

Interview Subject: Kim Boone
Interviewer: Logan Collins and Lilah Henderson
Project: Dock Stories
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Place of Interview: Boone's Seafood, Darian Georgia

[00:00](#)

LH: This is an interview with Kim Boone on April 13, 2024. This interview will be conducted in Darian Georgia about the dock Boone's Dock.

KB: Boone's Sea Food

LH: Boones Sea Food, sorry

LC: and Brannen's Seafood

KB: Well your talkin bout Brannen's Seafood, that was Meridians Shrimp Company from a long time ago. They...

LC: No keep going.

KB: They have been gone since... They sold their place to the state in '91, something like that '91-'92, but they had been there for years.

LC: And your family owned that?

KB: My mom and dad and it belong to my grandfather before that.

LC: Do you have any memories with your grandfather on the dock?

KB: I remember going out there with him on the weekends. We would go out to the dock to feed the cats. They had cats everywhere and he would blow his horn before he got there and they would come out from everywhere.

LC: Thats cute, So can you tell us about your connection with this dock, Boone's Dock?

KB: My husband's family, his grandfather had this dock and since they have passed away his dad and his dad's siblings all had it. It's still a family dock.

LC: You talked about the other dock having a different name. Did this dock ever have a different name?

KB: No, it's always been Boones' seafood.

LC: How long have you been connected to this dock?

KB: For probably 42 years. That's how long we have been married, 42 years.

LC: Did you ever come to the dock before you were married?

KB: No, we stayed at our dock, which was in the county.

LC: Were there any differences between that dock and this dock?

KB: Not really, both basically the same. This dock was considered new at the time, whereas that dock was older and more rustic.

LC: What's your role here at this dock?

KB: I don't work for the dock. My husband shrimpfishes out of here.

LC: We've seen you milling about today though, what's some of the stuff you have done today?

KB: I had to go deliver shrimp, go pay the crew, that type thing.

LC: Is that normal work?

KB: Very week. Yep, every time they come in, yep. Deliver shrimp, get groceries, restock the boat, all that stuff. It's work [Laughs].

[3:30](#)

LH: Can you tell me more about the people who work here?

KB: Holly works here, then they have a crew that helps unload the boat, they just kinda hire different people and Mat works here weekly, but other than that they just hire people on the unloading days to come help pack.

LC: Do they have a hard time finding people?

KB: They do, Its hard to find people anymore. Its just random days of work, you don't know. Seasonal on top of that. You don't know when they are coming in, so you kinda have'n to call them last minute and its hard to find them. Usually, we end up with less than we need.

LC: What has this dock been through?

KB: Hurricanes, all kinds of things. It was flooded during the last hurricane. It came all up in the office, and water was just flowing through from the outside through and all around it. The whole going [knocks over recorder]. Oh I'm Sorry.

LC: No it's okay.

KB: The water was coming where you come down the hill. There was water starting to go up that way.

LC: And was that Matthew?

KB: It actually flooded I think during both of them. You know the past two that we had. Matthew was one, and I can't remember the other one's name.

LC: What about at your family's dock? Was there anything like that that happened?

KB: No, we hardly ever had hurricanes then you know. Our worst have been these past few years. We have had them skirt by but it never did anything. Actually the year they moved, so like I said it was probably '91 or '92, we had some sort of huge tides that came up and almost flooded it, but then one of these hurricanes actually flooded the house that we lived in beside the shrimp dock. The shrimp dock [has?] been torn down cause the state bought it. They bring logs in there and the house actually flooded then. Which is always a big fear of theirs living where it is right just surrounded by water, but never happened while they were there.

LC: I know you talked about your grandfather and your parents, but was there anyone that worked at the dock your family owned, or who was around that dock?

KB: The dock in Meridian? We lived there, so my brother and sister and then there were probably had twelve different boats that fished out of there. Families and stuff from the area, and every now and then you'd have boats that weren't from here that would come in and load with them and stuff.

[6:15](#)

LH: Can you tell us about some stories about the dock

KB: O'lordy stories about the dock, I don't know. There are so many, but it's hard to remember. Back then there were so many boats, there were way more boats then there are now. They caught a lot of shrimp, they would bring'em in to unload usually out there it was Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. And here you see it was one boat unloaded a little bit of shrimp and Poof that's done, well then all the boats would come in and unload on those days and you would have people there heading because they wouldn't head the shrimp, a lot of them didn't head the shrimp on the boats, so you'd have probably 25 different headers there to head the shrimp and they would work all day and not get done till 2 or 3 in the morning by the time buys you need, back then you had a bunch of buyers pulling up in the big semis and everything. So, it was way more going on then what there is now, as far as working three days a week at least sometime more, but working all day and then into the next.

LC: Do you have any funny stories from this dock or your family's dock?

KB: Well one thing we used to have pet raccoons that we raised, and so the raccoons would also come over and steal the shrimp out of the boxes and stuff. And you had, like the heading tables were long tables with the trough of water that ran your shrimp so as they headed them they would through the shrimp in the trough, and one time the raccoons got up there and were scarin'em [coming up and?] grabbing them on their heads and stuff you know. There was always something going on, it's just hard to think of the stories right off the hand. We used to, my brother and sister and I, we used to go over there on the off days and with the basket they would use to pick the shrimp up, like you saw out here, back then they used basket baskets that were iron. If tide was low we would jump in the water and get our daddy to drop it in the water and pick us up in the basket. I can't think of anything right of hand, I'll think of it when I am done.

LC: Do you have any good memories from this dock?

KB: From this dock? Oh yeah I mean lots of good times, I mean there are times when this dock gets busy even nowadays with boats that are coming from other places. Most of my memories are from Mriydian, being young, and stuff that went on.

LC: What was that like going up on a dock?

KB: Oh it was fun. Cause we were right there by Sapalo you know all the people going to Sapalo and stuff would be stopping by, it was just fun. We stayed in the river all the time.

LC: Do you have stories your grandfather would tell you about the dock when he first got it?

KB: Not really 'cause I was so young when he had the dock, I don't remember. I like I said I only remember going out and feed'n the cats.

LC: Cats and raccoons [Laughs]

KB: Yeah, had lots of animals.

LC: What are some of the animals that lived around the dock?

KB: We had dogs, but they were more like watchdogs for there. Everybody was scared of the shepherds, [unknown] Shepherds.

[9:57](#)

LH: What changes have you seen in the industry so far?

KB: Drastic changes. Mainly we were paid more years ago then we are now for the shrimp. Your buyers actually wanted the shrimp, you had people scrapping to get the shrimp when you unload and now you practically have to beg 'em it takes 'em. Lots of differences as far as the expense and that part of it. It is just harder now I think than it was 20-30 years ago.

LH: Have you noticed any changes in the water or weather a little bit?

KB: Not really, weather, I mean there's some type of weather always to affect ya, but you have had that for forever.

LC: I wanted to go back to the industry question. You said that it was just harder, is that just in the financial sense or in a different way?

KB: Mostly the financial part of it so much more difficult, but everything changes except shrimp prices. Shrimp price seems so low, as far as, you know you go to the grocery store, groceries are high blah blah blah, shrimp are high too in the grocery store, but the fisherman doesn't get it. So, it's just hard for them to make it worthwhile, to pay all these expenses and see what you have left. It's hard.

LC: What hard time has this dock faced?

KB: There's times when it is just not feasible to go fishing, so if nobody is fishing the dock is not making any money. They according to packing your shrimp, selling you fuel, selling you ice, so if its feasible for the boats to go then they can't make and just sit there. It cost the dock then because their expenses of power and everything are still there and that's happened. Whether it be there where just weren't any shrimp at the time. Some years you just don't have that many shrimp, the cold may have killed them if you had a really cold winter or something like that. We have been lucky the past few years to be able to fish. They always say "Oh well y'all are catching good shrimp", but who wants to work harder and catch more shrimp for the same money? It just depends on the year. Every year that comes up you hope "Oh boy this is going to be a good year, this is going to be good shrimp," hard to say. The old fisherman a lot of times, this being the first shrimp out this year and the shrimp we are counting pretty small barely making a 26-30 so something or counting 31, so a lot of the old fishermen would say "Oh if the shrimp are little your first trip like that it means there are a lot of them." I hope that is true this year because they were small. So you never know.

[13:00](#)

LC: You talked about the floods from the hurricanes, how did that affect the dock?

KB: Not too bad, I mean a lot of their stuff got wet, they had to redo the office, things like that. Some paperwork and all that got wet. Now they've learned if ones comin, put stuff up higher, but other than that it didn't really hurt anything as far as the machinery and all the stuff. It just kind of just washed through and washed out.

LH: Then you talked about how y'all had good and bad years, could you describe what that good year was, how many did y'all catch?

KB: Pound wise I can't [unknown] off the top of my head, but good years is when you catch good and the price is good. But when you have bad years if you're just not catching enough to

cover your expenses and you have to sit in waitin' to try it the next time, go out a month later and see if it's any better or something like that. Those are bad years. You know like (audio distorted) it's not looking good with shrimp prices being low this year. They were low last year, but you know few years back we were gettin' paid decent, but now all of a sudden they are blaming it on imports and all this stuff where I guess they taken a lot of the tariffs off of them.

LC: Were there any hard times that hit your family's dock?

KB: Back then we were young, so if it did we really did not know about it, but not like now. It was more consistent with having people fishing and stuff. It just didn't seem like it is now, you know back then groceries were cheaper, fuel was cheap, ice was cheap, we had plenty of help, all of that's totally different. Just finding the people to work, that's the hard thing to do, even on the boats finding crew that's not easy anymore and used to, you had people "call me call me" just ready to go.

LC: Did COVID affect this dock at all?

KB: Covid did affect everything. Nobody did anything for a while, and then you had crew who were kind of leery of going. Know when you stay on a boat you're in close quarters all the time, it's not like they are huge inside, and then they were wearing masks and spraying lysol and all that good stuff, but it all worked out.

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LH: When thinking about the future for commercial fishing in Georgia, what do you think dock needs today to be successful?

KB: um I don't know. What the docks need to be successful. Well, you need a lot of boats, good shrimp prices, workers when you need 'em, I don't know what else I would say. You need your product and you need a decent price for it and consistency of working.

LC: Do you think looking ahead for future storms or hurricanes, is there anything that can be done to help docks survive more or prepare better?

KB: For hurricanes, no, I mean they do all they can do. The boats all tie up and use extra ropes. You pick up what you can and tie down what you can, and you hope for the best and I just don't see where you could change anything.

LC: In the next five to ten years what investments could be made on this dock to improve it and make it more successful?

KB: Well it's going to need a new building, the rust is kind of all. It's been here for, like I said I know 42 years, but I know it was here before then. I mean its getting really rusty, so I know it will need a new building. You're constantly maintaining equipment, they add these ice makers. We use to get our ice from the ice plant. They would bring these big 300 pound bars and unload 'em and stock 'em. Then everybody started going to ice machines, and we were still on the old way cause we had a ice plant real close by. All of a sudden the ice plant guy retired and quit with the ice business cause less people were buying it. So, you just instantly had to go buy ice machines, fix the big thing that holds the ice and all that. They waited till that had to do it, but they did it. Other than that I think the shrimp dock could put in more coolers and freezers, start selling more from the dock straight to consumers is where I see it having to go with the way the

buyers are. And this place is in a prime spot to do it, it's just one thing that probably should be done.

LC: I am interested, do you know any more changes that have happened to this dock since it opened early 'til now. You're talking about it getting more rusty, adding the ice coolers, but do you know how this dock has changed over the years?

KB: Well this room we're used to be the office, so they upgraded a little bit. Trying to think of things. Honestly, it's basically the same setup, other than ice machines, is what it's always been. Other than they use to load stuff by hand, now we have a forklift, you know that type thing. Basically unloads the exact same as it did when I first came here.

LH: Do you have any recommendations for the future of the commercial fishing industry?

KB: Recommendations, I am sure there is a lot that could be said and done, but main thing is to support local. No imports.

LC: Do you have any thoughts on how to get more people to support local?

KB: I mean that's come a long ways the past few of years, more people are into buying straight from a boat. Kind of like farmers with supplying directly to the people how they do. A lot of people want that, it's just hard, they go to the markets. A lot of people come down here and they don't realize that they can. They think "Oh there just unloading" or something. They don't realize they can come buy them straight from here. So that will probably take more advertising or something.

[20:52](#)

LH: If you had the check right now what would you spend it on, how would you utilize that money for the dock?

KB: For the dock, see I am more on the boat end than the dock end, but right now I would buy freezers and a way of packaging the shrimp to go directly to the consumer. You know straight from here, like doing it in 5-pound blocks or 5-pound bags or however, and having the freezer and cooler to do it. 'Cause right now they don't have that, they have the ice cooler. We don't store the shrimp here in any way, it goes directly out. I think that would be something that would work.

LC: Do you have anything else, any stories, whether it's this dock or your family's dock, or anything else we just need to know about the docks in the industry that you have talked about that you would like to share?

KB: I really just cannot think of anything right off hand story-wise.

LH: Any crazy mistakes that some of the workers might have made? Something kind of jokey y'all clown about?

KB: Related to the dock, oh gosh, not really. It's been so long like I said they left in '91. I don't.

LC: Well thank you so much for your time today.

KB: Sorry I couldn't think of more stories, it's been a long time.

LH and LC: No it's fine!

Ends interview

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