

BILL DOW
Farmer, Ayrshire Farm – Pittsboro, NC

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Interviewer: Ashley Rose Young
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Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
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[Begin Bill Dow Interview]**00:00:00**

Ashley Young: This is Ashley Young with the Southern Foodways Alliance. Today is Monday, August 29, 2011. And I am interviewing Bill Dow of the Ayrshire Farm for the Carrboro Farmers' Market Oral History Project. We are currently sitting in Bill Dow's home at Ayrshire Farm near Pittsboro, North Carolina. Bill, would you please introduce yourself and state your profession?

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Bill Dow: I'm--well I'm not sure how to handle all that. Anyway I--I farm. We've been involved in starting a farmers' market where you get direct sales from the producer to the grower or the grower to the producer. And once upon a time I was a physician; that was a long, long time ago.

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AY: And would you please state your date of birth?

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BD: That tells you how long--if I can remember, February 15, 1945 actually.

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AY: It's a good month, February. I was also born in February. So now we're going to build a context for this interview and I'm going to ask you some general questions about where you grew up and how you eventually came to become a farmer. So first, where did you grow up?

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BD: Well we moved around some and I just--it's been one of those fortunate things for me that it's worked out the way it has. But I was born in Middletown, Ohio. My dad was in the Air Corps during the Second World War and was stationed there and that's where I appeared.

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Then we moved to Mississippi and that was a major change in appearance and--and the way of doing things. And I was trying to think the other day when exactly that was. I think it was in '60, but I'm not--I remember what was going on but I don't remember the dates. And from there I went to Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tennessee, part time--if I had money and if I didn't have money I went to Mississippi State. And if I had it to do over again, I'd do it the same way. I think that each had its contribution to make and it was a privilege to do it that way.

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AY: Did you grow up on a farm or what was your relationship to food growing up?

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BD: Well the--the family, and by that I mean the larger historical family, almost all of them were farmers and when I was--when I was a kid, the year after we moved to Mississippi, I had two younger brothers and I think that the folks decided that they really needed to keep us busy

especially since we were living about halfway between Meridian and Philadelphia, which was an interesting place to be in those days.

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And so they went down to the hardware store and bought a couple of axes and a cross-cut saw and we went out and they had bought this 300-acres of worn out cotton land from Mister--I can't remember his name. At any rate, and they basically said, "Go to it boys. We need to clear this off so we can make pasture out of it and don't call us, we'll call you."

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And a little incorrectness there but not much. At any rate, Mississippi was Mississippi. The Civil Rights workers were buried within twenty--twenty miles of the house. The schools were not integrated at that point. When my younger brother came through his class did integrate and it was interesting because it was the football team that did it. They--there were some that agreed with it and some that didn't and by John's reckoning, anyway, they went into the shower room after practice one day, locked the door, and sort of had it out and that was the end of that. And from then on they went on to win the State Championship and--and I think it really changed the--the racial context of the--of not only the school but of the whole area.

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What happened after that? Well the first year as I said I went to--went to Vanderbilt. I was way out of my league but at any rate it was--it was an interesting exposure to things. Didn't have the money to go back so went my sophomore year to Mississippi State which was also a privilege, definitely a different context to seeing the world, and then went back to Vanderbilt for the last two years. I majored in Molecular Biology and it was--it was--it was interesting, both academically, you know, between all the music that was going on and most of it being blues and

bluegrass and the mountains being as close as they were and so on. It was--it was a great place to be.

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AY: Excellent. I also wanted to follow-up with a few more questions about the farm that you worked at when you were younger. So what kind of farm was this?

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BD: [*Laughs*] It was--I mean it really was 300-acres of old worn out cotton land and it had grown up in sweet gum and pine and half of it was swamp. And it was a good place to, you know, gather up the boys on Saturday morning and take them up to the farm and say, "We'll come back and get you later on."

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And--and as bad as it was, I must say that--that my brothers and I all agree that it was probably--probably the most important thing that happened to us. It was--it was a whole new world and a great place to be in--in a good sense of the word anyway.

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AY: What kind of--did you grow vegetables or was it a cattle farm or what kind of farm was it?

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BD: Cows--cows and soybeans. My--you know, I don't know if this is where you want to go exactly, but--but the problem with agriculture was it was dictated by people who had a lot more land than we did. Three hundred acres is not much. And then half of it is swamp, it really isn't

much. But the--the way that the system worked was that, you know, the more you produced the better off you were and then they couldn't figure out why prices didn't go up. And you'd go to the stockyards and put stuff up for sale and you'd just get nothing for it.

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And my dad and I had many arguments about the whys and wherefores of that and he wasn't going to come my way and I wasn't going his way, so I ended up back up in Nashville and--and my other two brothers were there at the farm. It's hard to--it's hard--it--there's a way of doing things as far as agriculture and a lot of other things. You know, there's a way of doing it, and if you don't do it that way then there's a price to pay. And so at any rate, I--I--when I was up in Nashville, I just started hacking around with vegetables and so on and so forth and--and, you know, you could grow a head of broccoli that's twelve to fourteen inches across and it--it brought better money than cows and soybeans.

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But I'll never forget the time that my--this--I was selling to a supermarket and the guy that was the produce man was really very helpful to me and a nice guy. And I came in one day with a big sackful of broccoli and he said, you know, "I had a complaint about your broccoli last week." And I said, "What?" He said, "Yeah, I had a complaint about it." And the--the heads--we were getting prune cropped heads that were probably twelve to fourteen inches in diameter, and this lady had complained because she had--had two large stalks in her bag of broccoli. She wasn't looking at the head. She was just looking at the stalks to make judgment about how much was there. Well, you know, you just think oh my goodness. *[Laughs]*

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But that's--and it was a learning experience for me, too, so--. But at any rate that's--that's where it went. And then I--in the interim in there--went to medical school and got a residency in

pediatrics and was fortunate enough to be able to be involved in a lot of stuff that we did up in East Tennessee in the coal fields which is still going on unfortunately. And ended up back in Nashville to do a residency and--so there you go.

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AY: Could you briefly explain what was going on in East Tennessee with the coal fields?

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BD: Well strip mining, I think most people are aware of and these were the early days of strip mining. It wasn't the--the--the mountaintop removal stuff that goes on today. It was much smaller or, you know, sort of encircling the mountain according to where the vein of coal was. And there was a lot of--a lot of opposition to strip mining because of what it did to local families and their water systems and so on and so forth.

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We ended up putting an organization together mostly with the help of Nat Caldwell who was a reporter for the *Nashville Tennessean* and had gotten a Pulitzer Prize for putting a finger on John L. Lewis in the times past; and Nat taught me a lot about a lot of things. But we--it--it, you know, the State wasn't going to help you out so what we ended up doing--that tipped us off saying, you know, "The reason those counties up there is poor is not because there's not any money." He says, "There's lots of money up there. It's just in the ground and somebody else is taking it out and selling it and leaving you with a mess because there's no--there's no taxes being paid to pave roads and schools and so on and so forth."

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So Nat was--Nat was right about all that stuff, and it was another one of those sort of learning experiences that I have been privileged to have.

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AY: How did your political activism with the strip mining influence or eventually lead to you returning to farming?

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BD: Well the folks in the mountains and--and in the South, the poor folks anyway, especially the white were caught between the well to do or blacks and the--the establishment. And so it's--let me--ask me the question again so I don't wander off too far here.

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AY: I wanted to know how--you said that the political activism with the strip mining was an experience that you learned from, so I'm wondering after being involved in that did--did you transition to farm work because it was part of this larger political environment of the '70s or--or how did you actually come to choose to farm once again?

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BD: Well those--those people that were in mining because the only job they could have--they didn't have an option of where to go. The--the auto industry in Michigan was shutting down. I mean things were going to hell in a hand basket and they--they had experience of gardening but it was home gardening. And nobody had really thought about the fact that, you know, Knoxville was down the road and--and Oak Ridge was down the road and Louisville was up the road,

Lexington was up the road and I mean there were a lot of places potentially to--to sell if you were growing something. And so to make a long story short, set up a program by which it helped folks organize production and sale of produce, not on a wholesale basis but--but on a retail basis.

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AY: And at this point in your career as you were coming back into farming and helping others learn to farm, I wanted to ask you what do you--what did you love most about farming? What was it like returning to that profession after having been in medical school and also having a residency kind of being in that world and then returning once again to the farm?

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BD: It's the people. It--it--yeah; it was--whether they were talking about coal mining or farming or whatever--and whether they were talking about blacks or whites or whatever, agriculture and--and what do I want to say--other than business opportunities had to be made for themselves and--and it was--it was fun seeing that happen. It wasn't that they didn't know how to do it; they did and knew it a whole lot better than I did but the sales and the production part were too far apart and--and it's the production, I mean the sales that is where the money is. And so they had not participated in that part of it before and that made a difference.

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AY: I also wanted to ask you how you came to find this beautiful farmland here at Ayrshire Farms--Farm. Perhaps you could explain how you came here.

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BD: [*Laughs*] I came here--well I--I had been dating a lady for some time and she had been off at a long distance--and we decided that we wanted to be together in the same place and she was a midwife and I said, "Well, I can farm most anywhere. Being a midwife, you ought to be able to do it anywhere but the law being what it is it probably isn't going to work out too well. So I'll tell you what. I'll--wherever you can find a job as a midwife I'll go." And I wasn't planning on being here but that's the way it turned out because at that time, about the only midwife services were over in Siler City.

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And so that's where it started and--and found a realtor who knew about this farm out here and so we bought it.

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AY: Would you also explain how many acres are here and how many acres you're currently farming?

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BD: Hmm. There's twenty-two acres and of that there's probably fifteen that have some sort of production on them, not very traditional production but--.

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AY: I understand that Ayrshire Farm was the first farm in North Carolina that was *certified organic*. I was hoping you would speak about some of the early challenges you faced trying to become an organic farm or trying to be an organic farm from the start.

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BD: Well the--the--the idea of *certified organic* really was in its premature state and Debbie Wechsler and--and myself and several others began meeting about, you know, "What--what can be done to advance organic agriculture?" And one of those things was to--to have it--. What I'm trying to say is have it--being legitimated by--that you--you are--I'm hunting for a word here--certified. That's right. I got a secret--I got a helpful hint here. [Interviewer's note: Daryl Walker, Bill's partner, is speaking to him]. And--and certification was important to sort of separate the one from another. You know, the fact that it wasn't contaminated with pesticides and herbicides made a difference to some people, anyway, and to prove that things were--certification was necessary.

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Now I must admit that--that myself anyway I got to the point where--I mean I was doing it for me anyway. I mean it wasn't a matter of trying to prove it to somebody else. They were welcome to come and take a look and so on and so forth but I wasn't--just decided I wasn't going to pay that money for a certification for something I was doing anyway. And that, you know, whatever--whatever help I could give to the effort could be something else besides financial.

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AY: Was there a demand for organic produce at the Farmers' Market or in local communities when you first made this effort to be organic?

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BD: Occasionally you would find people that were interested and might know something about it. There were several chefs in--in Chapel Hill, who--some of whom I think you probably know, but were very helpful in giving us a market on an individual basis and they--they deserve a lot of credit for that because they were stepping way out of bounds.

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So it--it's--it's something I--I agree with certification. I think if you haven't been certified you need to be certified. And I think that the public ought--ought to be concerned about that. If you've been at it as long as I have it's--it's sort of like one of the politicians here in the state used to say, "It's the oldest mule in the shed." Some people haven't been at it as long as I have, so--.

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AY: What chefs in particular really helped you find a market or find a niche for--to supply your produce or to--to move your produce?

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BD: How do I find them?

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AY: Or which--which restaurants or which chefs in particular helped you over--over like--who do you have a relationship with?

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BD: Now you're going to get me in trouble, see, because my mind is that I can't remember very well and I'm going to forget somebody. But Bill Smith was one of them and I think you know

Bill Smith. There was another guy, Russell--somebody, who I wish that I knew what happened to him. He had been in Nam and had come home, was cooking for what is now Margaret's and he'd come to the Saturday morning Market and come around and just say, you know, "Bring me this, this, this, and this," and walk off. And Russell was a--Russell was a good man. The last time I heard he was working in a pizza place over in--in Durham but I had been in there once at least looking for him and nobody had heard of him, so--. I'm not sure what happened to him.

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But he was the one that really--and Pyewacket was another one that--that was--was there early on and I--I--with my apologies to those who were there also and I have forgotten about but--but they were--without them we wouldn't have made it [Interviewer's note: Pyewacket was a restaurant in Chapel Hill, NC that was open from 1977-2002 and was known for its vegetarian dishes].

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AY: And I understand here at Ayrshire Farm that you have a mentorship program of sorts to help other farmers coming in who might not have experience with farming to kind of get--you know, learn the ropes, so to speak. I was hoping you might talk about some of these individuals who are working here as well and what your mentorship style is like--how you teach them to farm.

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BD: [*Laughs*] I'm not so sure that's--that's going to be very enlightening. I've been very fortunate to take on a lot of people over the years, sometimes we got as many as twelve, fifteen young folks that, you know, think they might want to try it on for size. And some--some have

done well and a lot of them have found out that in fact it's--it was nice but it really isn't what they want to do. And so they're doing something else.

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What we decided to do this last year and Daryl has been the one that's really done the work and that is to set up a lessee arrangement with certain people that--that want to learn how and may know some--in fact, most of them have had some experience but if--I mean you can grow things if you don't know what to do with it and--and by that I mean what--what to grow, when to grow it, and you can't sell it, it doesn't make any difference. Well that's not quite right but it doesn't make much difference.

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Yeah, we've just been very fortunate to have a lot of--a lot of folks that--not all of them--not all of them have become farmers. I wouldn't expect it to. We had a good time getting there though, some days better than others. It's hot and this--this summer has been one of those hot summers. But that's part of it and I think that--I think that what--what a lot of those young folks learned was that you can do it. You may not like doing it and you may not want to do it again but it can be done. And we get letters and cards and stuff from folks that have been around--part of it just to say, "Hello" and part of it to say, "Guess what I'm doing?" And [*Laughs*] so, it hasn't all gotten lost.

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AY: You also take some of these lessees to market as well to the Carrboro Farmers' Market and they set up a stand next to you. Is this also part of the mentorship process?

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BD: Right. Yeah I've--it doesn't make any difference about being able to grow it. If you can't sell you're going to have to do an awful lot of eating yourself or give it away and that isn't going to be very beneficial. So I think that--I think that learning how to sell things, how to market things is certainly the equivalent of how to grow things.

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AY: At this point in the interview I was hoping that we could move towards discussing the Market a little bit more in detail. And the first question that I wanted to ask you is--how were you involved in the early foundation of the Market?

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BD: Well I think--I think I mentioned before Debbie Wechsler who was involved in it. Laurie Heise who had been in--when the original program got set up over in Nashville it got set up not--well it got set up in part because that--that particular period of time, the fertilizer prices were going out the roof and it was really tough financially. And the NFO, the National Farmers Organization, was--was going around the country with freezer trucks with ground meat and pulling in somewhere with permission and having a--having a sale. And all you had to do was go over there and realize holy smokes; look at all these people.

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And you know, why aren't--why aren't they out there all the time? And so you begin to learn about the--the politics of food and pricing and the--the planning and, you know, certification of stores and there was a lot to learn. But the bottom line was that it was being done for somebody else besides the farmers.

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And so I don't--I don't mind looking for a fight sometimes. It, you know, sort of keeps life interesting. So you know, that's--there was a woman named Lindsay Jones, Laurie Heise, John Volcheck--now this was over when I was still at Vanderbilt and we put that together over there and then when I came over here to Carolina, I got together with Debbie Wechsler and a couple others and put the same sort of thing together here.

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AY: And when the Carrboro Farmers' Market was brought to Carrboro was the--how was the community reaction? Was it supportive or what were people--how did they perceive the Market at first?

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BD: Well actually the--the Market actually started at the Church of Reconciliation, if the truth be known, and then it outgrew that and we moved over to East Gate. And to give you an example of sort of the--the politics of the situation, East Gate had one supermarket over there which will remain unnamed and that group of stores voted, as I recall once a month, well, it was probably once a--once a quarter maybe--as to whether or not to allow the Market to be there in the parking lot. And it was always a twelve to one vote and the one was the supermarket.

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Now you don't have to be too smart to figure out that, you know, if there are people going to that market out there out in the broiling sun right in front of our store and they're going out there to get it rather than coming to our store we're missing here somewhere. Now corporations, some are smarter than others, and--and so that went on for several years. And then we moved over into Carrboro, not where the Market is now but back behind where the--where

the Fire and Rescue Squad is which was a great place to be and there were some politics played in there and we ended up moving over to where the--where the old high school was--was another City Hall. And the--the main thing about a market is whether or not it's covered. A market without shade is very difficult, shall we say. So it--it's--the Market itself has moved around several times. It's been the same group of people, you know, and just sort of adding on as time has gone on and I think they've become much more sophisticated but it's been the same people.

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And it's--and they've been fortunate to have places to go to sell and not necessarily because they were invited, but sometimes they were.

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AY: Can you speak about the early growth of the Market through the 1980s? Were there any specific changes or large changes in the Market over time as it began to grow and become more popular?

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BD: Hmm. Well I--that deserves probably a long thought but the--the main thing that comes to mind anyway is that--the--the Market as it started out just grew the traditional stuff which did not include such esoteric things as broccoli and cauliflower and so on and so forth. And then with time, there began to be a demand for those strange things that nobody had--you know. I think it was one of our esteemed presidents that had problems with some of the stuff but then he had problems with a lot of things.

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At any rate, the--the--the Market then and the Market now is almost unrecognizable that one is--it's the same people, well with a number of additions and unfortunately a number of subtractions. I mean a number of them have passed on just out of--they've aged out. But the--the variety of--you know, whether you're talking about flowers or mushrooms or beans or you name it, it's there and it didn't start out that way. And so the--the folks that are selling there and the buyers, I think, have become much, much more sophisticated about what they can--what they can get, what they would like to request from people. I've had a lot of people say, "Well, why don't you grow such and such, and such and such?" Well, I may have a good reason for not growing it, or it may be that I just wasn't smart enough to figure that one out and so let's give it a try.

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I think the other thing is being that the--the consistency not only of the farmers there but of the people that came, the--the people that shop at the Market you see every week. It's not just sort of a fly-by-night--it's cool and groovy, you know, market thing that--it's a very serious and financially beneficial operation.

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AY: Do you think the customers--how have their tastes changed over time? And why--why do you think their tastes have changed?

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BD: Oh I think because food has become--I think they call them foodies. I wouldn't want to make any positive statements about that but--but there are a lot of people that--that have asked

for us to grow things that, you know, I--rutabagas, I mean I'm--I know what a rutabaga is now but I didn't then, and there's a lot of other things in the same category.

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So you know, we end up growing things like all these varieties of lettuce, fennel, broccoli. One of the presidents that didn't like broccoli or something and then--but then a good one is radicchio. I mean I'm not sure how to spell it but it's--it's a--a vegetable, salad vegetable, which quite frankly, I think about the only way you can eat it is develop a taste for it but it's got--you know, it's developed a hell of taste because it--you know there's a big market for it. So it's been fun with time, you know, to see not only what people want but what--what the growers are willing to grow.

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I'm being coached here [Interviewer's note: Daryl Walker, Bill's partner, is speaking to him]. I forgot one particular--and I'm saying this in part because it's a good illustration in part because the guy deserves a--deserves a lot of credit. In the early days, I used to deliver at night. I worked during the day and then delivered at night. And La Residence was one of the--one of the restaurants here in town and the chef at that time was a fellow by the name of Bill Smith, who is still among us and still doing very well.

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At any rate, I--I went in there one night at ten o'clock at night I guess and he was still at the stove. And there was a--a metal table there in the middle of the kitchen. And there was a--a box opened that had these twelve round red somethings in this Styrofoam box. And each one had its own little compartment. And I--I had never seen anything like it before, and then I thought what in the world--? I said, "Bill, what is this stuff?" He said, "Radicchio." I said, "What the hell is that?" And he said, "Well it's--they--they grow it in Southern Europe. It's--it's a salad green."

And I said, "Well, where do you get it?" He said, "Well, we get it from England, I mean Southern Europe." And I said, "Well, how does it get over here?" He said, "We fly it in." I said, "You fly in radicchio from Southern Europe to serve here in--?" He said, "Yeah. Yeah, yeah I sure do." And I said, "Well, why aren't we growing it?" And he said, "Well, I don't know. You could." So it took about two years to find somebody that knew something about radicchio and to figure out what--what varieties would grow and how to sell it and how to, you know--etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

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But that--that's how the--I think that's how the--the Market has expanded. It's little encounters like that where somebody says, "Well, why not," you know? And it--and that's--that's the right question: why not?

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AY: You've spoken a lot about your relationships to chefs in the surrounding areas. From the produce that you're--that you're growing here at Ayrshire Farm how much of that is going to restaurants and how much of that is going to the Carrboro Farmers' Market?

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BD: That's a good question and I probably--probably ought to know the answer to it, but I don't. I--for us I would say that--that probably half of what we do and maybe more than that goes to restaurants and--and it's the restaurants--or where I get--if somebody says, "We need such and such, and such and such" I say, "Well how do you spell it," you know? And it's--we have to sort of get over the recognition and then, you know, with time you can figure out how to grow it or maybe it's already being grown. But the--it's the chefs in large part that--for me

anyway--I've learned a lot and I would not be selling what I'm selling today if it weren't for them.

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Of course now, you know, the appetites of people in--have also changed, so that it's made it possible to sell these things, but I don't know how many people have ever eaten radicchio but it is--it's stout. It's--it's--it's--you remember it, so--.

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AY: We've talked about the consumer interests of the chefs who are--who have formed a relationship with you. What concerns or what questions are everyday consumers at the Market asking you about? What does the average Joe ask you about when they come up to your stand at the Farmers' Market?

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BD: "Why haven't you got such and such?" [*Laughs*] Or, "When are you going to have such and such?" Yeah, it's--that's--the questions that--that are--are inquisitive, you know--they're not--they're inquisitive. They haven't seen a lot of these things before. They've haven't--they've heard of it and don't see it or they see it and it looks pretty good but they're not sure what it is. So yeah, there's just--there's a lot going on between the--the public, the chefs, and the growers. The public is an important part of that triumphant--. Without them you're nowhere; without the chefs the same; and without the growers you're the same. So we all need each other and I think that the--the Market, the markets, I should say, that are being set up these days, for the most part, recognize that. And so I--it's not as hard as it used to be to find a restaurant that serves locally produced food.

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AY: How would you describe the atmosphere of the Market, the relationships between farmers and vendors who are selling produce and other goods at the Market?

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BD: I don't--you got to be careful about stepping on toes in a question like that but--you got a lot of young folks. And--and the sales to--to they and people that--that are not foodies if you will, it--it just--it works. It--it--and then there are those who--who you've seen in the Market for years and years and years and it's a friendship. And it's probably more than that. I'm not sure what the proper term is but it--it's an important relationship for both sides.

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I don't know--ask me the question again and--.

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AY: How would you describe the community of the Farmers' Market? What's the community like?

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BD: Okay. The--well [*Laughs*] the community has to do with what the weather is and what time of the year it is and--and we--it's--we're fortunate in the respect that the population turns over on a fairly frequent basis because of the University and so you have--you have new people that--that are interested in what's going on and so on.

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On the other hand there are a lot of folks who have been there year after year after year after year and you couldn't get by without them either. But--but it's a very different relationship; I mean that--that's a friendship. And I don't want to get into naming names, but I think there's certain ones that--that they keep up with us as much as we keep up with them.

00:44:52

AY: What would you say the legacy of the Carrboro Farmers' Market is? Has it--how would you describe its influence on other communities for starting markets--or, in general, what do you think its legacy is?

00:45:07

BD: Well it--it had the good fortune of being in a place early on where there was enough parking and--and shelter and so on and so forth that the Market expanded fairly quickly. And so you had some observers from other places that--that realized that these things can change fairly quickly and why don't--"Why aren't we doing this back home?"

00:45:39

So there's a lot of small markets that--a plethora of small markets right at the moment. I think there are probably going to be a--some--some are going to be, you know, staying with it and some aren't. But--but the number of markets and the quality of what's there has--has--has made the difference and, you know, on--on Saturday morning you've got--you're there at eleven o'clock and there's this--this mass of people moving by in front of your stand and you haven't got time to sort of say, "Hello, how do you do, my name is—" you know, and there's none of that because there isn't any time. It hasn't always been that way. But--but it's not a bad thing. It--it is an unfortunate thing in the respect that--that--that Market on Saturday morning is not just, you

know, meet and greet sort of stuff. It's--it's checking in with the people and--and I--. And so there's a lot of little markets that have set up around that--that are doing pretty well. And you know, it--they have identified population centers in their communities where, you know, they're kind of making themselves available to--to people who wouldn't be there otherwise.

00:47:12

AY: Is there anything else that you'd like to add about the Market or speak about in regards to the Market before I move onto our last few questions?

00:47:24

BD: I just--I--I think we have been very fortunate to have the people we have had that have been with us on both sides, both as producers and consumers who aren't just passing through, you know. I mean a pint of sun gold is--is good and you eat it as little kids or adults but--but it's not the sun gold that's going to do it. And as I say you can start naming names and that goes onto a long list and I hesitate doing it because I don't want to offend anybody. And I can't remember the names anyway so it's just [*Laughs*]*--*you know, we've gotten--I've gotten to the age where "Hello, how do you do?" And you know who they are and you hope they know who you are but you can't remember their name and so that's just the way it is. They let you by with it though--for the most part.

00:48:32

AY: So for these final few questions I wanted to ask you about the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association and the Sustainable Agricultural Program of the Central Carolina Community

College. So could you speak about what the program is like and what inspired you to kind of establish this program?

00:48:54

BD: Well the--the Carolina Farm Stewardship Group, myself and Debbie Wechsler and Laurie Heise and several others I think I had mentioned before got that--got that going and my major contribution probably was the fact that we met in my kitchen down in a place that I was living in at the time and decided that's something that needed to be done. But the--the other folks really--and Debbie Wechsler in particular really, you know, carried the mail on that.

00:49:41

AY: What is the basic goal of the program?

00:49:47

BD: Hmm. I'd have to--you know, I'd have to sort of imagine what--if you put out a number of possibilities what people would vote for. The basic goal of the program--has to do with their own needs, nutritionally and--and food-wise. I think there are some that are there for political reasons. You know, I'll--who--who is going to run this country? Is it going to be people making ground turkey and finding out that it's contaminated or is it going to be people that--who are personally associated with the people who are doing eating and wouldn't dream of doing something like that?

00:50:42

Yeah. It's--yeah I don't think any of them including the turkey people do it intentionally. It--you know, people don't spray stuff intentionally to poison somebody else and they don't

think they are but there's a lot of chemical stuff and a lot--just, you know, the--the food system is so contaminated that it--I don't think those changes are going to come soon. They're going to come because I think the public is going to demand it. And the bottom line for most of those--those people is--most of the companies, the bottom line is, you know, is it worth it? And I think there's enough of them coming to realize that we got to change our ways here. Maybe that would be just hopeful--hopeful thinking but at any rate--.

00:51:48

AY: Finally, could you speak briefly about the Triangle Land Conservancy and your recent involvement with that group?

00:51:58

BD: [*Laughs*] That's--that's a strange group. No. I'm being very facetious. The Triangle Land Conservancy is--has as its goal an attempt to maintain farmland and--and do it in such a way as people can--can remain on that land and--and it's not--it doesn't have to be sold as lots and so on. So our association has been that we have sold the development rights to the--to the Land Conservancy and that means that they--the land cannot be divided upon our death or leaving--leaving this place. You--it's--the--the development rights have been sold and they're gone. That's comforting to me anyway. Unfortunately that--you know, if we--if we looked out this window here to the--to the south there's a ridge up there and it just got sold here in the last couple weeks. And I don't know what the end result is going to be but I can't help but think that it's probably not to our benefit.

00:53:30

The Land Conservancy plays a very important part in--in trying to help folks hang onto what they got and not let it go to something else.

00:53:42

AY: Well as we get to the end of our interview I just want to ask one more question. Is there anything that I did not ask you that you'd like to speak about or any topic that you'd like to speak about?

00:53:57

BD: Well with your permission the item that's been left out is that it takes more than one to do it and Daryl Walker who is--who has been a--a part of this for several years and on my better days is willing to deal with me and on my better--on my less better days she can sort of whip me into shape. But at any rate, yeah. I--there are those that are important.

00:54:33

AY: Wonderful. Well thank you so much for participating in this oral history. It has been a pleasure speaking with you today and this will conclude our oral history for today.

00:54:45

[End Bill Dow Interview]