families knew each other except for my--my--my mom's parents who lived in the Breaux Bridge area--everybody else was close to here.

**00:07:44**

**MBL:** That's really great. That doesn't happen a lot anymore.

00:07:46

**JH:** Right.

00:07:47

**MBL:** When--when your mom was raising you by herself was she working at that time?

00:07:52

**JH:** No; as a matter of fact, my mom--when my dad passed away, she collected a small insurance and we were on Social Security. But at the time the parents--the mother could not work. If she worked outside she collected an income, a small income and--at the time for her and I but if--she couldn't work, so she had 'til I was 18 years old that was the law then that the--the--my mother couldn't--the spouse, she couldn't work. If she would work she would lose her--her income; you see? So she--she didn't work 'til--'til I was 18 and we lived on Social Security and a little small insurance that my--my father had left when he got killed. He worked in--he was--he was killed on a bulldozer. He was grazing some land and a tree fell and instead of staying on the cab--in the cab, he jumped off and the tree fell on him and he was killed. He lived just a few hours and my mom was--my mom was like--she was pretty young. They were--well my dad was only 26 when he got killed and I was three years old, so I really don't remember. I don't have any recollection of my dad or before that. So my mom raised me; I was a spoiled brat. But we were raised very poor you know. But we didn't miss out on too much. We came out okay.

**[Laughs]**

00:09:17

**MBL:** And can you tell me a little bit about your stepfather?

**00:09:19**

**JH:** My stepfather was Mr. Berard; his name was Forest Berard and he was--he never married you know. He never had any other children but--so he helped my mom raise me and he was a great stepdad and he--I don't think he could have had any other children that could have meant more to him than--than me and of course my five kids when they came along you know. He was a super granddad [*Laughs*]--well not a granddad, a stepdad; I'm sorry. And we lived right here in Cecilia until I married Mr. Huval. As a matter of fact, we still have the little house that I was born and raised in.

**00:09:59**

**MBL:** Tell me about that; how far is it from here?

**00:10:01**

**JH:** It's just about maybe three miles from here right in the middle of Cecilia--.

**00:10:06**

**PH:** A mile--not more than a mile, a little more than a mile maybe; it's not far--a couple of miles.

**00:10:10**

**JH:** But it's right in Cecilia--not on Main Street but just--just about on Main Street.

**00:10:13**

**PH:** Yeah; it's a little--it was actually a two-room house originally I believe and they had--.

**00:10:18**

**JH:** Yeah; it's just a three-room house now and a bath.

**00:10:20**

**PH:** Three-room house and they added another room and now they've added a bathroom. Her mom and Mr. Forest lived there years ago. When they got a little older they decided to build a full bathroom because they were getting older and they needed that you know. So yes; the little house is still there. We go there occasionally; we keep it as a little--like a little entertainment house.

**00:10:40**

**JH:** A playhouse. [*Laughs*]

**00:10:43**

**PH:** A playhouse and when Todd comes--our son that lives in Dallas comes--to visit that's where he stays.

**00:10:48**

**MBL:** We talked about Mr. Huval being a dairy farmer. Did you work after you got out of school?

**00:10:54**

**JH:** I worked for a short time for the telephone company in Lafayette and then I worked for a country doctor here, Dr. Louis Weinstein for a couple of years. And then after that I was a housewife for 14 years--when we had the dairy farm. That's when I was raising my children, so I just was a house-mom and then later on when we bought other businesses, well I kind of helped out in the businesses and then I drove a school bus for 26 years. I retired from the school system three years ago, but that was okay 'cause I was--I just had to go--leave for about an hour in the morning and I was--about an hour in the afternoon and in between I could do whatever I wanted--raise my kids and--. I don't think I would have liked a full-time job when I was raising my children--not with five. *[Laughs]*

**00:11:46**

**MBL:** Let's talk a little bit about the French heritage in your family; the last names all sound Cajun French. Tell me a little bit about that.

**00:11:56**

**PH:** Huval originally my--my ancestor that bears our name came directly from France. I don't recall the year but I have a family tree that shows it and his name was Jean Huval. A lot of the--of our ancestors, the rest of them on all three sides came from the Nova Scotia Cajuns. They're Cajuns that traveled--that were exiled, the Berard(s), the Angelle(s) and the Guidry(s) and there are some Angelle(s) that came from Spain. I think her family, there are some Spanish. There is a lot of Spanish in her--in her side of the family but me, it was all directly from France or the Berard(s) which was the other side were all descendants from Nova Scotia. And Jean, the original old man had two sons, one was Jean Batiste and one was James and from those two sons

all the Huval(s) in Louisiana are coming from. We researched back and they all come from those two names.

**00:13:05**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit about your upbringing. Did you speak French in your homes and like a lot of people in the area, were your families practicing Catholics?

**00:13:17**

**PH:** Very--very strong Catholic, very true to our faith; our parents raised us that way, taught us our prayers when we were small children, and speaking French I could not say a word of English when I started school. My name sounds the same both Leo Huval [*French pronunciation*], Leo Huval, and then the teachers that started first grade back then when we started school they had to be able to speak French and English to communicate with the children to get them to start learning to speak English. I remember our first grade teacher, Miss Adele Martin; I think Judy had the same first grade teacher, and they had to--there's a few kids that could say their names in English or speak a few words 'cause Judy's mom spoke English well. My mom spoke English fairly good but my dad couldn't amount to anything, so it was much easier for us to speak French all the time. Then as my brothers--my older brother started going to school, I picked up some from them and my mom could speak with them, so I could learn a little bit. But when I started school it was strictly French and our Catholic faith was very strong for us.

**00:14:27**

**MBL:** Do you still speak French?

**00:14:30**

**JH:** Oh mais bien, mais bien, Judy and I do.

**00:14:34**

**MBL:** Well I was about to say; Judy tell me about your family and the language and religious traditions.

**00:14:39**

**JH:** My family--well my mom with so many brothers and sisters, she was--she was a high school graduate, so she spoke a lot of English because at the time they only went 'til eleventh grade. So I was taught to speak a little bit of English but we spoke mostly French because all the--grandpa and grandma and they spoke--when I started first grade I--I spoke a little bit of English but I spoke a lot of French because the--the grandparents they spoke--they hardly spoke any English. And let's see; where am I now? Oh yeah and we were--we were born and raised Catholic you know and we walked to church; we walked to religion; we walked to school 'cause I lived right in Cecilia. There were buses but I didn't--I wasn't bussed 'cause I lived in walking distance you see. So we walked to church; we walked to school; we walked--we had a--a movie house. We'd walk to the movie house. It was really a small community you know very, very small and my father's name Angelle, I think they are Spanish descendants and Hebert is French and everybody spoke a lot of French--and we spoke English though you know.

**00:15:53**

**MBL:** Did you retain it? Do you speak French at home with your husband now or--?

**00:15:57**

**JH:** Yeah; we speak a lot of French and my children speak French. We spoke to them in French a lot and they spoke to the grandparents in French and to the stepdad, although my stepdad spoke broken English but they all learned the French and they--they can speak it--not the Parisian French now. It's a different--

**00:16:17**

**PH:** Different dialect.

**00:16:19**

**JH:** --it's a different dialect you know.

**00:16:21**

**PH:** It's strange how from--from one little town to the other--you travel to Arnaudville and you--the people that speak French there have a--they call it a patois which is I guess it's French for dialect, a different--there are some words they're going to pronounce which will sound totally different. Then you go to Ville Platte and you go to Grand Coteau they all have--some words that are not quite the same. They have their own way of saying it but it's all--it's interesting to--to know that the--some of it is still kept--the older folks especially. They're trying to preserve it by teaching French in school; it's not working that good 'cause the French they teach is the Parisian French and the--the dialect that we speak is gradually being lost 'cause our children are not going to speak it enough to keep--to retain it for theirs.

**00:17:08**

**MBL:** So do your--on that thought, do your grandchildren have any French-speaking capacity now or are they--?

**00:17:16**

**PH:** We have some that do. They've taken French--Forest knows French--.

**00:17:21**

**JH:** They have a French Immersion Program.

**00:17:23**

**PH:** French Immersion Program and is involved in it and they can--they can manage but they're not going to speak it every day. We talk to them in French and they're going to come back with an English response. I'd like for them to practice it and that--that way they could keep it and pass it onto their children, but I'm afraid it's going to eventually get lost 'cause of their--not that they can't do it, but if you don't practice it then you--you lose that want to say--. One thing that's helping the French in the area is the music. The French music is very strong and it--it still--. As a matter of fact, we have a grandson who plays the accordion and I--I sing French. I've written some music and I have a CD that's out and I have another one that I'm getting ready to--to put out. I have some French and English in it but I sing French very fluently. I write in French. I can read pretty well in French. And Judy was--actually she went to the rally--am I right in French?

**00:18:20**

**JH:** Yeah.

**00:18:22**

**PH:** And was a State Champion in French. She could--she as a very good--very good patois in French. She's very good.

**00:18:28**

**JH:** I don't brag about my patois.

**00:18:31**

**PH:** But yeah I like to brag about it. *[Laughs]*

**00:18:33**

**MBL:** Now what--now what is a rally?

**00:18:33**

**JH:** A rally is like a--a--

**00:18:37**

**PH:** Competition--school competition at the State level.

**00:18:38**

**JH:** Yeah; at the time--yeah they still have rallies in different subjects you know. That's what they called it then but at the time when we were in school it was in French and you went to--you went to Baton Rouge and you learned different speeches. One was about ma famille, ma village - -different things. I forget how it went. There was seven speeches you had to learn and you know

talk--they picked one. And you had to learn all of them and I placed and I got Extemporaneous  
Speaking in that so I did pretty good. I don't brag too much.

**00:19:16**

**PH:** It's weird that--that the teacher who was in charge of it was Mrs. Bienvenu who was the Librarian and her and Judy got along like oil and water. They clashed at every word but she knew how good she was--Mrs. Bienvenu knew how good she was, so she picked her because she knew nobody could do it as good as her and she knew what she was doing 'cause she became a--she won. She had a very clear voice; let's put it that--younger, as a younger. Now she still does but mostly when she was younger. You know how some people have a very clear voice that carries--that the words are so explicit? She had that gift when she was young. She could speak in the next room and you could hear her voices so clear. You could understand every word and not many people have that. We have a neighbor who is like that.

**00:20:02**

**JH:** He knows exactly how I could speak and how clearly I spoke. He's the one that can tell you how clearly I spoke. *[Laughs]*

**00:20:12**

**MBL:** Keeping him straight, huh? *[Laughs]* Well tell me a little bit--either one of you--about your home Parish here in Cecilia, your--your Church Parish?

**00:20:21**

**PH:** Our Church Parish is St. Joseph's Church just a little ways down the road. And we've been--we've belonged to it all our lives; we had--went to religion class there, First Communion, Confirmation. We were married there and we both belonged to the choir when we were in high school. We sang and then later on Judy--babies came along so she couldn't attend practice religiously--religiously so I kept on and I was the Choir Director for many years. I'm still--still doing that and have a good group. We do some nice music.

**00:21:00**

**MBL:** How big is the--how big is the Church Parish? How many families do you think?

**00:21:03**

**PH:** Five hundred; yeah about--about that. Not all of them are--you know practicing every Sunday or you know but we have about 450 to 500 families that we consider parishioners. You have maybe a third of that--that are active enough to consider their--their donation, their attendance at Mass and services and so on, somewhere around that area.

**00:21:32**

**MBL:** Let's talk a little bit about your music. I'm intrigued by your playing and singing. Tell me about it.

**00:21:40**

**PH:** It--it's--it was in my family from many years ago. I had an uncle, my wife--my mom's brother, a younger brother named Sidney who played music as a teenager and was in a band back when he was young, played guitar and sang. And when I was a little kid for some reason I could

carry a tune fairly well so they made me sing. I had an older brother, who's passed on now, my second brother named George, who attended a Seminary. He studied for the Priesthood and he--he went all the way to Theology and then he left--he left and got married and raised a family but anyway he had a good friend from Mississippi, Meridian, Mississippi as a matter of fact. His name was Adrian--I can't remember Adrian's last name. But anyway he--they were very close. He'd come home and spend weekends sometimes and come home and spend part of the summer and he couldn't get over how I could sing. So he would make me stand on a chair, give me a nickel so I could sing. I would sing to him and it always stayed on my mind. I'd learn some country songs I'd hear on the radio and learn the words and sing. And I just kept on the--the habit of loving to sing; I always did. I started--I don't--I don't play an instrument. I--I started a few years ago a little bit with the guitar. I'd just strum and accompany myself but I'm--I'm not really a musician as far as that goes, but I can write music. I've written some songs for other people. I've written for me; I've recorded some. I have some--a CD that I'm ready to put out right now of--of 10 songs, original songs that I've done, some in French and some in English. And I have a--maybe another 30 or 40 songs that I never did record that I just wrote that I just have on tape or have the words down. But I always did love music.

**00:23:31**

**MBL:** Now were you singing--I know you said you've written both French and English songs. Are you singing--were you singing traditional French songs as a child?

**00:23:39**

**PH:** Yes; yes I know--I know a lot of the traditional French songs, Jolie Blanc! And La Valse de Meche! (means *Waltz of the Swamp*) and some of the old songs by Lawrence Walker like Harry

Choate and some of the old musicians that performed back then that wrote some songs. I remember those songs. I can sing--.

00:24:02

**MBL:** Can you give me a little--a little chorus of one right now? Judy is giving you a sideways look?

00:24:07

**PH:** [*Sings in French: J'ai Passed u vont ta Porte/I Passed by Your Door*] That's a song about a guy who is--he and his girlfriend broke up and he--was trying to go back to her house to make up with--so they could make up and when he got there he--he found out that she had died and she was exposed and he sang a song about--she called to him but nobody answered and his--his heart is breaking. That's what it says. [*Laughs*] Very touching; they had some beautiful thoughts to write about then.

00:24:59

**MBL:** Since we're on the--the subject of music tell me the history of the building where Webster's is now located.

00:25:10

**JH:** [*Laughs*]

00:25:10

**PH:** Well Judy can fill you in on that one.

00:25:11

**JH:** Oh well we both can fill it--fill you in on it. Webster's was an original dance hall when we were teenagers and the same owner, Mr. Webster, who owns this store--he was the owner of the dance hall. As a matter of fact, the same building, as we speak is--was the dance hall then but it was in another location and as teenagers that's where we went dancing and that's where our--that's what we did when we were young--danced. *[Laughs]*

00:25:42

**PH:** Good times--.

00:25:43

**JH:** But it wasn't called Webster's; it had another--Mr. Webster had a nickname, Shooktah; I don't know what that means but that's what--when we said we were going out on Saturday night we were going at Shooktah's 'cause they had bands and they had--that's where everybody would get together.

00:26:03

**PH:** It drew--it drew people from a lot of the little towns, Breaux Bridge, St. Martinville, as far--Lafayette; people came from all over--Catahoula. They all came here and that's--that's where everybody--*the* place. You know how it is; there was a place and this was the place--that's where everybody--.

00:26:19

**MBL:** Can you tell me who the musicians were? Who was playing here at that time?

**00:26:21**

**PH:** Oh I mentioned a few while ago when we talked; Johnny Allen and the Crazy Cats, Randy and the Rockets, Jay Nelson--.

**00:26:34**

**JH:** Bobby Paige and the Riffraffs.

**00:26:34**

**PH:** Bobby Paige and the Riffraffs, I forgot; that was a big band.

**00:26:36**

**MBL:** Now what was the name of that again?

**00:26:37**

**PH:** Bobby Paige and the Riffraffs; let's see--Jimmy Newman, a country star--Jimmy Newman played here also.

**00:26:49**

**JH:** That was before us though.

**00:26:50**

**PH:** Yeah; but he still played some.

**00:26:52**

**JH:** And Fats Domino played here.

**00:26:52**

**PH:** Fats Domino came here--

**00:26:53**

**MBL:** Really?

**00:26:55**

**PH:** --back when he was in--

**00:26:55**

**JH:** Twice.

**00:26:57**

**PH:** --his big name band, big--big star, and he came at this place and played two--on two different occasions that we attended.

**00:27:02**

**MBL:** Over there?

**00:27:05**

**PH:** Yeah; oh yeah.

00:27:05

**JH:** Yeah; we had front-row seats.

00:27:06

**PH:** I mean the place was packed. He packed the place; yeah. And I can't remember some of the other bands--Herb Landry and the Serenaders with--and Randy and the Rockets; I think I mentioned Randy and the Rockets. That's another good band.

00:27:21

**MBL:** Sorry; I was just moving my chair up.

00:27:23

**PH:** Sure, all of those; Larry Brasso and the Rhythm Airs, a country music band, all of these guys all played here, yeah.

00:27:33

**MBL:** Describe to me a night at the dance hall if you will, Judy.

00:27:35

**JH:** The night of the dance--of the dance? Well it's--[*Laughs*], I don't know about the guys but the girls around 4:30 Saturday afternoon we'd get together and that's when we got ready and by 7:30 we were--we had our special place here at the dance hall where we'd sit. The girls--the parents would bring--the moms would bring the girls and the moms would sit somewhere(s) and

the girls would sit in their little area and the dances would start at about 8 o'clock 'til 12:00 and you'd dance all night. **[Laughs]** That's what you did.

**00:28:15**

**PH:** Yeah; I was telling her earlier where the--showed her where the bar was--the guys would stand at the bar, usually would stand all night when we weren't dancing, stand at the bar and walk around and talk to the girls and when the dance--. We'd figure out the one we'd want to dance with and the first note that started on the song take off running--.

**00:28:35**

**JH:** Better hurry. **[Laughs]**

**00:28:36**

**PH:** And occasionally you get to--if you wanted to try to get to know the girl better, try to get two or three dances after the song was over. You'd try to stay on the dance floor and chat with her a while and hoping that another song would start so that you could have two dances and maybe three. You know if it's a girl who was a good dancer and you wanted to get to know better or try to make a little time you know **[Laughs]**--so that's--that's how it went. And--and you know it's remarkable. We--we go places now and if it's not air-conditioned we can't survive but there was no air-condition then. There were fans, two or three large window fans that would blow some air and we never suffered from heat you know. We'd sweat a little bit but I think--we had--yeah we had--we had good times. We danced until sometimes when we were really fooling in the dead--dead of summer you'd break out in a sweat but it didn't matter. We had fun.

00:29:27

**MBL:** Now what years would those have been?

00:29:30

**JH:** Fifty--fifty-six, fifty-seven, fifty-eight, fifty-nine, sixty; I don't know what--.

00:29:34

**PH:** Early '50s, like '52, '53. We didn't go then but my brothers went, my older brothers; we didn't--I didn't start coming--.

00:29:42

**JH:** That wasn't rock and roll though then. That was country. We didn't like country--we didn't like country. I'm sorry you country singers but we were rock and roll. *[Laughs]*

00:29:48

**PH:** Yeah; rock and roll when the--when the--you know Elvis and--and Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, that kind of--that--that era, that's when we were really rock and rolling, having a good--Pat Boone and a lot of the--the popular rock and roll artists then, the Shirelles and--I can't remember all--a lot of ladies. I can't remember the names of all of them but those--that era there when they were really popular that's when we were dancing.

00:30:17

**MBL:** Okay; so the dance hall was playing contemporary music then. It wasn't like traditional Cajun dancing?

**00:30:23**

**PH:** No, no.

**00:30:23**

**JH:** No; that wasn't popular at that time, the Cajun music. I mean we--if someone was playing Cajun music somewhere it was like we didn't like it. It was really rock and roll and later on then they introduced the Cajun music and then now it's popular you know.

**00:30:41**

**PH:** It was--it was still on then but it was--I know there was a place in Lafayette called--in St. Martinville called the Jolly Roger. It was a club; occasionally as a bunch of young guys we'd go riding around on Saturday night or just to--and we'd go into the Jolly Roger and it was all Cajun--accordion and fiddles and there was a place in Lafayette too. I can't remember the name of it--name of it, on--on University. They had a big dance hall there and then the one in Scott; I can't remember the name of that one either. They were always just French music. But the older folks then like our--our folks, our parents and people of that age were still going to the French. It was still popular in some places but there was a big dance hall in Bristol--Bristol. I can't remember the name of it but all of those areas had one or two big dance--that played strictly French music.

**00:31:32**

But what we would consider old folks then which was our folks which was probably in their 40s and 50s--maybe a little older, they would congregate there and have dances. A dance would last sort of like ours; start at 8:00 and finish at midnight.

**00:31:48**

**JH:** We didn't go much of anywhere(s) but in the Cecilia area.

**00:31:50**

**PH:** No; we never--

**00:31:52**

**JH:** This is where we stayed--in Cecilia, Breaux Bridge, Arnaudville area; we didn't--very rare did we drive to Lafayette to go out to dancing. This is where we stayed. Nobody had that many cars, you know. Of course--we could--we could get there; we--we just didn't want to go there. We just wanted to be in our little area here. That's how we were brought up.

**00:32:14**

**MBL:** Now I understand that this dance hall had a kitchen in it and they served food. Tell me a little bit about that.

**00:32:20**

**JH:** Well the dance hall when you weren't having such a great time dancing, they had the little--the little kitchen back there where we had this lady that would make hamburgers. And so if you didn't want to dance--you got tired of dancing you'd go out there and she'd--you'd eat a hamburger for about maybe 25--35-cents, yeah and that's how Mr. Webster started with the food business I think.

**00:32:43**

**PH:** Yeah.

**00:32:45**

**JH:** After the dance hall died down and he moved--he lost his lease; he had to move to the building here, and that's when the dancing just faded out and it went somewhere else. [*Laughs*] And he started with the food and started selling boudin and the meats and he did that for years and years. And that's how we got into the business after he retired.

**00:33:09**

**PH:** I was telling her about Noo-Noon. Noo-Noon used to make the hamburgers and how her--her bread for her--to put in her burgers was some--some bread that she would soften with water and mix that with the meat, sort of like a meatloaf burger is what you mentioned and that's how it looked. They were so delicious and she would cook that in a--in some hog lard on a--on a regular skillet.

**00:33:31**

**MBL:** Like a black skillet?

**00:33:33**

**PH:** Black skillet--black pot, a big old black pot--eight or ten of them.

**00:33:38**

**JH:** We still do that; we still make hamburgers in a black pot.

**00:33:40**

**PH:** Yeah; they're very good--very delicious. But anyway that's how he started selling food and we--almost everybody would buy a hamburger. After the dance we were kind of hungry; you know kids and the appetites are never ending. We were hungry for something to eat before we got back home and grab a hamburger. For 50-cents you could probably get a Coke and a--and a burger and a Coke--fill you up. *[Laughs]*

**00:34:01**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit about Mr. Webster's meat business. What was that like?

**00:34:08**

**JH:** Mr. Webster's meat business, there really weren't that many meat markets in the area. There was Mr. Huval in Cecilia, but they were right close--Mr. Huval and Mr. Mantor Guidry and here but it wasn't a big supermarket like they have now days you know. It was just a little bit thing and they did real well because we didn't have any supermarkets in the area you know. And they would slaughter their own beef and pork and that's how they--they started their business and they did--they made a good living with it.

**00:34:46**

**PH:** A lot of people lived on farms; it was mostly family farms--would raise like--when we had the dairy farm and even before, we'd raise our own beef, chicken, all hogs. We all raised what we--what we could eat; it was all raised and we'd sell it. But as time progressed and people that lived in the towns, the people that had jobs--and it wasn't many--but they'd buy their meat instead of raising it 'cause they didn't have a place to raise it or didn't have time because of their

jobs. So that's how they started doing that it--it evolved into what it is today, the supermarket things now where you buy. People--90-percent of what they consume, maybe more they buy. They cook but they buy it; we don't--what they're cooking they're not buying--they're not raising it--they're buying it. But back then it just--it had just started getting into that when they raised this--opened the little meat markets.

**00:35:41**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit about how y'all decided to buy Webster's and get into the store business.

**00:35:49**

**PH:** Well I was in the finance business. I had been in it for 19 years and the--the--our manager, our boss was this--a--a great guy but he became ill with cancer and died. And the guy who took over as our supervisor was a--a younger fellow--his son and he--he and I didn't--didn't jive that well together, the combination of both our stubbornness(es) I guess. But anyway I was kind of looking for something different to do. I was still hired and Brian and I were doing all right but this came about where his son had--had operated it for a while and then he died of cancer at a young age. So he was still alive and the daughter was married. He had only two children. The daughter was married to a young man who--who graduated about the same time as we did and we were close friends in school and our younger--when we were young. He married, Mr. Shooktah's daughter, so he operated it for a while.

**00:36:49**

Then he got tired of it and then his son had it for a while and then he got out of it and got a--another job and Carroll came back. And then they were tired of it; they didn't want to do it

anymore, so they--they put it up for sale. So I talked to Judy; I said I'm going to go check it out. So I went and talked to the old man and after much conversation and much research we decided to buy. I don't think Judy was too excited about it.

00:37:20

**MBL:** She was shaking her finger while you told that story.

00:37:21

**PH:** Yeah. [*Laughs*]

00:37:22

**JH:** As a matter of fact, he did this all behind my back. He said you know old Mr. Shupta's place is up for sale. I said I can't believe; I said well I hope they sell it. And the next thing I knew he said guess what; I think I'm going to buy Webster's. I said I think you're out of your mind. But he did; but this is hard work. [*Laughs*]

00:37:42

**PH:** Yes; it is.

00:37:42

**MBL:** Now had y'all ever--y'all hadn't ever done any food, any butchering or anything like that right?

00:37:48

**JH:** No; we had a little grocery store for just a short--and we had a fast-food place but no butchering or meats or boudin or anything like that, no.

**00:37:56**

**PH:** Nothing like that before.

**00:37:58**

**MBL:** Since this is the Boudin Trail let's talk a little bit about the boudin that you make here.

**00:38:03**

**JH:** The boudin we make here is strictly Mr. Webster's recipe. We changed nothing about it because why break up something that's doing well you know.

**00:38:14**

**PH:** When it's not broke don't fix it.

**00:38:17**

**JH:** So everything we do here are all Mr. Webster's recipes, like we bought; you know they're our recipes now and his meats, his--. Everything here is just a few changes we've made you know but--and it's a very unique place here because as you can see there's--it's not like any supermarket. We have one showcase and the same people that come here if they see something in the showcase that they don't like, well they want you to take that big piece of meat from the cooler and cut it so they can see. That's how the business is; and it's still like that. That's how

Mr. Webster's business was. And that's how we've maintained it ever since, so--and it's--it's a hard business. **[Laughs]** It's a lot of work.

**00:38:58**

**PH:** There are very few places where they sell fresh meats where you can have it cut to order. If a guy walks in and wants a round steak, he wants it a half-inch thick or an inch and a half thick, we can cut it for him. He can't go do that in a supermarket. He'd have to buy the one that's on display or not have it. So that--it has its uniqueness for that and that's why we keep a lot of people--regulars because they want to buy it a certain way or they want the bone in it. Sometimes you buy it at the store, you can't have the bone, you know different things--different reasons why it's--it has its own individuality 'cause of the way you can offer--to cut the meat for folks.

**00:39:39**

**MBL:** Can you tell me a little bit about Mr. Webster's recipe? What's going in the boudin and how does it taste?

**00:39:46**

**JH:** Spicy. **[Laughs]**

**00:39:48**

**PH:** It is spicy I attest.

**00:39:50**

**JH:** It's always been spicy. He's had the same recipe for his boudin ever since we would come here and buy from him. You know it's the rice, the pork, the liver, the onions, the bell peppers, the high seasoned cayenne pepper and--and we'd make only one kind. We don't make mild or real hot; it's just hot. I mean it's not overly hot but I mean to people that don't--it has a little kick to it but we have no trouble selling it. *[Laughs]*

**00:40:25**

**PH:** That's the way they like it. Our clientele like it that way; they keep coming back.

**00:40:30**

**JH:** And that's how Mr. Webster--that's how he made it.

**00:40:32**

**PH:** We've shipped some off to--frequently to different places, Alabama, California, people that call for--and generally it will cost you more for the--to get it over there than it will cost for the product but they're willing to pay it to get that--that particular thing--they'll pay or they'll run down, a guy will run down from Alabama and pick up six or eight pounds of boudin to take back home. People come from everywhere like Virginia, even Canada--we've had some that have picked some up to bring home. So it's--once they get to taste it and it's not for everybody but if they like the way we make it they'll bring some.

**00:41:09**

**JH:** Boudin is a very delicate dish.

00:41:10

**PH:** Yes.

00:41:13

**JH:** I know they have some places that make it but I wouldn't you know--. It's--it's delicate meat; you have to use the proper meat and you know--. I don't know what other people--where they--they--what--how they--it's different. Here it's different from--.

00:41:29

**PH:** We pride ourselves with running a very clean operation. I've seen some places where like she said I don't think I'd eat the boudin there or any other thing they're making. I've walked into--I've walked into some--I'm not saying it's dirty; it's just--it doesn't have that neatness and--and we make a certain amount. If we were making three times what we're making it--we might not have that. We might not be able to stay with that quality of cleanliness and--but we make what we make and that's it. It's just like selling our Sunday dinners. We sell 400 dinners; we could sell--if we could sell 1,000 we might be lacks in some area as far as quality or cleanliness, but we--we stick to what we can do well and what the people are looking for and why they keep coming back.

00:42:14

**MBL:** Let's talk about where you get your ingredients. I was lucky enough to go on a tour of the cooler earlier and it struck me that you're using a lot of local products.

00:42:24

**JH:** We use all local products. Like he said, he buys--he orders a certain amount of pork from--

**00:42:32**

**PH:** Down at the Stockyard we buy our hogs and--.

**00:42:33**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit about the Stockyard for people who don't know.

**00:42:36**

**PH:** Dominique's is a business that's been in--in--in--they've been in business for many, many years and they have a sale barn in the--in the Carencro area and they have one in Opelousas also. And they buy local--from local farmers; they also buy from--as far as the Carolinas where the biggest hog raisers in the--in the country are in the Carolinas. They buy a lot of hogs from there; they buy from different areas. But that's who we buy from. We would call them and tell them we want six or seven market hogs--top hogs for this week and they will buy them for us and bring them to our slaughter--the place that slaughters for us and we pick them up the--the Tuesday or Wednesday of the next week, all butchered, all clean and ready to--ready to process.

**00:43:28**

**MBL:** And where are you getting your onions and your spices?

**00:43:32**

**PH:** The onions we--and our--our produce we buy from a place called Guidry's in Lafayette--in Arnaudville. Guidry Produce has been in effect--in the family--it's a family owned operation,

started by Charles Guidry maybe 20 or 30 years ago. His--his children took over when he passed on and we still buy from them. We buy a lot of local stuff like onion tops from farmers--from Harry Huval, from Bebé Williams; that's another nickname Bebé. I don't even know his real name but his name Bebé—Bebé. We buy cabbage from him. We buy--right now we're buying onion tops. We buy different things as the season--as they're in season like right now we'll buy a lot of onion tops and--and cut them up and put them in the freezer for us to use throughout the year. Onion tops are not--you can't grow them year-round I don't guess; so when you do have them you have to buy a lot and we put them in freezers so when we need some we have some throughout the year. So we buy as much--we buy some fresh red peppers that a guy will make--it's called chow-chow. It's a seasoning--red peppers, ground red peppers and vinegar and--and salt and water and you put that on your--on your food. And we buy that locally. We use it for our seasoning and we sell it on the shelf.

**00:44:52**

We make our own barbeque sauce which is the recipe that was developed by Mr. Percy Herbert many years ago, maybe 40 or 50 years ago. He started making barbeque sauce and it stayed in his family and we bought the recipe from the family when he died and his--his wife is dead also now but they have a son and a daughter that are living. We had bought the pots that they'd cook it in and we cooked our own barbeque sauce and it's Percy Herbert's barbeque sauce. It still bears his name. So that's all local stuff that we--that we use--very unique.

**00:45:30**

**MBL:** It is unique. Let's talk a little bit about your lunch business here. Can you tell me what you serve and--and how you're doing it?

**00:45:38**

**JH:** Okay; the lunch business is--when we first bought Mister--when we first bought Webster's they only had a big Sunday dinner. They didn't have a daily--daily luncheon.

**00:45:47**

**PH:** Daily lunches.

**00:45:50**

**JH:** But then after we were here about a year or whatever--

**00:45:51**

**PH:** Something like that.

**00:45:53**

**JH:** --we decided that we still had to cook for the people that were working with us, so we decided to do it every day. And it's not as big as on Sunday but every day we cook some--something different. We have only one choice, like on Tuesday we have smothered pork chop over--with rice and a vegetable like black-eyed peas and a salad. On Tuesday we have chicken etouffée. On Thursday we have pork roast with the--with the rice and the vegetable. And on Friday we usually cook seafood. On Saturday we don't have a lunch 'cause we--we don't cook--we don't--. And on Sunday well we prepare all week for our Sunday dinners and that's--that's a lot of--lot of work. It's all cooked fresh on Sunday morning. We come here at 4:30 and the ladies do the trimmings and the guys do the barbequing and they cook the roasts in the big black pot

outside and they boil the potatoes and they bring everything in here--inside the kitchen so the ladies can do their finishing touches.

**00:46:58**

**PH:** Do the eggs, cut the potatoes, make the salad; it's all done fresh on Sunday morning.

**00:47:02**

**JH:** And Mr. Webster--

**00:47:01**

**PH:** Nothing is cooked before.

**00:47:03**

**JH:** Mr. Webster, we still have his recipe for his potato salad and I'll tell you what.

**00:47:08**

**PH:** It's very unique and very delicious.

**00:47:10**

**JH:** And we've never changed it.

**00:47:12**

**PH:** Never changed it; never wavered any--one iota.

**00:47:14**

**MBL:** Well without giving away any of your secrets, describe it. What makes it so unique?

**00:47:19**

**JH:** It's just--just eggs, potatoes, mayonnaise--.

**00:47:24**

**PH:** It has--it has a moistness.

**00:47:26**

**JH:** And the touch we put in it. [*Laughs*]

**00:47:26**

**PH:** It has a moistness and a unique taste because of the--the--the combination of the eggs and mayonnaise. They mix the--the yolk with the--with the mayonnaise and then they chop the--the--well the white and then they cut the potatoes. Yeah; they cut the potatoes to--you have to boil them to a certain extent. You can't--it can't be too boiled. It can't be mushy and then they can't be too large also 'cause they'll be--they won't be well-boiled on the inside. All these things have to be--come into play to make it reach its--its perfection and a little vinegar is used and--to make it--to give it that little tang, very little light tang but still has a--. Oh it's indescribably delicious. And people will come here and buy three or four dinners and I'd like some extra potato salad--extra, or I want a barbeque dinner but double potato salad. Get--leave the veggie out or add me some more potato salad. It's one of the big draws that we have. And our rice dressing also is a big one; that's--Judy oversees that but it's--it's very moist and very meaty. It's not rice(y); it

doesn't run. You put it on your plate and you can--you can eat it with a spoon, you can eat it with a fork; it's not going to fall out. It's very, very good.

00:48:47

**MBL:** Where did you learn to do all your cooking Judy?

00:48:50

**JH:** Where did I learn how--all to do my cooking? I never cooked before I got married. My mom cooked everything but I watched her and I learned on my own by watching. My grandmother was a great cook and I just watched what they did and I learned on my own and I got better and better through the years.

00:49:13

**PH:** She did cook; she's a great cook, absolutely a model--.

00:49:16

**JH:** My boys think--. [*Laughs*]

00:49:18

**PH:** Oh yeah; she's a model. We have one of our sons, the one who owns this store who is an excellent cook--excellent. Yeah; you met him.

00:49:26

**MBL:** I did. I met him when we came in today.

**00:49:29**

**PH:** He's an excellent--out of all our kids he's the one that's the best. He's really--he likes to do it and he just has that knack--seafood, chicken, pork, beef--whatever. He's as good as her; he's the only one that brushed off of her. Not off of me 'cause I can hardly boil water, but she's very, very good. Sometimes I compare their food 'cause he--he learned from her and he has--he has a knack. He's really good.

**00:49:55**

**MBL:** Let's talk a little bit about the changes to your menu that are coming up. Mr. Huval and I talked earlier today. Lent is on the horizon. Mardi Gras starts on Tuesday, so what does that mean I guess for your plate lunch business but also what does that mean for the business of the meat market during the season when most traditional Catholics are not eating meat on Fridays during Lent?

**00:50:18**

**JH:** Well we use--we cook seafood. I mean a lot of people eat the beef and--but a lot of Catholics--most people are Catholic here so on Friday we always have a seafood and of course on Ash Wednesday--Ash Wednesday we--we cook seafood. Then after that--you know not everybody but here, like this coming for Ash Wednesday, my plate lunch is not going to be meat. It's going to be seafood. We're going to have fish coubillon, potato salad, cabbage salad and rice. But then they don't eat--most of the people don't eat that one day. They don't eat meat. And on Fridays we always cook seafood. Of course we have the hamburgers on--on some might--non-

Catholics might come you know but our--our menu for that day, Ash Wednesday and on Fridays for Lent will be seafood because of the--because of the tradition here and the Catholics.

**00:51:23**

**MBL:** And how does this affect sales in the meat market because I don't believe that y'all sell seafood in the counters. Am I correct?

**00:51:33**

**PH:** No; we've--we've had--we have in the past sold crawfish when crawfish were plentiful. It's been a few years since it was plentiful enough for us to sell some. We used to buy from Bellard who distributed; they'd sell--that's who we buy our poultry from and they distribute crawfish when it's plentiful but they haven't had some--we haven't sold crawfish in a long time. It--it disturbs our meat sales to some degree especially the early part of Lent 'cause some people are going to abide by that--that tradition and that fasting to a certain degree but they--it's going to last a while and then it's going to gradually fade after the fourth week and you get towards the end of Lent and they start getting ready for Easter. So they start buying ahead of time or placing orders, so it affects us four to five weeks and with a gradual decline and picking up again towards the--when Lent is ending. But we do feel it; we do feel it. It's good for the seafood people. I was telling her that Bobby Guidry is the Guidry Catfish people that it's the best time of the year for them, the Lenten season 'cause people will eat a lot more seafood. It's easy to get shrimp--pretty much easy to get shrimp around here. We buy--we buy our shrimp frozen from the distributor; we don't buy it fresh--very seldom.

**00:52:50**

Catfish is right there; crawfish right now it's very expensive. It's very rare and it's very hard to come by it. Unless it gets more plentiful people won't be able to afford to buy much of it. It's too expensive.

**00:53:08**

**MBL:** Let's talk a little bit about--we talked about the history of this building as a dance floor and I would like to remark that it still has the original oak floors. We were talking about the dance floor oak floors are throughout the building. You have some other really interesting and unique antique pieces here. Can you--can you describe the store to me and--and tell me about those pieces that people might not find in other places?

**00:53:31**

**PH:** Well we have the boudin as I showed you that they used to make the--the boudin sausage back in the old days. You'd put the product inside a cylinder. It was a hand-operated cylinder and I think you took a picture of it. That's one of the things that--we never used it but it was used before. As a matter of fact, Joanne remembers having--having used that to make boudin sausage. That's a very unique item. You can still buy those things by the way. I--I see they sell them at Targill; they're all stainless steel now. They're very expensive I'm sure. But for some people who wants to make a small batch of sausage or something they buy those. That's--that's one of the unique items we have.

**00:54:14**

The old scales--I'm sure you saw the old weights and measures State-regulated scales, we still have one left. We have some of their old ones that are back in the old storeroom. The band saws that we have are some of the old type of saws. They don't make those that way anymore.

**00:54:33**

**JH:** I'm sure in the places where they sell larger amounts of boudin, more modern places, but really this is one of the most unique spots around here. The others are all you know they're--how could you say--they're more large-scale. You know they have more modern stuff and bigger you know--.

**00:54:56**

**PH:** Larger operations.

**00:54:59**

**JH:** We're trying to stick to the old times--

**00:54:59**

**PH:** Putting out more products.

**00:55:00**

**JH:** --'cause that's what people want here. They want that old-time look. They ask us why we don't remodel the building and--or build a new building. If we build a new building nobody is going to come.

**00:55:10**

**PH:** Yeah; we're going to lose our uniqueness.

**00:55:11**

**MBL:** Well you call yourselves sort of small producers. How much boudin are you making here and selling here?

**00:55:19**

**JH:** Well they make every--almost every day and we--we--I don't know how many pounds they make; I'm not sure. I know it's by--by trays [*Laughs*] like eight, nine trays you know and sometimes they'll last 'til the next day but they usually make like--.

**00:55:37**

**PH:** About 20 to 25 trays a week and that's about 70 pounds per tray, somewhere around there--60 pounds. So that gives you an idea.

**00:55:49**

**JH:** It's a small-scale compared to some places that sell thousands of pounds.

**00:55:51**

**PH:** Yeah; there's a lot of places that they sell that in hours you know.

**00:55:53**

**JH:** Five hundred pounds you know but--.

**00:55:53**

**PH:** But they're on a heavier traffic path and they're--they make more 'cause it's--it's more conducive for the consumer to go out there and get it.

**00:56:04**

**MBL:** How do you boudin sales compare to your other meat sales? Is it one of your biggest items or is it just a--a featured item?

**00:56:12**

**JH:** No; well it's about--

**00:56:15**

**PH:** It's about--it's one of the big items, yeah. We sell crackling--we sell crackling a lot too but crackling is not that much of a--a money-making thing as much as boudin 'cause it's--the pork bellies are very expensive and you--we're selling our crackling at \$10 a pound which is probably the least per pound around here. You go places that are \$13 or \$14 a pound but we sell--we do okay with crackling; we just don't sell a lot of it because it--it's mostly a draw. So people come in to get something and they get a little bit of crackling. Very seldom do they come and get just--  
. Boudin is--is one of our bigger things; yeah.

**00:56:51**

**MBL:** By contrast in cost how much does boudin run for the buyer?

**00:56:55**

**JH:** Four dollars a pound; that's what we sell it here.

**00:57:00**

**PH:** Yeah; when we first started it was like \$2.50 maybe a pound.

**00:57:03**

**MBL:** And is that about the same price as sausage or is it more or less given all the labor that goes into it?

**00:57:09**

**PH:** Sausage, they're--they're the same price.

**00:57:10**

**MBL:** Really?

**00:57:11**

**PH:** Sausage and boudin--not every place they are; most places the sausage or boudin would be more expensive than here, more per pound because the reason is what we use to make our--our sausage is byproduct of the fresh hogs. It's all fresh meat but it's not the prime cuts, like the pork roasts and the--the shoulder and the--. What's not the prime cut it's--it's excellent to make boudin and sausage with and we don't--it don't cost us as much to produce sausage like it does somebody who has to buy some Boston butts and use that. It costs them a lot more per pound. So that's why we're--our sausage is usually lower than other places.

**00:57:58**

**MBL:** And I should mention also that when y'all are using meats, you were telling me earlier, y'all are trimming the parts of the meat that you want to include in the boudin. Tell me--tell me what makes good boudin meat.

**00:58:10**

**JH:** Hmm.

**00:58:13**

**PH:** I probably know more about that than her.

**00:58:14**

**JH:** More than--help me out. [*Laughs*]

**00:58:17**

**PH:** You have to have a fine mixture of--of fat and--and lean. If you have too much lean your boudin will be dry. If you have too much fat it will be oily greasy, so the shanks are also known as the hocks--are good because they're lean and they have good meat on them. Any time passed the--anything passed the--the--the prime center cut roasts is all lean. That is a good entry into the boudin 'cause it's lean and it's good meat. On the other hand, ribs--it depends on how lean the hogs are. They're not always--if they're not too lean and you have some fat on the ribs it's excellent to put in 'cause if you have--the meat is mixed with fat. So it--it comes out--the--exactly the right way.

**00:59:09**

If you have--if you trim that fat off like if somebody wants to buy a slab of ribs you trim some of the top fat off so your rib can be more lean. You don't want to do that when you do boudin because that meat is--and fat are entwined and they--you boil them together, you grind them together, and it has the perfect mix for it--for boudin. You just have to do it every day and not every day but after you do it so many times you get to know. We--we learned from the old ladies who work here, from Joanne and Mama Lou is another one of our great workers and Mr. Luloon, they were working here when we--they worked for the old--for the Calais(s) who were still working here when we got here and they--they showed us. And Gwen, the lady of--the daughter of old Mr. Calais she worked with us for quite a while to show us the routine of how to pick your meat for your boudin.

**01:00:03**

**MBL:** So you learned then on the job; you didn't have a background in it?

**01:00:06**

**JH:** No; we learned it--when they came here they stayed with us for like maybe a couple of months.

**01:00:12**

**PH:** Yeah; oh yeah they were here every day and every--everything we--we cooked, everything we fixed they were there. You make a chaudin or you make whatever you were making, how--how do we fix it, you know, how do you stuff a roast, how do you trim a rib, how do you stuff a rib, how do you--all these things they taught us specifically so we could do it the way they did it to keep the quality of our product.

**01:00:36**

**MBL:** Now I know that you've sold this business to your son. But how involved are you in it still; what--what's a day like here?

**01:00:46**

**JH:** What's the day like here? Just like it was when we owned it. [*Laughs*] Except--except Mr. Huval is not here all day; he has another job so I have to help my son. I don't have to but I do.

**01:00:57**

**PH:** She doesn't work as hard as she did before. She oversees more but she's not at an age to be working that hard, so we have to have the workers, but it's good to have her expertise to guide them 'cause if you're not watching over you know they'll tend to--to be lacks to some degree. But if you're close or if you--they know you're coming they're going to have that--that carefulness that--that's not going to go away 'cause they know you could pop in any minute. So it's her presence even if it's not always there they know that she could be in and she's watching. And if they do something and she checks the next day you missed this, you missed that, we can correct it. If you let it go too far it's hard to bring up. So that's why it's important to be there.

**01:01:43**

**MBL:** So what time are you coming into work and what time do you get off?

**01:01:43**

**JH:** Well the ladies come in at 7:30. Their working hours are from 7:30 to 5:00 and the butcher helpers and I come in around 8:30--9 o'clock and I stay 'til 1:30--2 o'clock. Sometimes I stay all day; sometimes--.

**01:01:58**

**PH:** And it depends if we have something to do like sometimes there's a funeral to attend, there's bringing someone to the doctor. We have doctor's appointments; we can miss a day or most of the day and things go--.

**01:02:11**

**JH:** Yeah; our ladies know--the ladies know pretty much--.

**01:02:14**

**PH:** They know their work and do an excellent job.

**01:02:16**

**JH:** I don't know if I could make the boudin without them to tell you the truth. [*Laughs*]

**01:02:19**

**PH:** No; I wouldn't even try--with what they know and--.

**01:02:23**

**JH:** Because that's what they do, like Miss Joanne here, she's been there since when Mr. Webster--so she can--she can make boudin with her eyes closed. [*Laughs*]

**01:02:34**

**MBL:** Do y'all ever sell your boudin outside of the store or ever get--does it ever get featured at festivals?

**01:02:40**

**JH:** No, because we're not--we can only sell it here. It's the license.

**01:02:47**

**PH:** We--we could have gotten into it like when--the Crawfish Festival, got in a booth and sell boudin and crackling. Some of the places around have done it. We never did; it's a lot of work and it's a lot of--you have to make a lot of product. You might have to take away from the quality you know to be able to reach the--the number that we'd want. So we never did.

**01:03:07**

**JH:** One thing Mr. Webster, Shooktah, the owner before us, long ago when he first started he could make maybe 200 or 300 pounds of boudin and take it to Baton Rouge and sell it to the stores in a regular truck iced down. But now you can't do that. You know people can come by all they want here but inspectors--you'd have to have all this and we--we didn't want to go into that expense.

**01:03:34**

**MBL:** Do you sell it for people to take home and cook or do you also sell hot links here? Can people get it to eat on the spot in the store?

01:03:41

**JH:** Oh no; they get it to bring home--whatever. They can get any amount they want.

01:03:44

**MBL:** But can--can they eat it here in the store too?

01:03:46

**JH:** Yeah.

01:03:48

**PH:** Most of it is bought to eat right away, but sometimes they'll take some cold or they'll call and say I want that 30--40 links for a little group we're having. I want 20 links cut in three for-- and put them in a little tray. We're having a little get-together you know as a tidbit, you know as an hors d'oeuvre. Yeah; they eat it that way too.

01:04:09

**MBL:** Since y'all are around it so often do y'all eat it?

01:04:11

**JH:** Oh yeah; we eat it.

01:04:13

**PH:** Oh yeah; oh yeah.

**01:04:14**

**JH:** It's delicious.

**01:04:15**

**PH:** But I haven't--

**01:04:17**

**JH:** See what boudin is--people don't realize when you say boudin because it's in a casing. It's really rice--it's a form of rice dressing.

**01:04:26**

**PH:** Sort of a rice dressing.

**01:04:26**

**JH:** Sort of a rice dressing that it's fully cooked when it's put in this casing.

**01:04:31**

**PH:** You can eat it cold.

**01:04:33**

**JH:** You can--you can take it out of the casing if you want. I mean you don't have to eat the casing. Some people don't eat the casing.

**01:04:38**

**PH:** You've heard of boudin balls? They make boudin balls too. They just roll them up with a little--something to hold them together--flour maybe; I don't know cornmeal or something and you fry them.

**01:04:47**

**MBL:** Do you know because it is like a rice dressing; do you know why the tradition ever started where they were putting it in casings? It seems like an extra step.

**01:04:56**

**PH:** I can go back to way back when they used to kill hogs--used to raise hogs. Well hogs was one of the best food products in the--in the Cajun country--anywhere, but I know when I was a little kid, people used to raise hogs because everything on a hog is good. You might have heard that saying you can eat everything; the only--everything but the eyes and the-- Well the tail, we make cracklings--they put the tail; you can eat the tail. A lot of--a lot of the things that were not the prime cuts that they couldn't make salt meat with they could grind it and make boudin with it. They could boil it and make boudin; take the head and make hog-head cheese. Take the eyes out, take the skin off and boil that--use the meet on the jowls and make the hog-head cheese. Used to eat everything--everything but the bones; so that's why they started making boudin. They--they'd take some of the--they'd make the casing with the intestines. Now in order to do that--in order for the hog to be clean enough you'd have to run him on--feed him on corn for--pure corn--pure--nothing else. I remember my dad had a little pen. When it was time to butcher the hogs to make the lard for the year, we'd make our own hog lard--he'd take a--he had a little pen where the hog--all the hog could do was stand up and eat and drink and sit down. He could not move, so he got to be real fat and grow--put on a lot of weight. And everything in him was

clean; his intestines were clean with pure corn and water. And then you could clean those intestines well because they didn't have any feed in it or--or grass or anything that would be--that--that would cause it to be not as clean, not as neat. And they'd use those intestines to make boudin and sausage. So that--and then whatever product that was not used for--for prime cuts or for to make salt meat they would grind it and make boudin.

**01:06:54**

**MBL:** So the--the casing just served as a storage container then in that scenario like a way to keep the meat parts after you've done the butchering?

**01:07:03**

**PH:** I don't--I don't--.

**01:07:04**

**MBL:** I guess I--I guess what I'm asking is why do they put all the--the meats in the casing as opposed to like keeping it in a Tupperware container? [*Laughs*]

**01:07:14**

**PH:** Oh the tradition--the tradition started by making boudin because it was--they had the casing and they--they wanted something to--a way to serve it.

**01:07:25**

**JH:** That's was called in those times boucherie and see that's how the older people--now I was a city girl; I wasn't a farm girl.

**01:07:32**

**PH:** Well they started making boudin but I know when we made a boucherie we made some boudin because it was a--a--a one-time thing. Only when you made a boucherie you couldn't freeze it; you had no freezer. You couldn't do anything with it but eat it--keep it for a few days and if the weather was cold enough it would keep for a few days but it was something that--that you could only eat at--it was like a seasonal thing. It's like eating a fresh corn when the corn is--okra, when it's--all of the--all the crops, all of the game, all the things that was seasonal. Boudin was a seasonal thing when you made--when you butchered a hog you made boudin. You'd pass it around to the--the neighbors and friends. You won't have any until you make boucherie again, so that was--that was a way to eat something delicate and unique that you could only eat at that time.

**01:08:23**

**MBL:** So you said you were a city girl and they didn't do those in town? [*Laughs*]

**01:08:27**

**JH:** I was--I was a city girl. I wasn't raised on the farm. [*Laughs*] I didn't know anything about pigs or cows or dairy farming or--I knew about boudin 'cause when they--you know they'd make a boucherie, you know but he was raised on a farm. I was a city girl right in this big little town of Cecilia. [*Laughs*]

**01:08:44**

**PH:** Cecilia--grand total of 25 I think. [*Laughs*]

**01:08:49**

**MBL:** Well tell me about Cecilia; how big is this community and what do people do here?

**01:08:52**

**JH:** We do--

**01:08:52**

**PH:** Cecilia is a small--the--the real nucleus of it is not very big. But it--it involves a large geographical area. We go from Arnaudville to Henderson to Breaux Bridge and that area is all Cecilia. And the people back when I was small it was 90-percent farming--family farms. There's still a lot of farming but it's large farmers know that grow soybeans, sugarcane--are the two big crops--mainly sugarcane. But it's all the--it might be 10 farmers in the Cecilia area, maybe less that do sugarcane--as the big cash crop. It evolved into the small farmers started getting absorbed by the--the big ones and the farm--a small farm, my daddy had 30 acres of land. You couldn't grow enough cash crop to make enough money to sustain your family so that's why he went into the dairy business. We'd sell milk; that was a better cash crop. And through the years the people started getting away from the family farm and started working on jobs. Construction started to become popular. A lot of people did oil field work--was a big, big thing for--in the area, both on the rigs drilling and on the riverboats transporting. It was a lot of--lot of people that got involved in that type of work. My dad didn't 'cause he was--he was too old. He had to--by the time he finished, his family--he was still on the farm but like my brothers, they all--none--not very many at that age went--kept the farms going. They all went into different jobs. Some of my--some of my brothers went to college and some--the oil field business was always--was right there in the

'50s and there was so much--so much work. I graduated in '57 and from early to mid-'50s through the '60s and '70s the oil industry was such a big, big boost for our area. It was--I would say it affected at least 80-percent; if not directly it affected 80 to 85-percent of the people whether by they're working directly into the oil field and the--and the dredging and the riverboats or the jobs that the money--that these people were earning that kept their businesses going.

**01:11:20**

**MBL:** So today now that the farming is more mechanized and--and there are larger farms, are people still working in the area or are they driving further to go to work?

**01:11:32**

**PH:** Mechanized farms--you know that--that grew with--when we first--I remember going back many years when I was a kid and my dad just had a team of mules and--and all the farming was done by mules. And he bought a tractor when I was young and my older brothers, you know and kept on going. And then gradually the machinery got more popular and there are some people who--there are still some big farmers around here, Ronnie Roberts, the--the Melancon people, the--some others I can't name that don't come to mind but there are a few big ones. It's mainly the sugarcane farmers and they--they might do some other crop. But people drove--yeah; there--there wasn't work around here except for the farming. They just went elsewhere--drove to Baton Rouge to get the riverboat or drove to the Gulf to the Coast to go work offshore or the--the rigs--the inland rigs in the--in the Bay areas. That's where most of the work was. There was some drilling locally but nothing--it wasn't much. It was mostly south of us.

01:12:43

**MBL:** I'm interested in this phrase that you and Judy have both used--*make a boucherie*. Tell me about--tell me about those events. When did they happen and can you just describe one?

01:12:53

**PH:** A boucherie was--they were held by families getting together because we would butcher let's say every year we would butcher two hogs. It would have to be in the--in the wintertime and when the weather was cold, so to be able to have the boucherie so you could do all the products without having to fight flies and your--your fresh meat would keep longer. Let's say we would butcher two hogs--two or three of my uncles and aunts would come; kids would come. We'd all get together for the boucherie and they would help us butcher. We'd--all the meat would be for us except we'd give them a roast. When they would--when it was time for their boucherie we'd go over there and help them. It would take a lot of people to do a boucherie, cook a lot of fresh food and prepare all the meats and then we would get a roast to bring back home--a fresh roast. And that's how the boucherie thing did.

01:13:50

There was some family combination boucherie(s) of beef also; it wasn't as common as hogs. Beef--you couldn't keep. You couldn't salt beef. You could salt meat in a--in a jar, in a big ceramic jar and keep it for months and months--it would keep. You can't do that with beef. So the beef had to be disposed of more quickly. That's why they would butcher a calf less often--more often but you couldn't keep the meat, so we'd have to share. A calf is going to be good for two days okay. John is going to kill one today; next week Jeff is going to kill one and we'd go and we'd share. That type of thing went on. It was a very--it was a very neighborly thing, the--the butchering of fresh meats--every neighborly.

**01:14:39**

**MBL:** Does that kind of thing happen anymore around here?

**01:14:44**

**PH:** It's done as a--as a gesture of keeping the tradition alive but it's not--it's not a thing that's done for--. You can buy anything you want or most of it and that's how it goes.

**01:14:59**

**MBL:** Tell me--you bought the store in '97; so how old was you son when you bought the store and--and did he come up in it? How--how did he come to buy it from you?

**01:15:11**

**PH:** I bought it in '96--actually March of '96. When I reached the age of 62 I decided that I wanted to do something less physical and he was interested and he worked for Coca Cola. It's the only job he had ever had. He graduated in '85 and started to work for Coke and he worked for them throughout. And when I went to sell the store he said daddy, I want to buy it; you know whenever you're ready to sell it I want to buy it. So we looked into financing it for him and he bought it. And it's been in the family--still in the family. *[Laughs]*

**01:15:46**

**MBL:** So he had not worked in the store then when you owned it; he was working for Coke at that time?

**01:15:50**

**PH:** Yes; but he worked with us on weekends and he--he learned the business a little bit and before he bought he--he had a lot of vacation and time left to--to--to spare, so he took three months off from his job, collected his back pay and his retirement pay and he put some of it in--in a trust as a retirement thing--IRA and he's got some money there. And then he came to work for us full-time--with us full-time to learn the routine. So it went well.

**01:16:24**

**MBL:** As we draw this interview to a close, can you just tell me sort of your thoughts on this business and--and what you think about it?

**01:16:29**

**JH:** Well I think the boudin business is here for a long--has been here for a long time and it's going to be here for a long time and it's not about to end.

**01:16:41**

**MBL:** And you?

**01:16:43**

**PH:** Yeah; I agree. I agree and--and the type of business we have here is family oriented and unique in a sense that it's the only type of business that offers what we offer. We have a lot of places you can buy; the product that we have--but you can't buy it under the--the context that we produce it--a small amount, an old traditional recipe, custom-cut meats--that type of thing. Very,

very few people offer that and I think it's--it's very unique. I'm proud to be a part of it and we enjoyed being here and we--we're still--we're not the owners but we still enjoy coming here.

**01:17:23**

**MBL:** Well thank you so much for sharing your time with me today. I appreciate it.

**01:17:28**

**[End Pope and Judy Huval Interview]**