

MELANIE COOPER COVELL
With her mother, Joanne Cooper

Owner, The Wheelhouse Raw Bar – Apalachicola, FL

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Date: March 25, 2006
Location: The Wheelhouse Raw Bar - Apalachicola, FL
Interviewer: Amy Evans
Length: 52 minutes
Project: Florida's Forgotten Coast

[Begin Melanie Cooper Covell]

0:00:00.5

Amy Evans: This is Amy Evans for the Southern Foodways Alliance on Saturday, March 25th, 2006, in Apalachicola, Florida, at the Wheelhouse Oyster Bar with Melanie Covell. And Melanie, would you mind saying your name and also your birth date, if you don't mind, for the record?

0:00:18.3

Melanie Cooper Covell: Okay; my full name is Melanie Cooper Covell, and I was born March 14th, 1968 in Apalachicola.

0:00:25.9

AE: And your family goes back a far piece in this area.

0:00:28.5

MCC: So far we've found seven generations.

0:00:32.1

AE: And you've been doing the family tree and digging up all that information.

0:00:37.2

MCC: The family tree on the bay side, and most all of them are seafood workers.

0:00:42.0

AE: So tell me about what you were telling me about earlier about that—as far as back as you've gone and the names and the—.

0:00:49.2

MCC: Actually, as I said that would be my—my dad which, is a Cooper; it's his mother, which was a Hall. Her mother was a Roan. I traced that family, the Roans, back to 1824.

0:01:02.0

AE: How do you spell Roan?

0:01:03.2

MCC: R-o-a-n.

0:01:05.1

AE: Okay.

0:01:06.8

MCC: Living in Florida—Franklin County, which in 1824 Apalach didn't really exist as Apalachicola. Carrabelle did, I think, at that time, and the Halls came from Ireland; they were probably here by 1840—something like that. And the Barbers on my mom's side came from Georgia, probably about the same time.

0:01:33.0

AE: Okay; so the seafood industry for many generations back?

0:01:37.1

MCC: Yeah.

0:01:37.2

AE: And you grew up in it?

0:01:39.3

MCC: Uh-hm; we grew up shucking oysters every day—Mama did.

0:01:43.5

AE: Your family had a[n oyster] house, did I remember that right?

0:01:43.7

MCC: My family—Cooper's Seafood on Highway 98. When did y'all have that Mama?

0:01:51.9

Joanne Cooper: We—let's see; we had it about twenty-one years when Daddy died, so 1954.

So not '54; we started it in the '50s—beginning of the '50s. And your daddy died in '94.

0:02:06.5

MCC: They built it their selves.

0:02:08.7

AE: Started it in the '50s.

0:02:09.2

JC: So I guess we did—we worked there about twenty years.

0:02:12.7

AE: Okay. So was it—was it a fish house or an oyster house or—?

0:02:16.4

JC: Oyster house.

0:02:16.9

AE: Oyster house. And you shucked at the house?

0:02:20.2

JC: Yeah. And I shucked and I paid off my—to get out of the house. And back then they had in the center of the oyster house, they had bins in the center. And I'd—I think they—since then they've taken them down. They used to just dump the oysters in there—*[Wind Blowing]*.

0:02:46.4

MCC: Like big horse stalls.

0:02:50.7

JC: They were right behind the oyster— *[Wind Blowing]*.

0:02:55.2

MCC: The shucking stalls.

0:02:56.8

JC: The stalls, the shucking bins.

0:02:58.0

AE: So Melanie, how old were you when you started shucking?

0:03:01.8

MCC: For a living fifteen. But before that we played around with it. We shucked since I was fifteen, and I'm still shucking.

0:03:10.4

AE: Yeah. What was it like growing up here and in the business?

0:03:13.6

MCC: It was a fun; this was a beautiful place to grow up. We got up in the morning, and you put your bathing suits on and your cut off shorts. Nobody wore shoes, and you just ran up and down the [Apalachicola] bay. We swam in the bay, the river every day of our lives; it was so much fun—ate oysters every day. I did.

0:03:31.2

AE: [*Laughs*] And you have—tell me about your brothers and the rest of your family.

0:03:34.1

MCC: I have three brothers and one sister. Rudolph oystered, Joey did, Kenneth did, and Karen shucked a little bit—something she swears she'll never do again. [*Laughs*]

0:03:46.3

AE: Yeah? And so when—say again what year the oyster house closed—Cooper's Oyster House.

0:03:51.2

MCC: It closed in—

0:03:53.8

JC: Ninety-four.

0:03:54.1

AE: Nineteen ninety-four.

0:03:55.2

JC: My husband died in '94 and we—we were in the process of selling it when he died.

0:04:00.6

AE: May I ask how he passed? Was it just—was he sick?

0:04:02.6

JC: Heart attack.

0:04:02.8

AE: Okay, heart attack?

0:04:04.9

JC: Massive heart attack.

0:04:06.1

AE: And then y'all were out of the business then when—?

0:04:08.0

JC: Yeah.

0:04:09.2

AE: And what did y'all do after that? Did you stay shucking?

0:04:11.7

MCC: We shucked for somebody else.

0:04:13.6

AE: Okay. Who was that?

0:04:14.8

MCC: Uh-hmm. Who did we shuck for after that, Mama?

0:04:17.2

JC: I shucked for anybody. I was—

0:04:19.6

MCC: Annie Mac—Annie Mae Wilson.

0:04:21.3

JC: —to get out of the house, I you know—and I enjoyed it.

0:04:26.3

AE: So how long did you stay in that about?

0:04:29.4

MCC: You shucked until you started working here [at The Wheelhouse Raw Oyster Bar], huh,
Mama?

0:04:31.9

JC: Uh-hmm.

0:04:33.0

MCC: Which has been about two years ago.

0:04:36.1

AE: Okay. And so this place, the Wheelhouse, used to be like a bait and tackle place, is that right?

0:04:39.5

MCC: Uh-hmm. Let's see, me and Larry [Covell] first opened it as a bait and tackle. We really—he—both of us really wanted to open a restaurant the whole time. After about a year of that, we closed it and opened the restaurant. And we wanted to start out with just oysters on the half-shell and steamed shrimp. And then I really don't know what happened from there.

[Laughs] We just keep making the menu bigger and bigger.

0:05:03.7

AE: And how long have you and Larry been married?

0:05:06.8

MCC: We've been married two years.

0:05:09.0

AE: Okay. So you were shucking up until—and I remember, though, that you painted houses, too. Did you do that on the side?

0:05:14.0

MCC: Yes. I'm still doing that occasionally, every now and then. I painted houses, and I shucked when there weren't any houses to paint. Again, when I married Larry, I quit shucking and I did a little bit just a while back and did this—this oyster shucking and then all of this, and I still paint houses every now and then.

0:05:34.9

AE: Do you miss at all, for any reason, working in the oyster house shucking there, or how is this different from that?

0:05:41.5

MCC: It's cold in the winter—freezing cold and you have these great big—what was that heater called, Mama? That long tubular heater that was so loud? A blower or something like that?

0:05:51.5

JC: In our oyster house?

0:05:52.2

MCC: In everybody's oyster house.

0:05:53.4

JC: Oh, yeah.

0:05:54.2

MCC: What were those?

0:05:55.4

JC: They were blowers, I guess, but your daddy got a gas heater.

0:05:58.5

MCC: The one—they would shoot out a flame on the end. [*Woof*] It was loud; it smelled like—
what kind of gas was that?

0:06:06.6

JC: Well ours was natural gas.

0:06:07.6

MCC: Yours was natural gas. It was cold and hot in the summer.

0:06:12.1

JC: We had a blower on that, but ours wasn't that loud.

0:06:14.9

MCC: Hmm? It wasn't?

0:06:14.8

JC: Ours wasn't loud, uh-uh.

0:06:18.5

AE: What was your father's name?

0:06:19.8

MCC: My daddy? Fred Cooper.

0:06:20.8

AE: Fred Cooper?

0:06:21.9

MCC: Uh-hmm.

0:06:22.4

AE: And so now all your brothers—I remember that Rudolph is working construction with

Mike the sailor down here.

0:06:28.5

MCC: Uh-hmm.

0:06:29.6

AE: And Joe works here—Joey works here.

0:06:33.0

MCC: Uh-hmm. Let's see, Kenneth moved to South Carolina. He's been there how long,
Mama?

0:06:38.1

JC: Oh—.

0:06:39.8

MCC: Six years? Seven years?

0:06:40.3

JC: Longer than that. He—they—they moved right after your daddy died—not too long.

0:06:45.0

MCC: Okay; so that would be ten years—eleven years.

0:06:50.5

JC: No, he hasn't been there eleven. He's probably been there about eight years.

0:06:53.9

AE: So why did they get out of oystering, your brothers?

0:06:59.3

JC: Kenneth wasn't oystering when he left.

0:07:01.5

MCC: He wasn't oystering when he left?

0:07:03.0

JC: He was doing some other kind of work. What was he doing?

0:07:04.5

MCC: I don't know. I know that he oystered off and on—probably construction or something. Her family is from there—from the Carolinas; they were looking for a better life, basically. It's kind of hard to—the living is really hard here, especially the seafood industry. That is, it's just—it's hard work, it really is.

0:07:26.5

AE: So was this—The Wheelhouse restaurant, was it an opportunity for you and your brother and Larry to get out of the business and do something else?

0:07:34.5

MCC: Uh-hmm, yeah, Joey growing up he always wanted to cook. He knew what he wanted from the time he was a little kid. He would make us like omelets and stuff like that, and when he was young he worked, I think—he worked in the Carolinas and he worked on one of the casino boats in Mississippi as a chef. And he came down to visit and he wanted to come back home and asked Larry if he needed another cook. I said, “Thank God! Yes, yes!” And he came and he's—he's happy. And he loves to cook.

0:08:05.9

AE: And y'all have developed your menu a lot over the past few months and—even as I've been visiting here—and a lot has been added to it.

0:08:12.9

JC: Yeah, there's oysters, fish.

0:08:15.8

MCC: It's all Joey's recipes, yes. All that like the mullet dip and the cakes and the pies and the Alfredos and all of that is Joey's. **[Interruption]**

[Joanne has a side conversation with some friends who have walked up: What you up to? We got to work tonight over at the Spoonbill]

0:08:39.8

AE: So what did it take to open this place?

0:08:42.1

MCC: What you mean, money wise?

0:08:43.8

AE: Well I mean like did you already have the—the building or did you—are you renting it and—?

0:08:49.0

MCC: Okay, this building was the B-9 Marine. It was—let's see, Larry was—in the beginning he was like the keeper of this place. He could have done anything he wanted to with it. The man that owns the property—Larry stayed down here and he made sure nothing went wrong, and he watched the boats and the place like that—the groundskeeper. And from there he just—I don't know why we decided to open a restaurant. We just probably casually were talking about it, and then decided we'd do it—an oyster bar. We decided we'd do an oyster bar because there were no oyster bars here. And then since we did the oyster bar, two more opened up. One closed in Eastpoint, which is a really nice one.

0:09:27.7

AE: What was that—

0:09:28.6

MCC: Hmm?

0:09:29.0

AE: —called?

0:09:29.6

MCC: I don't remember the name of it. The guy that owns the Grill [restaurant in downtown Apalachicola] had it. And it was like on the bay, and it was a beautiful place. It had [oyster] tongs on the walls and they—you'd find shells from oh, twenty, thirty years ago with somebody's pocketknife in it. It was cool. It had a lot of neat stuff in there. But we did it and shoot, maxed out all the credit cards. [*Laughs*] And we're here, and that's about it.

0:09:55.2

AE: Because you had to then install a whole kitchen and everything then to complete this place?

0:10:00.6

MCC: Uh-hmm. We installed the whole kitchen. Larry and a friend of his, Hank, did that by themselves. We—so far we've done everything ourselves except for one little electricity deal. But other than that, me and Larry did the—and Hank did the walls and the plumbing and all the painting—all of it.

0:10:23.9

AE: So now that you've been in the restaurant business a little while, what do you—what do you like about it?

0:10:27.1

MCC: Getting to eat every day. [*Laughs*]

0:10:30.5

JC: [*Laughs*]

0:10:32.0

MCC: Oysters and fried food every day. That—really, it's just fun to cook. It's fun to cook, and it's fun to serve people and—and see their expressions and it's—it's nice to serve them a good meal, and they're happy and they're—they're full and they're content. I kind of want to work on like the atmosphere. We want to make it a theme of some sort, something to do with the bay; we're just not there yet.

0:10:58.8

AE: Uh-hmm, well and Larry was telling me on the boat today that y'all are thinking about building a free-standing [restaurant] thing up here on this [concrete slab next door]—?

0:11:06.0

MCC: We're supposed to. I'm not going to hold my breath. It's—so far we've had a lot of trouble getting it going so I just—if it happens, it happens. I live here. And it's like, when we have a storm, we have to move everything out. We have got to move our refrigerators and our ice machines, our tables, our chairs—we have to move—even your pens and your ticket books; everything comes out of the whole building. And if you have four storms—sometimes they're two weeks apart—you've got to close two or three days ahead of time. **[Interruption]**

0:11:37.9

JC: *[Side Conversation: What y'all up to today? What y'all up to today?]*

0:11:44.3

AE: All right. So we were talking about when storms come and you have to take everything out.

[Laughs]

0:11:48.9

MCC: Okay.

0:11:49.0

AE: Where do you take it to?

0:11:50.2

MCC: What's that?

0:11:50.8

AE: Where do you take everything out of here?

0:11:52.9

MCC: We take it—we live up the [Apalachicola] river two miles on land. We take it all the way up there, what used to be the old poggie [fish] plant. Do you know anything about the old poggie plant?

0:12:05.7

AE: No.

0:12:05.8

MCC: Poggie is a fish, and they used to catch the fish, the poggies, and bring them in there. I remember growing up and all of us kids would get in a car and go riding around and bogging and, you know, take your big truck, and you'd bury it pretty much. And we'd go out to the poggie plant and it always smelled, you know, stunk real bad of rotting fish. But then I remember somebody telling me that they made perfume out of poggie. I don't know if that's true or not—.

0:12:29.0

JC: Out of the oil?

0:12:30.0

MCC: Out of the fish oil.

0:12:30.6

AE: I have no idea.

0:12:30.9

MCC: I don't know but that's what—that's it. [*Wind Blowing*]

0:12:42.1

AE: So having this restaurant, I know, you know, this—the Wheelhouse was the first—the first night I was in Apalach I came to the Wheelhouse, and y'all were having—that weekend you had that—

0:12:54.4

MCC: Yeah, that was nice.

0:12:55.6

AE: —that toy drive for the oystermen and all. So, you know, it really struck me how community minded y'all are and that you do all these events to—to help people in the community and do the food pantry thing on Mondays and all that.

0:13:05.7

MCC: And that taught the younger kids. Like I had a twenty-one-year-old and a nineteen-year-old and they—the twenty-one-year-old had no idea how broke you could possibly get, really,

until she saw, you know, a lot of these people and, you know, listened to their stories and all that; and it only takes a few months to lose everything, and she learned a lot of things—some good lessons, I think, but she was really great during the whole thing. Shannon—Shannon is the oldest; she would—well first thing in the morning get up and we'd work all day on it, and she—all her spare time went to it, and she was a wonderful, wonderful person—still is but she was really great through all that.

0:13:48.5

AE: And that was just—that was just y'all trying to give back to the—the oystermen and their families because of the red tide and because the bay had been closed for so long?

0:13:55.6

MCC: Uh-hm.

0:13:56.1

AE: Hurricanes and all?

0:13:57.2

MCC: Yeah, because at one time when mom and daddy had the oyster house, [to Joanne] what happened and y'all almost lost everything? I remember—

0:14:02.8

JC: The storm came.

0:14:05.1

MCC: A storm.

0:14:05.8

JC: The oyster house was damaged and nobody could work; it was awful. That was in the [nineteen] eighties.

0:14:14.5

MCC: And we knew how it was—how it felt and it—it's like—babies that didn't have diapers. You know, if you don't have money, you just don't have money, and people just couldn't understand that. We plan on doing something else further down the line. I promised Larry I would work on the Wheelhouse a little bit and then after that and after things are settled, we're going to get back on some kind of a fundraiser. I'm not sure; like there's one in Eastpoint, a

church, and they help like the disabled and the elderly and all that, so we're going to kind of do something like that . And what I told him, I said, "Storms are just around the corner and they—they predict we're going to have a year just like last year, so we could get a head start on it." It would be nice.

0:14:54.7

AE: Well did you do things like that before you had this place?

0:14:58.3

MCC: Not—not like that. No, uh-um. [I'd] lend money to teenagers. [*Laughs*] Stuff like that. But no, nothing like a—nothing like this. It got real big real fast, and we did not expect that.

0:15:13.9

AE: So what has the response of the oystering community been to your generosity?

0:15:19.4

MCC: I made a lot of new friends. And a lot of the girls that came I used to shuck with a long time ago, and they're just real kind—real kind—and they—you know, they still tell you thank you, stuff like that. You know, it gets a little embarrassing and all that, but it's—I think maybe

if—when you do something like that, I believe it kind of—I don't know. Sometimes it will bring out the best in people, maybe, a little bit. I don't know. More people, I think, should get involved in fundraisers because it's just going to get worse, as far as the storms and stuff like that. There's a lot of people capable of doing it too; we're going to work on it.

0:16:11.6

AE: Well I definitely believe you get what you give; so that's a good thing you're doing—definitely. So tell me about being in the restaurant business. What have you learned, and what's the learning curve of being in the—?

0:16:26.5

MCC: In the restaurant business the hardest thing—let's see; the hardest thing about the restaurant business is pleasing everybody. Let's see, it really goes pretty smooth. You're—you're—our—as far as the food, we'll get a complaint every now and then, but as far as the food, like my brother [Joey], he's real good—real good with it, and we both take a lot of pride in it and we both—that's my passion to cook, and it's his too. Larry is our guinea pig, and he loves that job; he loves it. **[Smiles]** Our main—the biggest problem we have is getting people to clean up. That's it. **[Laughs]** Mama is one of them. **[Laughs]**

0:17:13.6

JC: [*Laughs*] I sweep.

0:17:15.0

MCC: Nobody knows how to sweep, nobody knows how to mop, nobody knows how to wipe a table off and—they can count them tips, though, can't you?

0:17:21.6

JC: Yes, ma'am; I'm good at math. [*Laughs*]

0:17:25.2

AE: A family affair. You've got your mom working here and your brother and your husband and your daughter [Shannon]?

0:17:29.6

MCC: Uh-hmm.

0:17:30.6

JC: I just love to be a waitress.

0:17:31.5

MCC: Yeah, this is mama's first time waitressing. She was always an oyster shucker.

0:17:34.5

JC: I love it.

0:17:35.6

AE: You love it? *[Laughs]*

0:17:36.8

MCC: We had the—the other little girl, Brianna, and she is—oh Lord, I love her like one of my kids. She's really—she is something else, and she acts like one of them, too. *[Laughs]* She don't know what the broom is. *[Laughs]*

0:17:48.9

AE: So has business been good to you since you opened? Are you staying busy?

0:17:53.0

MCC: Business was really good in the beginning. The storm [2005's Hurricane Dennis], it was terrible. It's picking up really, really good right now. Right now, I think it's—I think we're going to have a really good summer, real good spring. But it was slow during the storm; I thought we were going to have to close. Like afterwards and the red tide [which is a bloom of dinoflagellates that causes reddish discoloration of coastal ocean waters, which is often toxic and fatal to fish]. Because everybody comes here for oysters, and nobody had any. Let's see, and then Louisiana got hit, so we couldn't get them. And you could get Texas [oysters], but they have some really big oysters, and we were a half-shell bar, so it was pretty rough for a while.

0:18:27.6

AE: Where are you getting your oysters now?

0:18:28.5

MCC: Right now we get them from—sometimes Harley Allen [Allen's Seafood], a couple places—Harley Allen and Water Street Seafood. And Water Street Seafood's Dee Rash bought my dad's oyster house. Let's see, that's pretty—I think occasionally we get them from [Tommy] Ward's [13 Mile Oyster Company], whoever has got them.

0:18:47.4

AE: Okay.

0:18:47.6

MCC: So we've got about three main [places] from where we get them.

0:18:49.3

AE: So where on [Highway] 98, if it's been bought—the business—what—where on 98 is the building that was your family's oyster house?

0:18:59.1

JC: It's at Two Mile [which is two miles west of downtown Apalachicola]. It's Water Street [Seafood]; they've got a sign out there. They're—Donnie Wilson was on one side, on the right; we were on the left, and he sold out. He has since died, too.

0:19:14.5

MCC: It's probably the third from the last on 98 going towards [Port] St. Joe.

0:19:18.5

JC: It's past the Steamers [Raw Bar restaurant]—it's on past the Steamers and you—it's right there on 98 on the left.

0:19:28.9

AE: Okay, okay. So now then, too, you're in the restaurant business, and then Larry has got his fishing trips and kayak rentals, and y'all have really diversified. Has that been—has that made it easier, so when the restaurant is down a little bit, something else can go up; or is it still just so seasonal?

0:19:46.6

MCC: Well like, okay, the—like when the restaurant was slow, Larry's tours is what kept us afloat because he does like the winter hunting things that they do here on the—St. Vincent Island. He tries to stash most of that money to get us through the winter in case it gets hard, but Larry loves it. Larry loves everything he does. He's living a dream. He told me when we first met that his dream was—pretty much what we're doing right now: work on the water with the tours, and have a restaurant. And he's got it all.

0:20:21.3

AE: And he's from up Seattle-way right?

0:20:23.5

MCC: Uh-hmm, Washington State, like Port Angeles. We went to visit last Christmas; it was beautiful. It was absolutely beautiful. And they've got some good seafood, too. **[Laughs]**

0:20:34.1

AE: Yeah, that's the truth. So when you go—do you go out on those fishing trips and tours with him sometimes?

0:20:39.6

MCC: I do sometimes; mostly I'm here. Jasmine, the ten-year-old [daughter], she pretty much does—she tries to hit them all because she's the little tour guide, and she gets tips. She loves it. She loves it. It's so cute; he has a picture of her—they had went out—had been out on two trips and she was exhausted, and he has a picture. She had fell asleep on the side of the boat, and she was holding her rope that she's supposed to hold in case he hits a big wave or something, and she was really sleeping. It was really cute—[she was] worn out.

0:21:10.3

AE: [*Laughs*] Yeah? And so when the—your friends came by and were talking you were saying that you were going to send out Jasmine and her friend to go hand out flowers downtown.

0:21:20.3

MCC: They were going to but they didn't get to; they're fishing instead.

0:21:24.4

AE: What kind of flowers and to whom would they hand them to?

0:21:27.0

MCC: Just like for the restaurant where—where we're at. The tourists don't know we're here, and we get a good bit of them. There's a whole lot more down there, so they'll take brochures for the restaurant—it's a menu with a touring charter on it and just stick it on windshields, and they get paid.

0:21:42.2

AE: Oh, okay—okay.

0:21:44.6

MCC: [*Laughs*] They get paid with ice cream or something like that.

0:21:46.5

AE: And so tourist season looks like it's hitting right—right about now in Apalach. It's pretty crowded.

0:21:49.5

MCC: Right now; uh-hmm, yeah.

0:21:52.8

AE: Yeah, so how else do you advertise to get word out that you're here?

0:21:56.0

MCC: Okay, [the radio station] WOYS, we'll run ads soon in the newspaper—the radio, the newspaper, and every now and then Larry will take the little flyers and he'll make some up and advertise, like the Sunday band and the Biker's Specials or the Oyster Specials, and pass them out at like the Laundromats and the convenience stores—anywhere you can put them—and that helps a lot. You have to work all the time; if you're in a bad location, you have got to always let

everybody know you're there and what you have. That's always—

0:22:30.6

AE: Yeah, because this is a little off the beaten path here from what's going on downtown.

0:22:32.1

MCC: It sure is.

0:22:33.1

AE: But that's the charm of it at the same time.

0:22:35.5

MCC: *[Laughs]* And people say that's why they like it. They like to come. It's not jammed packed, you know. It's not real loud. They like the peace of it.

0:22:45.4

JC: They love to sit out there, too, and watch—late in the afternoon and watch the river.

0:22:52.9

AE: Watch the river as boats go by.

0:22:52.4

JC: Gators go by and—

0:22:56.0

AE: Yeah, it's a pretty place.

0:22:59.1

MCC: Beautiful.

0:23:01.5

AE: And so y'all ride Harleys?

0:23:03.8

MCC: Uh-hmm.

0:23:04.8

AE: Like the biker connection.

0:23:06.6

MCC: Yes, yes.

0:23:07.0

AE: And so that's been—explain how that's a resource for you with your fundraising and the stuff that you do for the community.

0:23:12.4

MCC: Okay, let's see—like right now one of the guys—the guy that led the Harley—the Police Officer, he is supposed to maybe help us get a fundraiser together because there's a place called the Trinity Church that paid electricity and water bills for the people that couldn't afford it after the storm. Since the storm, they're out of funds; they have no money to help now. So we're thinking about doing another Harley Run—another Biker Run—and give the donations to them. And then continue to do stuff like that.

0:23:41.6

JC: *[Joanne is having a side conversation, which can be heard in background: The whole town is. Go down there and tell them to come down here because I'm going to start working at 4:30].*

0:23:44.1

MCC: Our good friend, Dave—remember Dave? He is the one—most of those guys were from Port St. Joe. It was only a couple from Apalach. I—they—I have no idea how they do it; they all know each other. They all go to the same places, and that is kind of like word of mouth. They put a flyer up everywhere they went, and then I think it was fifty-five bikes in the run, and then more showed up later on. It was nice. I think that—if I could get—find Dave we're going to do it again.

0:24:20.7

AE: Uh-hmm. Well it's a good thing that you do. That's—

0:24:21.9

MCC: He's a really great person, as far as that.

0:24:25.9

AE: That's great.

0:24:26.6

JC: [*Side Conversation: What she'll do, she'll add it up and reimburse you*].

0:24:28.3

Female: [*Side Conversation: I'm so sorry; I should have said something a lot sooner.*]

0:24:31.6

JC: [*Side Conversation: I wish you had of*].

0:24:32.8

Female: [*Side Conversation: It kind of kept playing on my mind*].

0:24:33.7

JC: [*Side Conversation: It was Tuesday—it must have been Tuesday before I came in.*]

0:24:37.4

Female: [*Side Conversation: It was Tuesday afternoon; it was the lady with the brown hair and the glasses.*]

0:24:39.7

MCC: Her brother is the one that has the ministries that has a donation place where you can donate. They have like a big yard sale and what they do is everything is so—like fifty-cent an item. [*Sighs*] And he helps the elderly and the disabled. We're supposed to get together with him and do something, too, like maybe—any little things like car washes and garage sales and bake sales—anything. Just money in the pot.

0:25:10.1

AE: Wow. what do you think the future of the Wheelhouse is here and what you've got going on—what you started?

0:25:15.2

MCC: Oh, gosh. If it got any bigger, I couldn't handle it by myself, really. So I guess that's why I'm scared of the other building over there because it's going to get big. And right now, the way it is, it's hard to keep up with it; it's hard to keep up with the people, the money. You're always running out of something. You never know until you're cooking and you—you have none left, even though you stock pretty good. We're going to learn how to communicate a little better. I'm scared and—. As long as my brother is with me and—I think it will be all right. He—he really knows his stuff where restaurants are concerned. I'm hoping it stays—

0:25:57.8

JC: [*Side Conversation: Is she going to have one next one too?*]

0:26:00.6

MCC: I hope we never put a bar, that's for sure. [*Laughs*]

0:26:03.0

JC: [*Side Conversation: She told me that they were going to have it this week and not have it anymore.*]

0:26:05.1

MCC: But I hope it stays kind of—a tad bit low-keyed. I don't want it too big; I don't want it more than what we can handle. But I hope it lasts, I really do.

0:26:16.2

AE: Are you pleased that it's turned out like it has, and it's given your family something to do other than working just in the industry?

0:26:24.0

MCC: Uh-hmm, yeah. Yeah. It's—uh-hmm. I'm pleased and I know it makes my brother really happy, it makes my husband happy, it makes my kids happy, it makes me happy, and it makes mama happy so it's—I guess it's good for everybody, huh?

0:26:41.8

JC: What?

0:26:41.6

MCC: The Wheelhouse—it has been good for everybody. It's been good for everybody.

0:26:46.7

JC: I enjoy meeting the people; I really do.

0:26:48.7

MCC: Yeah.

0:26:49.2

JC: I just don't like to sit at home. It's just boring.

0:26:56.8

AE: Cutting—cutting up. [*Laughs*]

0:26:58.3

MCC: Jasmine, she loves the people, too. She loves to meet people; it's—

0:27:03.8

AE: Yeah, she's real friendly. So tell me, too, about the Indian mounds and the stuff you know about the area. Because you seem so passionate about the history of the area and landscape and everything.

0:27:13.8

MCC: All right. That started when we were kids, and Dad took us to every Indian mound there is. And it's like one's at St. Joseph—near St. Joseph State Park; there's—there is one here; he took us to Eastpoint to one, he took—out along Indian Pass. And he had a name for every one of them like Pottery Beach, Stump Hole—what were the others, Mama?

0:27:38.1

JC: I don't know; I didn't go.

0:27:40.8

MCC: No, she didn't. She stayed at home.

0:27:40.5

JC: I took a break. *[Laughs]*

0:27:42.8

MCC: But he would take us. And there was one beach that just had Indian pottery all over the place, and myself and my brother Joey had—we were real curious about it. I met a lady just here a while back that's real passionate about the mounds and all that, and so we've been digging up any kind of information we could get on it. But there's a lot of them here. And just the way they lived, it was really—you know, how they—how they could have ever survived just—oh, Lord. I don't know, it's—when you go onto the mound of Magnolia you can still see pottery on the ground, and you can see the big mound. People have dug them. You know, dug big holes in them and chunks.

0:28:29.0

AE: Is this the Magnolia—where you're talking about at the [Magnolia] cemetery over on Bluff Road? Is that the—?

0:28:32.9

MCC: Uh-hmm, on Twelfth Street [which turns into Bluff Road]. There's a “No Trespassing” sign on the left-hand side; the right-hand side is—there is—you can go, but it's real grown up and real snakey. So you really don't want to do it, but you can go on there if you want to.

[Laughs]

0:28:46.4

AE: *[Laughs]* So when you were coming up in school here, did you learn about all that stuff, or is it stuff that your family—your dad just showed you?

0:28:53.0

MCC: Uh-hmm. We didn't learn any—not that I could remember. I wasn't a history student but *[Laughs]*—I was cutting class. But I don't remember anything like that. Karen, my sister, said she vaguely remembers some things, but most of what we learned we've learned from the Internet. The public library has all kind of books on it; there's a new one out, and I don't know what it's called. Larry knows—something about the river but it tells you all about the mounds up the river. Boy, when you come back, he could take you up there. The one on St. Vincent Island; it's really interesting. The pottery has design in it. It would tell you all about how they used bear grease in their hair and then put the—the red pollen or yellow pollen and decorated their hair. And there was the speeches he would give. He would give the speeches to the men—the Chief would—and he told us the name of the Chief. And then he would take a speech that was—a harsh speech, is what they called it—for the women about the—keeping the fire going. And what was strange—about being faithful to their husbands. People think they weren't civilized, but the more you read about them, they were. And no unlawful sex acts. And he would scold them and then send them to go build their fires. It's really interesting.

0:30:11.5

AE: So how do you think your father knew about all these mounds and all these sites?

0:30:14.1

MCC: From what I understand, his mother. That is the side that has been here. Her—my mother's—my mother's—mother's father was born here in 1825—'24.

0:30:32.7

AE: And what was his name; do you remember or know?

0:30:34.4

MCC: I know his first initial was *L*, the middle initial *T* and the last name Roan.

0:30:39.9

AE: Okay, wow.

0:30:40.6

MCC: And her name was Francis Thinsa Roan.

0:30:44.0

AE: Thinsa?

0:30:43.9

MCC: Uh-hmm.

0:30:45.0

AE: An interesting name—like T-h-i-n-s-a?

0:30:47.6

MCC: Right, uh-hmm.

0:30:48.4

AE: Thinsa. Huh. Well it sounds like y'all need to get together and write some of this down.

0:30:54.1

MCC: Yeah. We're trying, yeah.

0:30:55.9

AE: Yeah.

0:30:56.0

MCC: They have a really nice lady; she works at the library. And she started doing different bits and pieces for free; and so I offered to pay her, if she'd dig real deep, and she's got all the means. She knows what's she's doing; she did her own family tree. It's amazing what you can find and what's there.

0:31:14.3

AE: Do you take your girls out to these sites?

0:31:15.8

MCC: Oh yeah, always have. I take my—my nieces and my nephews; I take my kids. I don't bring anybody else's. A lot of people are real spooked; they think it's an evil—they do! A lot of people are really scared of the mounds.

0:31:30.1

AE: Really?

0:31:29.7

MCC: Uh-hmm.

0:31:32.1

AE: A lot of the locals?

0:31:32.4

MCC: Yeah, the locals—I—let's see, you know all your life you hear what is it—Indian burial grounds are evil. You don't go near them. It's like a voodoo thing or whatever is what they think.

0:31:45.3

AE: Hmm, that's a shame.

0:31:47.4

MCC: Uh-hmm, yeah. [*Laughs*] Really a shame. It's like when I took the kids, I had to tell them, "Now don't go tell your teacher you did this." The first thing my nephew did is go tell his teacher that he went on the Indian mound and—and we stayed there for hours and she—she was shocked and—and he didn't mention it again.

0:32:06.8

AE: Are—are the mounds that you go to, are they designated as historical sites? Are they like State—?

0:32:11.7

MCC: No, no. The one—that is something I've been worrying about because I've noticed some work going on down there. When I mentioned it to some people and they were going to find out what's going on—because all know it's a mound. I went on the Internet, and I found the government doesn't own it; it is a—it's supposed—it is a historical site, but it's not to where people can't molest it. I don't know why not. It's—it's in a book. It's on the Internet; it describes them, it describes what they are; they've—they've found bones—it's a burial and it's spiritual. So the only one that I know that they have saved is the one near St. Joseph State Park, and there's St. Vincent Island. You can't dig there; you can't do anything and that is a—there's lots of pottery. Like the storm will blow trees over, and there's pottery all in the roots. It's beautiful.

0:33:08.9

AE: Hmm, it sounds like you may have found yourself another cause.

0:33:11.0

MCC: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

0:33:12.2

AE: Get some of these places saved and put on the map, that would be great. It would be a shame to not know about it, and then have it be gone before other people knew about it.

0:33:22.2

MCC: Yeah.

0:33:23.0

AE: So tell me more about living here and growing up here and—in the area.

0:33:28.1

MCC: Well everybody knew everybody—really, they did. You didn't have to wear shoes in stores. [*Laughs*] We never wore shoes—never. It was—it was really nice. I don't remember ever much crime at all. Do you, Mama? You could get on your bicycle and ride all day long. We came home and we heard Mama yelling it was suppertime. We—and we grew up—

0:33:56.4

JC: Walk down that road and go down to that ditch.

0:33:57.3

MCC: The big ditch.

0:33:58.4

JC: Those crawdads.

0:34:00.1

MCC: Crawdads in the ditch.

0:34:02.5

JC: I lost every one of my Tupperware bowls. [*Laughs*]

0:34:04.0

MCC: [*Laughs*] She did.

0:34:05.4

JC: I bought those Tupperware bowls, and I never saw them. Nobody never knew where they came from. Darlene is the one—

0:34:11.6

MCC: I remember one. It was yellow, and we took her yellow Tupperware bowl and went back and couldn't find it, so we didn't say anything.

0:34:19.4

JC: Darlene told me, said, “Joanne, I saw those kids. Every one of them had one of them going to get crawdads.” And I never seen them.

0:34:28.1

AE: What did you do with the crawdads after you caught them? Just play with them or would you cook them up?

0:34:30.3

JC: They just messed—played with them.

0:34:32.0

MCC: We played with them. Rudolph cooked them, the oldest brother; he did cook them, which we thought was terribly cruel. We—it was our pets. *[Laughs]*

0:34:39.1

AE: Now tell me about Rudolph because Mike and Richard [a couple of sailors who keep their boats docked along the river] have told me some stories that he—you had some good ones to tell. I remember one about a bunch of cottonmouths [poisonous snakes] that they took somewhere to sell.

0:34:50.8

JC: Oh yes, they would go get those cottonmouths and sell them. They—and—and it like to made his daddy faint that time because Fred was really scared of snakes. And they were just intertwined.

0:35:03.9

AE: Sounds terrible to me.

0:35:04.8

JC: Just brutal. And they were selling them; they sold them. I guess for the—is it for the venom or what?

0:35:11.1

MCC: You can sell them for the venom.

0:35:11.3

JC: I don't know what they were selling them for, but they went and caught those snakes. They had a pile of them.

0:35:17.2

MCC: Rudolph doesn't have any fear when it comes to like snakes and gators. Like a lot of the guys that grew up here, they just pick up gators up or they'll jump on gators. They'll—like rattle snakes and moccasins, they just—I don't know where Rudolph got that from. Daddy wasn't into it, but he—our cousins are the Nash's, and they have Nash's Seafood further down on [Highway] 98. That is on—on my dad's side. But Rudolph, Stevie, and Wayne—Wayne is a police officer here, and Stevie helps his daddy run the seafood business, and those three boys did the snake thing and the gator thing and the stingray thing. They just—I guess, the danger, they liked it. I don't know. A lot of the boys here, that's what they'd do. It was horrible.

0:36:03.3

AE: What is the stingray thing? What would he do with stingrays?

0:36:06.1

MCC: They'd catch them and eat them.

0:36:09.0

AE: Oh, yeah?

0:36:09.2

MCC: Uh-hmm.

0:36:09.8

AE: How would they cook them up?

0:36:10.4

MCC: What they do—they would do is they would catch it—spear it. Like you gig it, like you do a flounder. And they say that you can't tell the difference between [the taste of] a stingray and a scallop. Yes, you take a little cookie cutter like thing and just cut little holes out and fry it like you do a scallop.

0:36:30.6

AE: Hmm.

0:36:31.2

MCC: Uh-hmm.

0:36:31.4

AE: So it sounds to me from what I've heard of—about Rudolph that—kind of liked living off the land kind of—

0:36:37.5

MCC: Yes.

0:36:39.3

AE: —kind of life that he enjoys.

0:36:41.3

MCC: That he and some friends of his used to go up the river and they'd stay weeks. And they made the rule, they'd go up the river, you couldn't bring food; you could bring water, you could bring your Pepsi or Coke, but you could not bring food. And they would find whatever they could find. And I do believe they did bring potatoes because they would make a catfish stew, and I want to put it on the menu because it's so original. He said he would catch the catfish; he said you could find your—your seasonings, your herbs, and stuff up the river. They put potatoes in it—yuck—and I hope they used clear water. But everything came from the river. And he told me he wrote it down, and he said he'd give it to me, and we're going to put it on [the menu].

0:37:21.1

AE: That's a great idea.

0:37:22.4

MCC: Uh-hmm, he said it was good. They lived off of it.

0:37:24.9

AE: Yeah?

0:37:26.4

MCC: He's still alive and doing well. [*Laughs*]

0:37:28.7

AE: [*Laughs*] Testament to the recipe.

0:37:32.6

MCC: Hmm?

0:37:32.9

AE: A testament to the recipe—[he's] a living testament.

0:37:36.4

MCC: Yeah.

0:37:37.7

AE: So how have you watched Apalach change, having grown up here and stayed and kind of changed your livelihood way to—around to suit?

0:37:46.8

MCC: Well let's see, when we were growing up, they weren't—there might have been two shacks down Indian Pass, that's it. The [St. George] Island, though, is just—there's a lot more going up, a lot more houses and a lot more businesses. Everything is outrageously priced now—when it wasn't. Ah, it's not as near laid back; I think people are a tad bit more uptight, which that happens anywhere. Compared to other places, when I say it's not quite so laid back, how much worse can it get? **[Laughs]** It's—like we grew up; we grew up and just—just ran and played all

day long. The kids can't do that now. That's everywhere, though. Basically it's—it's the building; there is twice as many places here. How do you think it's changed, Mama?

0:38:42.9

JC: Well, all of this was—this used to be Bodiford's [?] place. That's where we sold our seafood to him and then all down there was Nichol's Department Store and all that; see, it's all changed. That building over there, I think, underneath that was Nichol's Department Store. And then they moved out there on Highway 98, you know. And we had the dime stores.

0:39:12.2

MCC: I remember that; we'd go get ten-cent nail polish.

0:39:14.9

AE: At the Dime Store.

0:39:15.6

JC: Yeah, we had two Dime Stores down there.

0:39:17.8

MCC: Ten-cent earrings and our ears weren't pierced, and me and my sister pierced our own ears. [*Laughs*]

JC: Oh Lord, they were trouble. [*Laughs*]

0:39:27.6

AE: Have you always wanted to stay here?

0:39:28.8

MCC: When I was younger, I couldn't wait to get out. And I did leave, and I stayed away a few years; and I came back, and I've been here ever since.

0:39:36.1

AE: Where did you go when you left?

0:39:37.5

MCC: The same as Kenneth—out looking for a bigger better life. I wanted—

0:39:43.4

JC: Something exciting.

0:39:44.3

MCC: Yeah, a little more exciting, yeah. Yeah, it's a slow country town. I wanted to see the city and all that. I came back. Larry, I guess, was looking for—it's strange. We moved back at the same time. He made—he moved from Washington [State], and he just happened upon this little town. His sister lived in Georgia, and I think he was driving through, maybe, the scenic route or something visiting her—or a truck route or something and—and he decided he wanted to stay. And so I moved back from where I was at in Louisiana about the same time, and I think we met a year later.

0:40:20.8

AE: Wow.

0:40:21.0

MCC: We worked all around each other the whole time.

0:40:25.5

AE: That's great. So how about your girls? You think they're going to stick around here?

0:40:29.4

MCC: I don't know. I think they both live here. Tasha, I think, is probably more content here than Shannon. Shannon is always looking for, you know, an opportunity and stuff like that. She'll do the same thing we did: move away and she'll eventually come back. I know it. I think Tasha will do the same thing. Jasmine says she wants to move to the hills.

0:40:57.4

AE: Why?

0:40:57.5

MCC: Mountains, hills—she does. It—Washington, the Carolinas—she said she wants to move to the mountains because it's—I don't know why. She's ten. *[Laughs]*

0:41:06.5

AE: Yeah, well she seems to love being outdoors here.

0:41:11.3

MCC: I think she would be the one that she wouldn't stay very, very long away from home because she loves this water. She is—every day she cast nets, she fishes, she crabs; I mean she's always collecting algae and minnows and anything like that. And like they put it under her little microscope and they study it—gator blood. She just loves it all.

0:41:32.6

AE: She sounds like a little biologist.

0:41:31.9

MCC: She is; that's what she wants. That's—she says she is going to be a biologist of some sort. She is going to find a cure for the red tide, she says.

0:41:42.6

AE: Wow.

0:41:42.7

MCC: Yes, she watched the fish die and she—oh gosh, it was horrible. We had two—they swim like they're crazy, their gills fill full of the algae; they can't breathe, so their mouth is open and their gills are flapping and they just—they're splashing in the water. So she caught two that was dying and put it in freshwater, and she stayed there with them and did them back and forth, trying to get freshwater in their gills. And she was heartbroken when they died. She cried. We had to make this grass-floating thing and put the fish on it and wrap them up and send them out to sea, and that's when she said that she would cure the red tide. That's what she was going to do.

0:42:25.8

AE: I believe her.

0:42:27.3

MCC: I hope so.

0:42:28.6

AE: Yeah;, well is there anything about this area or your growing up or what's on the horizon that you'd like to share—thoughts about Apalach? [*Laughs*]

0:42:44.3

MCC: I don't know.

0:42:49.4

JC: Oh, I know one thing. We used to—when—when I first got married, we'd go down to Nine Mile and—it's gone now; the storm has took it. But it was an oyster bar out there. We had the most fun; we'd go out there and we'd bring our drinks with us—Pepsi or Coke—and go out there and pick up those oysters and take them to the hill. And sometimes we'd roast them down there, and eat them right there.

0:43:14.2

AE: On the beach?

0:43:15.2

JC: Yeah, but—and sometimes, you know, when the tide would be in, we'd wade, and we'd just pick them up. That was the most fun I have ever had. And just drag them oysters to the hill and just open them up and eat them. You just don't know. But that is living, now!

0:43:35.2

AE: And you can't do that no more, huh?

0:43:37.6

JC: And now—and now see, that bar is completely gone. I mean you can't walk out there anymore. The storm has taken it to where there's just a big drop-off. The last time I went down there—and it's been quite a few years since I've been down there—but it was a drop-off then because the storm just took it. And we'd go down to the lagoon, too, and do the same thing. I think you can still pick up oysters down there. Bring your hot sauce and saltines, and it's so good.

0:44:09.6

AE: What lagoon are you talking about?

0:44:10.6

JC: Indian Pass.

0:44:12.2

AE: Oh, okay, yeah.

0:44:14.1

MCC: There's—they had weird names for everything like the Lagoon, Laguna Beach, The Stump Hole—the—Stump Hole out there.

0:44:21.6

JC: But I miss that.

0:44:29.4

MCC: Another thing that we used to do that you can't do now is go blackberry picking. Ah, that was fun. Mama took—Mama and her mama and every one of us had a cut-out milk jug with a handle, and there was five kids, and we'd go blackberry pick, and we'd pour it in a five-gallon bucket. How many buckets would you end up with?

0:44:49.0

JC: I don't know. I don't know, but I know that Mama was real afraid of snakes that time, and my sister-in-law was with us [*Laughs*] and they hollered, “Snake!” and Mama dropped every one of her berries. [*Laughs*]

0:45:02.2

AE: [*Laughs*]

0:45:02.5

JC: They were just grabbing those berries. I don't—I don't think y'all went with us that time.

0:45:07.9

MCC: I remember going to the airport. I took Jasmine there as a little—

0:45:13.5

AE: Look at this [a fancy houseboat is going down the river].

0:45:13.2

JC: What is that?

0:45:14.1

MCC: That's a nice houseboat.

0:45:16.7

AE: It looks more like a house than a boat than I've ever seen.

0:45:18.2

JC: That is pretty, isn't it?

0:45:20.2

MCC: They're probably taking it up the river.

0:45:21.6

AE: It's crazy looking.

0:45:24.1

JC: Oh, that is pretty.

0:45:24.6

MCC: Junior Hunn, another local guy from this area, builds them.

0:45:30.1

AE: Huh.

0:45:30.3

JC: I wonder who that is.

0:45:34.0

MCC: It didn't look like—it looks like he's from the paper.

0:45:38.3

AE: I don't know. That is something else, though.

0:45:39.5

JC: Who is that that's pushing that boat?

0:45:42.4

AE: Just a little boat, little fishing boat.

0:45:44.7

MCC: Wow, got that—that hot water heater on it.

0:45:47.4

AE: Uh-huh.

0:45:48.2

MCC: Dang, a nice one.

0:45:49.6

AE: Yeah.

0:45:50.0

JC: That is nice.

0:45:50.2

AE: That is something else.

0:45:51.9

JC: I wouldn't mind living on something like that.

0:45:53.5

AE: Wow, I've never seen anything like that.

0:45:57.3

MCC: Dang—new windows; look at that, fancy windows.

0:45:59.5

AE: Uh-hmm. So anyway, blackberries.

0:46:03.0

MCC: Okay. I took Jasmine and we got one small blackberry patch where we live at the river, and every year we got there and just pick a few blackberries. You can't get enough to even make—you could make like a cobbler; you wouldn't get very much blackberries in it.

0:46:17.2

JC: Well now there used to be a lot of them at the airport.

0:46:18.8

MCC: You can't go in the airport no more, though.

0:46:22.0

JC: We did.

0:46:23.7

AE: *[Laughs]*

0:46:23.1

MCC: Hint—that was before those “No Trespassing” signs.

0:46:27.9

JC: You can go past them. *[Laughs]* *[Side Conversation: You ready?]*

0:46:33.0

Child: [*Side Conversation: Yeah. Mommy is trying to remember how to do the credit card thing, and she can't remember how to do it.*]

0:46:37.6

MCC: Okay, hang on.

0:46:38.8

AE: No problem.

0:46:42.3

JC: I told her about that time that I got my garden plowed up [*Laughs*], and I looked out there and it was coming a big rain and—and y'all—I—every one of you was in that mud.

0:46:53.2

MCC: That was fun. I remember it.

0:46:55.8

JC: It was deep. You remember how deep it was? It was deep. And I couldn't see anything but your nose. Every one of you. I know the neighbors thought we were awful. **[Laughs]**

0:47:04.8

AE: And your mom said she raised a lot of food out of that garden.

0:47:08.2

MCC: Uh-hmm. Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. And it was always so good. Oh, Lord.

0:47:13.3

JC: Those cucumbers **[Laughs]**—I'd give—well my Sunday—she was my Sunday school teacher; I'd give her cucumbers every—pickles every year; I'd make those pickles. One year she was keeping y'all. She—I didn't ask her to, but she was sitting in the second pew there with y'all while I was singing in the choir. Claims—she claims she was taking care of y'all, and she kind of pinched Kenneth.

0:47:38.9

MCC: I think Kenneth pinched her first. *[Laughs]*

0:47:39.9

JC: *[Laughs]* Uh-uh, she pinched him first. You know, he was talking or something and she—he pinched her back. She got on to this [and said], “I’ll tell you what, you’ve got to get a hold of him.” She said, “You’ve got to start right now and just kept on and on and on.” I got so mad with her I didn’t give her another pickle.

0:47:57.7

AE: *[Laughs]* Ah, no more pickles for her.

0:47:59.8

JC: No pickles. She came—she came to the house and brought me some jars and everything. And I—she looked around at the—and I didn’t say nothing. I didn’t give her another pickle.

0:48:08.9

AE: *[Laughs]*

0:48:08.0

JC: And I moved y'all to the other side of the church. [*Laughs*]

0:48:12.6

MCC: We didn't stay there long; we were bad kids. I'm telling you—

0:48:15.5

JC: Yeah, y'all—y'all were but y'all got pinched if you cut up in church.

0:48:20.8

AE: [*Laughs*]

0:48:21.8

MCC: Yeah.

0:48:22.6

AE: Well, growing up in the industry and your family having an oyster house and everything and staying here in Apalach, what do you think the future of—of folks who work on the bay is?

0:48:32.6

MCC: I don't think there's much future for them at all, really. I'm—they're doing everything in their power to close the bay; I really honest-to-God think that. It started with—when we were growing up, as far as I know, the bay was not closed for the red tide. Was it, Mama?

0:48:50.4

JC: Later on it was.

0:48:54.4

MCC: Later on.

0:48:55.8

JC: Yeah. Uh-huh, yeah. While we were running the oyster house, it was closed for the red tide.

0:48:58.2

MCC: But in the beginning it wasn't and then they started—everybody knows you don't make much shucking, and everybody knows if somebody falls in the oyster house, they've never sued.

But they—they were doing these workman's comp things, and they shut them down and charged them a lot of money. And then it was like they were forced to sell and then it—they're closing the bay for reasons that—that I've never heard of and—and staying closed longer than—than it should be—and are people that are wanting the land for houses—they want the land for condos and—and stuff like that. I don't think there's any future in it. [**Background: Bye y'all. Y'all have a good night.**] That was how most everybody made their living was shrimping, oystering, or fishing here—honestly.

0:49:52.8

AE: And I just learned today that they're closing that boatyard down at the end of the street [Deep Water Marina and Boat Yard].

0:49:56.3

MCC: There—which one, the—?

0:49:58.0

AE: The Deep Water?

0:49:59.6

MCC: Yeah, I think a condo is supposed to go out there. That's what I heard; I'm not sure.

0:50:02.2

JC: A what, now?

0:50:03.1

MCC: Condo at Deepwater.

0:50:06.0

JC: Oh.

0:50:08.6

MCC: It's—it's a hard living. Now you really can't blame people because there's a lot of them that don't want to sell. You really can't blame them, I don't guess, because they're—they've giving millions for it, but we're supposed to be able to hold onto this property as long as we can. There's only a few here that I—I think that's—they're getting tired of it, they're—they're worn out and too many really crazy rules and regulations now.

0:50:37.5

AE: So what would you want people who, you know, read this to know about Apalachicola and this area and the way of life that's disappearing?

0:50:47.4

MCC: It is, it is. [Short pause] I—I just—I don't know. I just don't understand how they can see that a whole bunch of condos is—is going to do this place any kind of good. I mean, look at the High Cotton [condominiums] down there; they haven't rented any of them. And they will eventually, but then after you, there is not going to be anything here for the workers. There is really not; as far as the girls that I went to school with, there might be one or two of them here other than myself and that's it. Joey is the same way. And I don't know. They're just—they're going to ruin it.

0:51:27.6

JC: Oh, I'm freezing.

0:51:27.8

MCC: It's going to be another little tourist town with condos and shopping malls and that's it.

0:51:32.9

AE: Hmm.

0:51:33.1

MCC: It's sad.

0:51:37.1

JC: Are you all through with me?

0:51:36.5

AE: You're free to go. Thank you ma'am.

0:51:39.7

MCC: Ask Joey to shuck our oysters, Mama.

0:51:42.6

JC: What Melanie?

0:51:42.6

MCC: Ask Joey to shuck our oysters.

0:51:44.3

JC: Okay.

0:51:47.1

MCC: Please.

0:51:47.6

JC: Do you like raw oysters?

0:51:49.5

AE: Yes, ma'am. Yeah. All right well unless you have—

0:51:55.9

MCC: Did she run into the wall? [*Laughs*]

0:51:57.3

AE: Almost. *[Laughs]*

0:52:00.1

MCC: She's a trip.

0:52:01.1

AE: It jumped out at her. *[Laughs]*

0:52:04.0

MCC: Geez. *[Laughs]*

0:52:04.4

AE: All right. Well we can wind this up so we can enjoy some oysters and some social time but—unless you have something else you want to add at the end. Any final thoughts?

0:52:12.7

MCC: I think that's it.

0:52:14.1

AE: Okay, all right. Well thank you, Melanie.

0:52:15.9

MCC: You're welcome. Come on.

0:52:18.0

[End Melanie Cooper Covell]