

Randy & Kenneth Jordan
Two Brothers Barbecue – Ball Ground, GA

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Interviewer: Ashley Hall, Southern Foodways Alliance
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
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[Begin Randy Jordan Interview]

00:00:01

Ashley Hall: So this is Ashley Hall with the Southern Foodways Alliance. It's November 13, 2010. I'm in Ball Ground, Georgia at Two Brothers Barbecue. Randy, could you tell me your full name and date of birth for the record, please?

00:00:13

Randy Jordan: Okay; it's Kenneth--Kenneth Randall Jordan, April 17, 1966.

00:00:18

AH: And are you the owner of this restaurant?

00:00:20

RJ: Me and my father own it.

00:00:23

AH: So how old is Two Brothers?

00:00:26

RJ: We started in '74; so what--that will make us 36--36 years, so--.

00:00:35

AH: And was it here before--did you buy it from someone?

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RJ: No, actually my father and his brother started which--hence the name Two Brothers. They started it in my grandfather's general store. This is actually a dry goods store. My grandfather died in '73, and they converted it over to a barbecue restaurant.

00:00:55

AH: And what are the Two Brothers' names?

00:00:58

RJ: It's Gene and Roy Jordan.

00:01:02

AH: And are they still involved with the restaurant at all?

00:01:05

RJ: My father, Roy is still in the business with me. He's--he's kind of getting toward retirement but we're still in business together, so--.

00:01:14

AH: How long has the store been here?

00:01:19

RJ: Since 1951 I believe, but--.

00:01:20

AH: And--and what was the purpose of the store?

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RJ: It was just a--a general dry goods store for the area, small grocery store, feed and such as that for the community.

00:01:32

AH: And do you know how old this building is?

00:01:35

RJ: I believe it was--it was actually built in '51, I believe. It had burned down maybe just a little bit before they started the--the grocery store. It burned down, and they rebuilt it to the present building that we're in today.

00:01:49

AH: And what inspired your father and uncle to start a barbecue place?

00:01:54

RJ: Well, actually they were laid off from Lockheed Company at the time and needed something to do; so they took a--a family recipe that they had. They used it at family reunions; decided to try to--try their hand at the restaurant business.

00:02:08

AH: And do you know; were they laid off at the same time?

00:02:12

RJ: They were; actually, that--one of them was called Mack. My--my dad's brother was called Mack, and he got out of the business shortly after they had started.

00:02:20

AH: What can you tell us about Ball Ground?

00:02:22

RJ: To be quite honest, I don't know [*Laughs*] a lot of Ball Ground's history. I understand it's where the--the Cherokee Indians played--played a stickball game and that--and that's how it came upon its name, but--.

00:02:37

AH: Were you born here?

00:02:38

RJ: No, actually I was raised in Marietta, lived down there most of my life. Then mom finally moved up here short--it wasn't too--it was later on after the business was going.

00:02:53

AH: So they were commuting from Marietta to Ball Ground?

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RJ: They were. They commuted probably—well, I graduated high school down there, so I guess to keep me moving from schools they kept me down in Marietta.

00:03:03

AH: So, tell me about this family recipe that they had that inspired them to open the place.

00:03:09

RJ: Basically, the Brunswick stew, I think it was probably all around what started it. It's just-- it's made with beef, chicken, pork, tomatoes, potatoes in it. I--I don't know how they come upon it [*Laughs*] but--but they passed it on, so I--it's the same recipe we use today.

00:03:36

AH: So the Brunswick was really the inspiration, more even than the barbecue?

00:03:41

RJ: About and--and probably just the cooking of the--the ham, so that was in their family reunions; that would be a big social point was the cooking all night and cooking on the open pits.

00:03:53

AH: And did your family have a restaurant background at all?

00:03:57

RJ: No, not--not at all. *[Laughs]* It was all trial and error, I'm sure. I was--fortunately I was young and didn't--didn't participate in it too much then, but they had ironed out a lot of it by the time I had gotten to it.

00:04:09

AH: And so why did they decide to open it here?

00:04:12

RJ: Well, like I was saying; they had the building here for my grandfather's grocery store and had an empty building and both unemployed, needing something to do, so--. That was kind of the ingenuity behind that.

00:04:24

AH: Do you know what other restaurants might have been around here back then?

00:04:29

RJ: At the time when we opened there was a small restaurant right behind us called the Sequoia. And there was a little two ladies--Nick's ladies owned a small little restaurant just on the other side of town and that was basically all we had here in--back in the '70s.

00:04:51

AH: Do you know how people found your--found your father's restaurant?

00:04:55

RJ: Word of mouth, I'm sure, through the community. An advertising budget wasn't very big back then, I'm sure [*Laughs*], so, I'm sure that's how most of it come--come to pass was word of mouth--families.

00:05:08

AH: And are there other family members working here?

00:05:11

RJ: No, just me. Well, me and my wife work here now. She--she's trying to get into the business with me as my father decides if he's going to retire or not, so--.

00:05:22

AH: Tell me about your hours; you're closed--tell me about that.

00:05:27

RJ: We're open Thursday through Sunday 10:30 to 9:00. We're closed Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

00:05:33

AH: Why is that?

00:05:35

RJ: The Monday and Tuesday part came about, they probably just needed a couple of days.

They were--to get ready to open back up, so eventually it worked into Wednesday. I'm not--not really for sure why Wednesday got thrown in there but--.

00:05:52

AH: Is there a--a certain day that's the busiest day of the week?

00:05:56

RJ: Usually Saturdays and Sundays are our busiest days.

00:06:00

AH: And you're open all day?

00:06:01

RJ: All day 10:30 to 9:00, Thursday through Sunday.

00:06:06

AH: Let's talk about your menu. Just tell me what we can find on the menu here.

00:06:11

RJ: Well we have a small menu, as you can see. Everything on it we prepare here. Our coleslaw, the Brunswick stew, baked beans; it's a small menu just simply because we can't prepare a lot of stuff and--and keep it--keep it the way we want to make it.

00:06:30

AH: Why can't you?

00:06:30

RJ: Well it--it would simply be too--too much. It's a small building. *[Laughs]* I have a limited cooler space and--and limited help, too. So I try to have a hand in all that we fix.

00:06:42

AH: Do you know how the menu may have changed since the opening menu?

00:06:46

RJ: The only thing I know that we've changed since we opened, where we added baked beans, maybe 10 years after they opened, and we also added the barbecue ribs.

00:06:57

AH: And so the barbecue sandwich, what cut of pork do you use?

00:07:03

RJ: We use the hams is what--is the pork we use.

00:07:08

AH: And why do y'all choose the hams?

00:07:11

RJ: Well it's leaner and--and easier to clean and you're able to get all the fat and gristle out of it.

00:07:17

AH: Tell me the process of how you cook a ham.

00:07:18

RJ: Well we--we smoke a ham, and it takes usually around 12 to 14 hours. And we'll cook-- we'll put it on--start cooking tonight and they'll usually be ready about 7:30--8 o'clock the next morning.

00:07:33

AH: So when--sorry; what kind of--what kind of wood do you guys use?

00:07:42

RJ: We use hickory; that's what we smoke with.

00:07:44

AH: And where do you get it?

00:07:47

RJ: From local people around. There's a lot of logging companies around, and they know I buy hickory. They--whenever they--they get some they'll call me. We'll usually end up buying it; we usually buy it by the trailer-load and have it cut at a local sawmill.

00:08:01

AH: And is it ever difficult to get?

00:08:04

RJ: It hasn't been knock on wood. *[Laughs]* We still have a good bit of wooded areas up in here.

00:08:11

AH: Is your pit--is it a smoke box or is it an open pit?

00:08:15

RJ: It is a--it's closed; closed smoker.

00:08:19

AH: So how do you get the smoke--how does the system work?

00:08:23

RJ: Well it's an electric smoker and it--it slowly smokes a good piece of wood and it will smoke it between 12 and 14 hours--smolder it out.

00:08:35

AH: And then the barbecue plate, how is that different than the sandwich?

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RJ: The barbecue plate is just the chopped barbecue with the two sides that we--the coleslaw, baked beans, fries, or Brunswick stew.

00:08:49

AH: And do--do you offer inside/outside chop or is it--you have a standard way?

00:08:54

RJ: It's just all chopped together. We don't have an outside cut or an inside cut.

00:08:58

AH: Do you know is that how it's always been here?

00:09:01

RJ: It has; they've always just chopped it together.

00:09:05

AH: And what--do you know why--why these decisions were made and why you started with the ham and why the chopped; how your father came--?

00:09:12

RJ: I'm--I'm sure they probably started with the ham. Just--it's just easier to clean and keep the fat and the gristle. A lot of my customers don't like fat and gristle in their--in their barbecue, so I'm--I'm sure that's how it came about.

00:09:26

AH: Tell me about your sauce.

00:09:29

RJ: Well it's a tomato-based sauce. We offer it in the hot and the mild. We also offer a different sauce for ribs that's a little bit--little bit thicker than the--. We have--our hot and mild sauces are a little thinner than--than our traditional barbecue sauce.

00:09:46

AH: And it's--is there vinegar in there?

00:09:49

RJ: There is. It's got a--a little bit of vinegar. I wouldn't call it a vinegar-base though. It's--I don't really--we've kind of been compared to the South Carolina style [*Laughs*] and--but it's--it's kind of a mixture of both. But it's basic--the basics of a tomato-based.

00:10:04

AH: A mixture of both what?

00:10:07

RJ: Tomato and the vinegar, so together.

00:10:10

AH: And how do you make the spicy--spicy?

00:10:13

RJ: The spices that I put in my sauce? It's just--it was again a mixture of a family recipe and it's still--still being carried on.

00:10:24

AH: Is the spicy sauce something--let me rephrase this; how--how do you think the sauce and the--and the cuts of meat you do here compare to other places around Georgia or the region?

00:10:38

RJ: How's the sauce different? Our hot sauce isn't--doesn't generally have the burn that a--that a regular barbecue sauce seems to have. It's a little bit thinner so it--it does saturate through the meat a little better. I think that makes the difference on it.

00:10:55

AH: And when--in your opinion is there a--is there a--a Georgia-style of barbecue?

00:11:00

RJ: I don't really know. It seems like it's such a mixture of--of different--different places. We have people that like--like the slaw on the barbecue, which is not generally a Georgia thing, but we still have a lot of customers that like that and ask for it. You know we've never had the mustard-based sauce here. Very few calls do I have for it. I don't really know if there is a Georgia--I couldn't answer that I guess.

00:11:28

AH: And how do you think your Brunswick stew compares to others that you might have had elsewhere?

00:11:33

RJ: It seems to be a little bit thicker--thicker based than--but basically I'm--you know the definition of Brunswick stew is kind of just put everything in and--and so it's kind of hard to label one over the other. But ours is just a little bit thicker it seems like.

00:11:49

AH: And again you've got meat in there.

00:11:53

RJ: We've got the pork, beef, and the chicken.

00:11:56

AH: And how are those prepared?

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RJ: We cook them just--well the pork we cook here on our pits; the beef the same way. The chicken, we--we cook it separate in a pot.

00:12:06

AH: And then there's a--is it tomato-based too?

00:12:11

RJ: There's a tomato--tomato ingredients in that mixed in with it, yeah.

00:12:16

AH: It seems pretty finely chopped though.

00:12:18

RJ: It is. We grind it all here, all the ingredients--we grind here, but--that are put in it.

00:12:23

AH: And you offer crackers to go and--to go with it?

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RJ: Crackers, well some--a lot of people like the garlic bread with it, so--.

00:12:32

AH: Has that always been on your menu--garlic bread?

00:12:34

RJ: Yeah; as far back as I can remember. It has; yeah.

00:12:36

AH: What--is there a certain thing that is kind of your signature or--? I mean your menu is pretty small but--.

00:12:44

RJ: It is. I--I don't really--can't really just point to one thing. I have people that will come in and buy just slaw. I'll have people that will come in and buy just quarts of stew, baked beans, pounds

of meat. Everything can seem to stand on its own. We have--and then I have people that'll buy it altogether but we--we have people that just come in and buy ice cream, so--.

00:13:06

AH: Describe to me your--your--like a normal day of work for you when you come into the Two Brothers.

00:13:13

RJ: Usually get here around 6:30, check the pits, see if everything is cooking all right; kind of look and see what I have to prepare for that day. This morning it happened to be Brunswick stew. And usually end up making about 20--25 gallons of stew at--at a time. I usually make it about every other day. The coleslaw, we'll cut--we'll buy our cabbage in 50-pound boxes, clean it, and cut it and mix it, put the dressing on it.

00:13:46

AH: What's the dressing like?

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RJ: It's a mayonnaise-based dressing, little vinegar, and a little bit of sugar in there.

00:13:52

AH: And there's other things chopped up in there besides cabbage?

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RJ: Just it's the cabbage and just carrots. The carrots--some of them--and we use some of the outer--the outer leaves of the cabbage.

00:14:04

AH: And so what else--what else do you do in a--in a day?

00:14:07

RJ: Well basically getting all that together and making sure I've got enough for that day. We do hand-cut our French fries, too, so we'll have somebody hand-cutting French fries. But basically just opening the door and seeing what happens, so--.

00:14:23

AH: Give us an idea of about how much pork you go through in a week or--.

00:14:26

RJ: In a week we usually cook about 50 to 60--55 to 60 hams a week.

00:14:32

AH: And where do you get those?

00:14:33

RJ: I get them from my local grocery companies. We have two distributors--US Foods, Sysco.

00:14:42

AH: And tell me; you said the--the sauce, where did that recipe come from?

00:14:48

RJ: I don't exactly know where they--the Brothers come up with that recipe. I'm not--not really for sure how they came up with that [*Laughs*] or where--what the roots of it are. I don't know.

00:14:58

AH: Well how did you come to become a part of the business?

00:15:02

RJ: Just grew up in the business; been a small kid running around here and my--both of my parents worked here at the time. Eventually just fell into it, I guess.

00:15:14

AH: So tell me about that. Tell me what it's like to run around as a kid at a barbecue place.

00:15:17

RJ: Oh, it can be--it can be challenging at times. [*Laughs*] Both parents work, and I had to find a lot of things to do. But it was--it was interesting.

00:15:29

AH: What was your mom doing here?

00:15:30

RJ: Mom worked--worked in the kitchen preparing--preparing food and plates.

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AH: What was her name?

00:15:35

RJ: Her name was Judith Jordan.

00:15:37

AH: Did your--at the time when you were a child--were there lots of your family members working here?

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RJ: No, not really. I'm an only child, so it was just basically me. We hired a lot of local kids, a lot of teenagers, so I grew up with a lot of people in the area.

00:15:52

AH: But in the kitchen, like your mother and your father?

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RJ: Yeah, mother and father. We had--they had several people they hired to help run the kitchen back there as far as washing dishes and cooking this and that.

00:16:05

AH: So how old were you when you started working here officially?

00:16:08

RJ: Probably--probably around 16 I started about part-time, and then by the time I probably graduated high school I was probably into it full-time by then.

00:16:17

AH: What was your first job?

00:16:19

RJ: Ah, my very first job here was peeling potatoes. [*Laughs*] A job I still wouldn't like today but--yeah; that was--that was probably about the worst job here, peeling potatoes.

00:16:33

AH: How long did you do that?

00:16:34

RJ: Several years, even after I went full-time I was peeling potatoes. [*Laughs*]

00:16:39

AH: What's so bad about it?

00:16:41

RJ: We hand-peeled them, for one thing, and I had to peel a lot of them. We were using probably close to 1,500 pounds a week then, so it--it would take a little while to peel potatoes. I wasn't the only one peeling them, but that was one of my jobs.

00:16:56

AH: How many--how many pounds are y'all going through now?

00:16:59

RJ: We're off a little bit now. We go through about probably 800 to 1,000 pounds a week.

00:17:04

AH: What do you think is the difference now as opposed to then?

00:17:05

RJ: Well the reason we're not using as many, I think, just the economy has slowed down, so that our business is off. I think it's just--just the nature with the economy. Every--we're kind of tied to the construction business up here a lot. It's off pretty good, so we're--.

00:17:24

AH: Why is the construction business important up here?

00:17:27

RJ: Well, we don't have any industry up here right now. A lot of our industry left several years really before the recession happened, so we were primarily based with a construction economy. A lot of people that dealt with--in the construction business were our customers, and--and still are. There's still a little bit going on, but it seems like we don't have near as much construction; there's no industry to speak of much up here anymore.

00:17:52

AH: What was the industry up here?

00:17:53

RJ: Well, for years they had the--Georgia Marble was up here; it was a big industry. Several in our industrial parks, I can't really remember what they did, but they've moved out several years before the recession, so--. So it just took jobs; it took customers away from me when they--when they left.

00:18:12

AH: And so tell me about your clientele.

00:18:17

RJ: Basically we have a big--big local following here anywhere from Canton to Jasper. We--we still pull people from Marietta and Common. But basically it's Canton, Jasper, Ball Ground, local community, local business.

00:18:33

AH: How far are we from Marietta right now?

00:18:36

RJ: Probably about 40 miles for Marietta.

00:18:39

AH: People come that far for good barbecue?

00:18:41

RJ: Yeah; they'll seem to travel that far, thank goodness. *[Laughs]*

00:18:45

AH: Do you have regulars?

00:18:48

RJ: We do have people that will eat in here two and three times a week, so--.

00:18:52

AH: And how would you describe--local folks; what does that--what does that look like?

00:18:58

RJ: Just—mainly, just family. We have a lot of--it's kind of different. We've had people that have lived here and--and raised here. We have a lot of new families moving in, so it's really a--a mixed clientele right now.

00:19:09

AH: Who are the new families moving in?

00:19:11

RJ: A lot of the younger families moving up here; I don't--I don't know if the housing market--maybe the pricing is better up here.

00:19:20

AH: Well it's beautiful up here, too.

00:19:23

RJ: It is. It's a nice place to live. It still hasn't built out like most of the bigger cities have but--
You can see it changing but it's--it's still got a small-town feel to it.

00:19:32

AH: And I've seen a couple of motorcyclists come through while I've been sitting here.

00:19:36

RJ: Yeah, we're pretty popular on the motorcycle route. I don't know exactly where they--
which way they're coming and going but we seem to get our share of the motorcycles
sometimes.

00:19:47

AH: Well, let's get back to when you were young working here when you were just starting out.
So you--your parents didn't put you to work before you were 16?

00:19:55

RJ: Well, yeah. But not--I probably wasn't doing enough to be called work then. *[Laughs]* It
was a lot of in and out, probably just small odd jobs, busing tables, washing dishes, but--

00:20:05

AH: What did you think about that?

00:20:07

RJ: Well I wasn't too--wasn't too fond of that at the time, but I liked getting paid though, so that--that helped.

00:20:15

AH: Were you--did you spend your weekends here as a child because your parents were working?

00:20:19

RJ: I did. We--we spent our weekends up here and I had a lot of family that lived around up in here that--that I could spend a lot of time with.

00:20:30

AH: So you were peeling potatoes; what else--what others were your jobs?

00:20:34

RJ: Well cleaning pits, loading the pits, taking--

00:20:40

AH: Tell me about cleaning the pits. That sounds like quite a job.

00:20:42

RJ: Well, it's--it's not fun. That's for sure. [*Laughs*] Messy job, usually takes a couple of hours and--

00:20:48

AH: Why do you need to clean the pits?

00:20:51

RJ: Well when just--it's just like a barbecue grill at home. You cook on it; it gets--gets stuck on your racks and stuff. You want to keep those clean and the inside of your pit clean, as well. This helps keep it clean by cleaning it regularly.

00:21:04

AH: Is there a seasoning process to a pit?

00:21:08

RJ: Ah, no; it--not--not the pits that we use, it's not. They're all--all our racks are stainless. The inside of the pits are stainless steel, so--.

00:21:18

AH: So you--you were doing a lot of dirty jobs when you were young [*Laughs*]; do you--are you one of the cooks--cooks here now?

00:21:29

RJ: I do. I do the ribs, the Brunswick stew, cook the hams, not so much making the coleslaw and--and doing the fries anymore, but basically those three right there keep me busy.

00:21:44

AH: Do you remember the first time your folks let you cook something?

00:21:49

RJ: No, to be honest, I don't. **[Laughs]** I'm sure that was trial and error. **[Laughs]** It's--it's been a while. You know I'm 44 now, so it's--it's been a while back since I done that.

00:22:04

AH: And so tell me when--how old were you when this became your full-time job?

00:22:18

RJ: I probably started here when I was 18. I probably graduated high school and started working full-time.

00:22:25

AH: What made you decide to work here instead of go do something else?

00:22:27

RJ: I liked the business. I was practically raised here, so it was a good fit for me. I still enjoy the business. It--it was a pretty simple decision.

00:22:39

AH: So did you ever think--consider doing anything else?

00:22:43

RJ: Not really, no. Really just always kind of--kind of been in the restaurant business.

00:22:48

AH: Tell me what it is you like about it.

00:22:51

RJ: I guess, you know, seeing my customers every day, dealing with them; being able to kind of set your own agenda for the day, I guess. That--that helps at times. I don't know. It--it seems natural to me just simply growing up in the business.

00:23:12

AH: It seems like it would be pretty long hours.

00:23:14

RJ: It can be at times. I have a manager that I split the day with so that helps.

00:23:20

AH: Do you live near here?

00:23:21

RJ: I live in Tate, which is just five miles north of here.

00:23:25

AH: What's your favorite thing that you get to do as an owner of a barbecue restaurant?

00:23:28

RJ: Ah, I don't--I enjoy my--you know, enjoy cooking and enjoy making Brunswick stew, cooking ribs. You know it's a lot of satisfaction fixing something and seeing people enjoy it.

00:23:44

AH: And what is your--what is your--I'm sorry; what is your wife's name?

00:23:48

RJ: Lisa

00:23:49

AH: Lisa. And then what is she doing here now?

00:23:50

RJ: Lisa works primarily through our lunch crowd on Thursday and Friday. She--she'll do everything from running the register to fixing plates, works the floor--really, really a big asset to me.

00:24:07

AH: Do y'all have any children?

00:24:08

RJ: We do. I have a daughter 17. Don't look for her to be in the restaurant business.

00:24:12

AH: Why not?

00:24:14

RJ: Kind of steered her away from it.

00:24:17

AH: Why's that?

00:24:18

RJ: Just the hours mainly; a lot of--just almost practically on-call the whole time you're open, so I think she's kind of grew up in that and saw it, too, and that--that's not her cup of tea.

00:24:33

AH: Does she like barbecue?

00:24:35

RJ: She does, but she's not hooked on it. [*Laughs*]

00:24:39

AH: Are you hooked on it?

00:24:40

RJ: I am. I have to have my fix about a couple times a week usually. [*Laughs*]

00:24:44

AH: So what's your--what's your favorite thing to eat?

00:24:47

RJ: I like the chopped pork and like the ribs, too. As long as I can have my ribs or my barbecue through the week I'm good.

00:24:54

AH: Tell me again about--about your rib sauce. You said it's different than the sandwich sauce.

00:24:58

RJ: It's basically, it's just thicker, basically and it's sweeter. There's--you put a little honey in it and give it a little more sweetness and for the rib sauce, you almost need it to be a little thicker to stay on the ribs.

00:25:12

AH: And what makes it thicker?

00:25:15

RJ: Basically we--you just don't--you don't cut it as much with--maybe with your vinegar or some water even. But it just--just to keep it thicker.

00:25:25

AH: So do you--do you cook it down?

00:25:27

RJ: We do cook it down, the rib sauce we do, yeah.

00:25:31

AH: And how many--how many slabs of ribs will you go through?

00:25:34

RJ: We usually go through let's see, probably around 50 pounds of ribs a week.

00:25:40

AH: And how much sauce?

00:25:43

RJ: Usually with that we'll make it probably close to about 10--15 gallons a week.

00:25:49

AH: Tell me a little bit more about this space because it's such a unique room. How did y'all come to accumulate all these great treasures?

00:25:58

RJ: Well, that's my dad's hand there. He's the--he's the big collector. He collects from all over. There's--there's something in here from probably every--every state he's ever been in. **[Laughs]**

00:26:10

AH: So he's a collector, and when did they start using it as decorations?

00:26:14

RJ: Basically, from the--the--when they started. They had bare walls and bare shelves and needed something to fill the space. **[Laughs]** So a lot of--a lot of stuff was donated from local people when they first started, but the majority of it he's--he's picked up through the years.

00:26:30

AH: For those since this is an audio recording, for those who can't see it, can you describe what kind of things we've got on the wall here?

00:26:37

RJ: Well we've got an--an old liquor still set up over here in the corner.

00:26:42

AH: Do you know where that came from?

00:26:44

RJ: I do. As a matter of fact, I picked that one up in Dawson County from a gentleman that had called over here wanting to get rid of it and--and we had--had a liquor still about that size the local Sheriff had let us use. And when he was voted out of office he come back and picked it up, so he--this gentleman knew I needed one, so--. **[Laughs]**

00:27:04

AH: Why do you need a still?

00:27:05

RJ: Well it was such a big part of the--the setup in here to start with. And when they took it out I had so many people asking you know where the still was. So this gentleman called us up and--and offered to sell us one. *[Laughs]*

00:27:19

AH: Was that really a used still?

00:27:20

RJ: It was. As a matter of fact, I--I took it down from where he was using it. *[Laughs]*

00:27:27

AH: When did you get that?

00:27:29

RJ: We've probably had that one about--probably about 20 years now I guess.

00:27:33

AH: What else have we got around here?

00:27:35

RJ: We've got pictures from the area, local--there's one right behind you there of the train that used run right through Ball Ground. Local pictures of Nelson, Tate, Ball Ground; we've even got Woodstock--just all kinds of old Coke bottles, car tags, tobacco cutters.

00:28:02

AH: What are these things over here?

00:28:04

RJ: We've got a cross-cut saw right there, several well pulleys, so you can see my dad is big in the well pulleys there, tractor seat, old Coke signs and there's a picture actually of--of the--the building we're in now when it was a grocery store.

00:28:27

AH: And what--?

00:28:28

RJ: Oh he's got a few guns back there on the wall that he's picked up from here and there, an old wood--wood-burning stove, a coffee grinder; there was a sign from--from a local dairy we had here in Ball Ground back in the '70s.

00:28:47

AH: And what--what do your clients--what do your customers think about this?

00:28:53

RJ: They seem to enjoy looking at the stuff. A lot of--you know a lot of the pictures on the wall. I've got relatives that are in those pictures. They seem to enjoy just looking through the stuff; it's--we've got an old paper over there, the *Gone with the Wind* premier back in '36. A lot of people like to--.

00:29:11

AH: Do people--are you still adding to the collection?

00:29:15

RJ: He doesn't put as much--he swaps stuff out now. *[Laughs]* He's got so much that he--he swaps it out occasionally.

00:29:23

AH: Does he have stuff like this at his house, too?

00:29:24

RJ: He does. He has a room that he has his stuff in, set out, but he'll--he'll swap it around every now and then.

00:29:31

AH: What about you? Are you a collector?

00:29:32

RJ: No; I--I never got the collecting bug. I--I guess I was around him so much it was always there if I wanted it, so--.

00:29:41

AH: Maybe you just grew up around it so much.

00:29:44

RJ: It could have been [*Laughs*]; it's--it's not one of my fortes to go looking for stuff like that.

00:29:49

AH: How many people do you have working here?

00:29:52

RJ: Right now we have--we have about 10 to 12 people usually.

00:29:56

AH: And how many are in the kitchen versus in the front?

00:30:00

RJ: I usually keep about three in the kitchen. I usually have three or four on the floor.

00:30:05

AH: And if you could describe for us that are listening, how many seats and how your tables are configured?

00:30:12

RJ: Actually we--I think we have 17 tables. I can seat about 70-something people at one time.

00:30:18

AH: Do you ever--do you know how many people come through here in a week?

00:30:22

RJ: Usually on the weekends we--we probably feed close to about 300 people a day, I guess.

00:30:27

AH: That's a lot of--a lot of mouths.

00:30:29

RJ: It is and I'm glad for it. *[Laughs]*

00:30:33

AH: I may have asked you this already; how many hams would you say you go through?

00:30:36

RJ: We usually cook about 55-60 a week.

00:30:40

AH: And about sauce, do you have any idea how much sauce?

00:30:43

RJ: We probably go through 15 to 20 gallons of the hot and the mild.

00:30:49

AH: And so the hot and the mild is--is the recipe pretty similar except for the level of heat?

00:30:53

RJ: It is--it is--there's a little bit of difference there just to get the heat up in it.

00:31:00

AH: And give me--if you could give me a sense of what's in the--what's in the recipes.

00:31:05

RJ: I really couldn't do that. *[Laughs]*

00:31:07

AH: Not exactly.

00:31:08

RJ: They wouldn't like me to do that but--but it is a tomato-based sauce.

00:31:14

AH: You don't have to say what they are, but are there lots of different spices or a couple of key ones?

00:31:18

RJ: There's about four or five different ones in it.

00:31:19

AH: And what gives the hot one its heat?

00:31:22

RJ: That would--that would probably be the peppers that they use, yeah.

00:31:24

AH: Do you use peppers in your regular sauce?

00:31:28

RJ: We do.

00:31:28

AH: Just not as much?

00:31:29

RJ: Different amounts yeah; uh-hm.

00:31:31

AH: Well is there anything else you want to let us know about your barbecue restaurant?

00:31:36

RJ: I believe you pretty much combed through it here. You're pretty good. [*Laughs*]

00:31:41

AH: Thank you. And you--think you'll stick with it for a while?

00:31:46

RJ: I plan on it. I'm fixing to have a kid in college, so I'm--I'm going to be here a while.

[*Laughs*]

00:31:51

AH: Well thank you so much for your time.

00:31:56

RJ: Thank you.

00:31:57

[End Randy Jordan Interview]

[Begin Kenneth Jordan Interview]

00:31:57

AH: Okay, I'm back. This is Ashley Hall with the Southern Foodways Alliance. And I'm here at Two Brothers Barbecue in Ball Ground, Georgia. I'm with Kenneth Jordan. Mr. Jordan can you state your full name and date of birth for the record?

00:32:09

Kenneth Jordan: Roy Kenneth Jordan.

00:32:13

AH: And what's your date of birth?

00:32:14

KJ: April 13, 1936.

00:32:16

AH: And you're one of the original owners--founders of this restaurant?

00:32:20

KJ: Right.

00:32:22

AH: And who else started it with you?

00:32:22

KJ: Well, my brother started it with me, but he got out the first year we was in business.

00:32:28

AH: Where did the name come from?

00:32:30

KJ: Well, I really don't know, just something that popped up I guess. [*Laughs*]

00:32:37

AH: So you kept it even though it was just one brother after a while?

00:32:40

KJ: Right.

00:32:40

AH: Well, what inspired you to open a barbecue restaurant?

00:32:43

KJ: Well, we was laid off from work back in '73, so we didn't do anything for a while. And finally decided to start cooking on the weekends, so it just grew from that.

00:33:01

AH: So you--were you always a cook?

00:33:04

KJ: No, no, we used to—well, we really got our recipes and stuff from family barbecues out in--family reunions and--.

00:33:14

AH: So when you decided to open it what--did you have your recipes already or did you have to work on them?

00:33:20

KJ: Well, we had a few but no, we didn't have as many as we do now. Yeah, we just worked on them from time to time.

00:33:27

AH: And what was on the menu when you opened?

00:33:31

KJ: Mostly just barbecue sandwiches and plates. That's about it.

00:33:36

AH: What about the stew?

00:33:40

KJ: Well, we added the stew later, which people demanded a little more of and still are demanding it, but--. We just got our own recipes up for it.

00:33:50

AH: And I hear there are family recipes?

00:33:51

KJ: Yes.

00:33:53

AH: Were--were they your mother's or your--?

00:33:56

KJ: No; my uncles and grand-uncles and just handed down.

00:34:02

AH: So you're a family of people that likes to cook?

00:34:05

KJ: Yes, on reunions only.

00:34:08

AH: How often do y'all have reunions?

00:34:11

KJ: We used to have them once a year.

00:34:13

AH: And where is your family from? And where are they now?

00:34:16

KJ: Up here in Pickens County. My grandmother used to own a store out in Tate, Georgia and we used to have family reunions up there out in the cow pastures and cook all night and drink and celebrate. *[Laughs]*

00:34:30

AH: How do you think your barbecue compares to other barbecue around Georgia?

00:34:35

KJ: I have no idea.

00:34:36

AH: You don't eat a lot of--?

00:34:38

KJ: No, all I do is stay here and cook. *[Laughs]*

00:34:41

AH: What's your favorite thing to eat here?

00:34:44

KJ: I like the stew and mostly the pork.

00:34:49

AH: How would you describe the stew?

00:34:53

KJ: The stew? I don't really know. I guess just a thick base of soup.

00:35:03

AH: And there's meat in it?

00:35:06

KJ: Oh, yeah, there's three different meats.

00:35:09

AH: And what else besides meat?

00:35:10

KJ: Well, we don't give out the recipes.

00:35:14

AH: But there are a few other things?

00:35:15

KJ: Oh, yeah.

00:35:18

AH: Why did you--why did y'all start by cooking hams?

00:35:20

KJ: Well, we found out we can get meat out of a ham than we did any other parts.

00:35:25

AH: Did y'all ever try a whole hog?

00:35:28

KJ: No, the State of Georgia don't allow that.

00:35:31

AH: Is that right? And but you liked ham better than shoulder?

00:35:35

KJ: Oh, yeah. I like the butts myself, but there's too much fat in the butt to serve to the public.

00:35:41

AH: They didn't like it?

00:35:42

KJ: No.

00:35:44

AH: And is the--where did you come up with the sauce?

00:35:48

KJ: We just kept mixing and stirring until we come up with what we got. *[Laughs]*

00:35:52

AH: Have y'all always had a hot sauce?

00:35:54

KJ: Yes; we have had one hotter than what we have now, but it didn't go over too good so we backed off and used a little bit lighter--.

00:36:05

AH: People didn't like how hot--?

00:36:07

KJ: No, not real hot.

00:36:11

AH: So but from the beginning you had a mild and a hot?

00:36:12

KJ: Yes.

00:36:13

AH: Which one do you like?

00:36:14

KJ: I like the mild. Of course, if it's anything milder than ketchup I don't use it. *[Laughs]*

00:36:24

AH: But when you opened, you didn't have the sides--slaw and French fries?

00:36:29

KJ: No, not to start with. We kept adding to it. And we did have fries.

00:36:35

AH: What can you tell me about this building?

00:36:37

KJ: The building was burnt down in '52. My dad and a bunch of--bunch of neighbors got together and put it back up so that's why it's about ready to fall in now.

00:36:53

AH: How old was it when it burned down?

00:36:55

KJ: We built first in '47.

00:37:01

AH: Do you know why it burned down?

00:37:03

KJ: Yes; I burned it down with a motorcycle.

00:37:06

AH: Was it an accident?

00:37:08

KJ: Yes.

00:37:09

AH: What happened?

00:37:10

KJ: I was putting gas in the motorcycle, and it turned over and run under the building and caught the building on fire.

00:37:17

AH: That's terrible.

00:37:20

KJ: Caught me a-fire.

00:37:21

AH: I hear that you are responsible for all this cool stuff on the wall.

00:37:26

KJ: Well, most of it I had. I had a lot of customers who brought in stuff and we just added to it.

00:37:32

AH: How did it get started like that?

00:37:35

KJ: I really don't know--just started adding stuff to the wall and putting a few of my antiques out but I got a lot of antiques and a bunch of junk right now. **[Laughs]**

00:37:48

AH: Are you--so you're a collector?

00:37:50

KJ: Pardon me?

00:37:50

AH: Are you a collector?

00:37:53

KJ: Yeah, not now as much as I used to be but--.

00:37:56

AH: Where do you find some of this stuff?

00:38:00

KJ: All around yard sales, farm sales. Don't have too many farm sales anymore.

00:38:07

AH: So farm sales is--what was a farm sale?

00:38:10

KJ: Well old timey--old farm--cattle farms and stuff like that you, you used to find a lot more than you do nowadays. Around yard sales now you don't find much of it, just find some of it.

00:38:24

AH: When y'all opened, do you remember the first day; did y'all have a lot of customers?

00:38:29

KJ: Well, I really can't remember that far back. *[Laughs]* That's been about 38 years ago.

00:38:38

AH: How--how do you think people found y'all?

00:38:40

KJ: Well, mostly it was neighborly stuff, and it just kept spreading from that.

00:38:44

AH: Were there other restaurants around when y'all opened?

00:38:47

KJ: Oh, no. No; there wasn't any restaurants at all hardly around Ball Ground.

00:38:53

AH: And when did you enlist your son to start working with you?

00:38:57

KJ: After he come into this world, I guess. *[Laughs]* He's been in it with--ever since he was born.

00:39:05

AH: He's been--he's been playing here since he was little?

00:39:08

KJ: Oh, yeah.

00:39:10

AH: When did you put him to work?

00:39:12

KJ: When he got big enough to steal tips. [*Laughs*]

00:39:17

AH: What would you have him do?

00:39:19

KJ: Just about anything I needed.

00:39:22

AH: When did you start letting him cook?

00:39:25

KJ: Oh, I don't even know. He just took that up on his own.

00:39:30

AH: Did you teach him?

00:39:31

KJ: All I knew, which wasn't much. *[Laughs]*

00:39:34

AH: I don't know. Y'all make some good barbecue.

00:39:36

KJ: Well, thank you. Yeah, we sell a good bit. It's slower right now than it used to be but--.

00:39:46

AH: How has that business--how have you seen the business change?

00:39:48

KJ: Well, we used to serve a breakfast, but since McDonald's move in as close as they are they just about took all the breakfast business. So, we stopped that. And it's just more businesses moving in and taking portions of it, so this--it's a lot smaller now than it used to be.

00:40:13

AH: So, is the Thursday through Sunday has it always been like that?

00:40:17

KJ: No; we used to just close on Monday. And then after it started slowing down, we started closing Monday and Tuesday. And then my son wanted to close on Wednesday. I think he got into the golfing pretty heavy. *[Laughs]*

00:40:33

AH: Do y'all have a busy lunch crowd?

00:40:35

KJ: Yeah; we have a pretty good lunch.

00:40:38

AH: How would you describe your clientele?

00:40:46

KJ: Just antiques and junk. [*Laughs*]

00:40:51

AH: And what kinds of folks do you have that come to eat here regularly?

00:40:54

KJ: Well we used to have a lot of construction, truck drivers, but mostly--and right now it's just local people.

00:41:05

AH: And when did y'all start to see the economy slow down around here?

00:41:09

KJ: Well, I guess right after the economy all started going down and building stopped. Truckers just about quit. But, we just learned to back up with it and live with it.

00:41:30

AH: How would you describe Ball Ground to someone who has never been here?

00:41:34

KJ: Well, the city of Ball Ground is a few local owned and it's not--not too much growth in Ball Ground.

00:41:42

AH: Have you lived here a long time?

00:41:46

KJ: Yeah; since--since about '47.

00:41:51

AH: And is your family from Georgia?

00:41:53

KJ: Yes.

00:41:54

AH: What part?

00:41:55

KJ: Tate community.

00:41:59

AH: You know how long they've been here?

00:42:01

KJ: I don't know. I have no idea.

00:42:04

AH: And your wife worked here with you?

00:42:06

KJ: Yeah; she--her health got bad and she hung it up.

00:42:13

AH: But she worked here for a long time?

00:42:14

KJ: Oh, yeah.

00:42:15

AH: And what is her name?

00:42:16

KJ: Judith.

00:42:19

AH: And so, do you still like working here?

00:42:22

KJ: Oh, yeah. I like to work but I don't like to be rushed anymore. I'm getting too old for that.

00:42:27

AH: That's hard in the restaurant business.

00:42:29

KJ: [*Laughs*] Sure is.

00:42:32

AH: What do you like--what do you like about it?

00:42:34

KJ: Well, I don't know. I like to meet people and talk to people but the economy now is hard to deal with.

00:42:44

AH: Do you ever cook anything besides barbecue?

00:42:47

KJ: No, I just about got out of it. [*Laughs*]

00:42:51

AH: Well is there anything else you'd like to add?

00:42:53

KJ: No.

00:42:55

AH: Well, thank you so much for your time.

00:42:58

KJ: Well, you're quite welcome, and I appreciate it.

00:42:59

[End Kenneth Jordan Interview]