

Chapter 1 - 1:00

Introduction

John Erling: In 1937, the son of Henry and Cornelius “Alabama” Marshall, Paul Marshall and his wife Lilah moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma and started a full-fledged pie making business. And on November 9th, 2009, Lilah was 93 years old as she told her story of meeting her husband Paul and how the two of them through hard work laid the foundation for the success of BAMA Pie. As she says, “We had no idea we were building a major company, we just did what we had to do.” Listen now to this very sweet lady Lilah Marshall as she talks about the humble beginnings of BAMA Pie and her hard work ethic on **VoicesofOklahoma.com**.

Chapter 2 - 3:24

The Early Days

John Erling: Today’s date is November 9th, 2009 and I am here with Lilah Marshall. Lilah if you will state your name and your date of birth please.

Lilah Marshall: Lilah V. Marshall. March 22, 1916.

JE: You are how old as of this date?

LM: 93.

JE: Tell us where you were born.

LM: Capitol Hill in Oklahoma City. Capitol Hill was across the river from Oklahoma City.

JE: Do you remember the first house that you lived in?

LM: I remember it was on a hill because my sister and I would run up and down that hill. I remember that, but that’s all I remember.

JE: What was your Mother’s name?

LM: Anna Burton.

JE: Where did she come from to Oklahoma?

LM: She was born in Missouri.

JE: Your father's name?

LM: David C. Drake.

JE: Where did he come from?

LM: Tennessee. He was from Tennessee.

JE: Describe your mother. What was she like?

LM: Oh she was the sweetest little lady. She was really something else. She was a wonderful mother.

JE: She was a homemaker?

LM: Yeah. She did do work in an overall factory part of the time of her life while she was married and when her children were little. She still worked over there at the overall factory there in Oklahoma City in Capitol Hill.

JE: Did she make pies?

LM: No. We weren't in the pie part of it then.

JE: And then your father, what did he do?

LM: My dad was in real estate in Capitol Hill, Oklahoma City.

JE: What did he do? Did he buy and sell?

LM: Yes, he was a real estate salesman. And he built some houses and bought and sold some houses.

JE: And then you had brothers and sisters?

LM: I had a twin sister and then an older sister and I had two brothers, an older brother and then my younger brother.

JE: The first school you attended?

LM: My first was Lee School in Capitol Hill, Oklahoma City.

JE: Do you remember classmates or people that you went to school with there?

LM: Our neighbors across the street that I grew up with, we went to school together. My girlfriends were our across the street neighbors.

JE: And did you stay in touch with them for a long time?

LM: Oh yes. I still stay in touch with them.

JE: Even to this day?

LM: Yes, they are still alive too. (Laughter)

JE: So they would be your age, 93?

LM: Yes.

JE: How many of them, out of your class?

LM: There are two of them that are close to my age. They are still alive, and they are sisters

that lived across the street from us, that we grew up with.

JE: And you are still in touch with them?

LM: Yes.

JE: That's amazing isn't it? So then after elementary school, what school did you go to?

LM: I went to regular school. I never went to the University or anything. I graduated from Capitol Hill High School.

JE: Do you remember as a teenager what you did for entertainment or for fun? Did you go to movies?

LM: Yes, I had my twin sister, we used to play jacks all of the time. We worked and played well together. We grew up being really good friends, so we were close friends.

JE: Let's name your brothers and sisters.

LM: I have a brother named Ross and a brother named Randall and a sister named Velma that was my older sister, and then my twin Lela.

JE: Her name was Lela?

LM: Yes. Lela Bernice and I was Lilah Belle.

JE: Were those names taken from some-

LM: My name was supposed to have been a schoolteacher's name that my mother had that I was named after.

JE: Okay.

Chapter 3 - 2:58

The Paul Marshall Family

John Erling: Let's talk about Paul Marshall and Paul's mother and dad.

Lilah Marshall: Yes.

JE: What was Paul's mother's name?

LM: Cornelia Alabama.

JE: But you called her "Big Mother?"

LM: Big Mother and Big Dad. That was just the nickname that they started calling her. You know, she didn't want to be called grandmother, so she was Big Mother.

JE: What was Paul's father's name?

LM: Paul's father's name was Henry Clay Marshall.

JE: And did he go by Henry or go by Hank or-?

LM: We just called him Big Dad, but Henry is what he went by. Henry is what everybody called him.

- JE: Tell us about Cornelia, what type of person was she?
- LM: Well, she was really a little ball of fire. She was something else. She was as cute as she could be and smart. She did work outside the home and she made pies for Woolworths lunch counter.
- JE: Tell me about Henry, what kind of person was he?
- LM: Oh he was just a typical Mississippian. He was just a slow-moving guy, but he was really a nice person. He was a fun guy.
- JE: Cornelia Alabama, where was she from?
- LM: She was from Mississippi.
- JE: And Big Dad was from?
- LM: Big Dad was from Tennessee but I can't remember where.
- JE: And then how many children did they have?
- LM: Well they had nine. Two of them passed away early when they were first born, but seven lived though.
- JE: Henry was quite a guy wasn't he?
- LM: Oh yes. He was really something. He was just a typical salesman. He and his brother used to travel around the country selling feather beds.
- JE: Didn't he run for governor of Texas one time?
- LM: One time. I don't remember anything about that though. That was just part of the history I got.
- JE: That was in 1916 that he ran and he didn't win, but he did run for governor of Texas.
- LM: Yes, he did. He was always involved in politics. He loved politics.
- JE: One time he had a farm that was mostly sand?
- LM: Yes, they raised sweet potatoes on it.
- JE: Sweet potatoes. And wasn't that kind of new to some people, sweet potatoes?
- LM: Yes. They did well at it and they would take them to market. They would grow enough sleep potatoes that they would go into market with them and Big Mother usually did that. She was a salesman too.
- JE: But because the soil was mostly sand and all, it wasn't all that profitable for them?
- LM: No, no.
- JE: And so they then moved to the Dallas area?
- LM: Yes and Big Mother went to work at Woolworths.
- JE: We are talking about Paul's parents.
- LM: Yes.
- JE: Even at some time they were picking cotton too weren't they?
- LM: Yeah.
- JE: I mean all of these people were very, very hard-working people?

LM: Oh yes. Yes they were.

JE: And picking cotton had to be one of the hardest jobs?

LM: That's right, dragging those big old cotton sacks and pulling them through the row and picking cotton all day. That's what Big Mother did. She wasn't very big, she was a little gal, but she was fast. (Laughter)

Chapter 4 - 3:36

Cornelia - Bama - Woolworths

John Erling: But then they lived in Dallas didn't they?

Lilah Marshall: Yes, that's where the BAMA shop was, in Dallas. They were in Waco, Texas a long time.

JE: This is when Cornelia went to work for Woolworths?

LM: Yes, that's right.

JE: It was at Woolworths then that she worked at the lunch counter?

LM: Yes, she made the pies.

JE: Did you learn your pie making from her?

LM: Yes, I learned from her and from working with my sister-in-law. I worked in the BAMA shop in Oklahoma City and that's where I learned for formulas and stuff was from them, was from my sister-in-law.

JE: But the story of BAMA pie really starts right here. She went to work for Woolworths and these pies that she made were really very popular?

LM: Yes, they sold really well. They were really good. She was a good cook.

JE: And I understand that people stood in line?

LM: Yes, they would line up to turn in their orders and they would make them (the pies) at the counter there and they would come back and get them.

JE: Then I think they had to enlarge the lunch counter?

LM: Yes, it grew.

JE: They had like 30 seats in then they decided to expand it to 75 seats.

LM: It grew because of the pies.

JE: Because of the pies that "Blanche" made as Big Daddy called her, right?

LM: That's right.

JE: So, she made hundreds of pies a day didn't she?

LM: She'd make 50 or 60 which was a lot because she made them all by hand and they would bake them all here at the counter. That's the way it got started.

JE: So then one day her husband, Big Daddy or Henry, he says-

LM: He said, "You make me some of those pies and I will see if I can't sell them on the job sites." And that's the way he did it. He had a basket with pies in it and when it was lunch time he would go around and sell pies for dessert just out of his basket.

JE: Then he gave the pie company a name?

LM: BAMA.

JE: Spinning off of Cornelia's middle name?

LM: Yes, her middle name was Alabama.

JE: So then Henry decided to go into this business?

LM: Yes.

JE: He went to the supplier to buy the supplies and he only had-

LM: He paid a dollar and a half down and they gave him credit for the other supplies until he got his money and then he went back and paid them.

JE: I think \$25 was the amount of the supplies?

LM: Yes, something like that, yes. And then he took them (the supplies) back to his kitchen and then Big Mother made the pies.

JE: So this is where Henry hadn't really started the business yet, but he said he would put this money down...

LM: Yes, he was a salesman. He really was.

JE: And the supplier looked at him and thought well, this looks like a very trustworthy man.

LM: Yes, you know they could depend on what he told them.

JE: Right, so then he had this vision for the company, and it wasn't just in Dallas. He thought he could grow this company throughout Texas?

LM: Yes, they started making the pies for school lunches and stuff, and that's when it started growing, because she really could make good pies, she really did.

JE: Okay. So then the money they were taking in, they just kept it in their house didn't they?

LM: Oh yes. They didn't get that much money where they ever needed to hide it. (Laughter)

JE: They soon opened a checking account I think at the First National Bank in Dallas.

LM: Yes, an account where they could deposit the money and not carry it with them. They opened the account with \$50.

JE: And then they bought a delivery truck?

LM: Yes, a Model A Ford. (Laughter)

JE: A Model A, you remember that don't you?

Chapter 5 - 5:18**Paul Meets Lilah**

John Erling: And Paul, your future husband, was very young during this time?

Lilah Marshall: Oh yes. He was just barely able to drive. He had just learned to drive.

JE: And he was very involved, he wanted to work in the business didn't he?

LM: Oh yes. Well, he saw his mother and dad going out one morning and she was driving for him because Big Dad never learned to drive. And so she would drive him around the route and Paul was going to school and he said, "I saw my mother driving my dad around because my dad never learned to drive and here I am just goofing off at school and my mother is out there trying to make a living." So he quit school and went to work.

JE: And then did Paul move to Oklahoma City?

LM: Yes, when Grace went to Oklahoma City, his sister, they had a pretty good business up there. He came up there and built some routes for them and that's how he got into the Oklahoma City market.

JE: That would have been his sister Grace and her husband Melvin.

LM: Grace is the one I worked for in her shop.

JE: So did she hire you?

LM: Yes. We lived over here and the shop was over here (motioning). I just had to go around the corner to go to work.

JE: Paul then became a route man didn't he?

LM: He finally came up one year. I don't remember why he decided to come to Oklahoma City, and so he came up here and worked up routes for them. That's what he did when he first came up there.

JE: So then you are working there when Paul came up there?

LM: Yes. I was working for Grace in the pie shop. Yes, I worked for his sister.

JE: Didn't you see his picture on the shelf?

LM: One of the jobs I had was a certain Saturday, every third Saturday or something like that you had to clean her house. And so, I would see his picture then. His picture was in her house on the table. I hadn't met Paul yet. I didn't know him then, but I saw his picture.

JE: What did you think when you saw it?

LM: Well I thought he was sure cute. (Laughter) He was too. He was a cutie.

JE: Did you think that she would ever meet him?

LM: You know I never thought much about it. I thought that was just clear out of sight. But let's see, I was going roller skating or something, I don't know how we really did meet. Except that he worked there and we met that way you know. On his 21st birthday, my brother-in-law told Paul, "Well, I guess you're old enough now to ask that girl for a date."

He was talking about me in front of all of the other girls that worked in the shop. It embarrassed me to death.

JE: I'm sure.

LM: But anyway, that's how we got started going together was roller-skating. We went roller-skating.

JE: Well you had your eyes on each other then?

LM: Yes.

JE: And you were hoping? It must have really embarrassed Paul.

LM: Well, you know I didn't feel like I ever really had a chance. I thought you know, he will never see me. But he did.

JE: Yes, he did. And so he asked you for a date in 1935?

LM: Yes.

JE: He was 21?

LM: He had just turned 21.

JE: And you were how old?

LM: I was 19.

JE: And then, lo and behold, was it just two or three months later?

LM: Yes, we didn't go together long till we got married.

JE: And you got married when?

LM: On December 23rd of 1934.

JE: That was a wonderful Christmas wasn't it?

LM: Yes, because it was a weekend and I didn't have to work that weekend. So we got married on a Friday and had the weekend for a honeymoon. That was as long as it was.

JE: So you never did take a honeymoon trip?

LM: No honeymoon, but we had a lot of good trips though. We had a lot of good trips.

JE: That shows how you are hard-working young people at 19 and 21 years old.

LM: Yes. I wouldn't have had anything. I had to work to even get any different clothes or anything when I got out of high school. My dad had my twin sister and then he was in the real estate business and it wasn't very good. So it was hard for us to get along (make a living). It really was. But I was able to save money. I started my first savings account. When I first started working, I started saving.

JE: Do you remember how much you were paid for the job?

LM: It seemed like it was five dollars a week or something like that. It wasn't very much, but it seemed like a lot to me.

JE: Sure.

LM: It was a lot to me.

JE: Did you know what you were saving money for, or was it just to save?

- LM: No, because I just wanted to save money. I just wanted a savings account.
- JE: Both you and Paul then were very interested in the business obviously of making pies.
- LM: You know, I never realized I was until Paul and I got interested in each other and then I knew that would be the way that we would make a living. And so I tried then to start learning. And Grace taught me everything all of the recipes and everything, how to make all the pies and everything. So when we went to Tulsa, I had all the formulas and everything to make the pies. And so we started her business in Tulsa.
- JE: Was that difficult to learn how to make these pies? Did you have to do a lot of do-over's and practice?
- LM: Well, no because I had the formulas, I had been making them you know. We didn't make them in just huge amounts. The main little thing I used to make those little pecan shells, you know making those little pecan shells and filling those because that was the popular thing then.
- JE: Pecan shells for pies?
- LM: Yes, those little pecan pies and we made a lot of those.

Chapter 6 - 4:00

Marshall Buys Marshall

- John Erling:** Tell us about how many children that you and Paul have?
- Lilah Marshall:** We have three children. We had John and then John was 16 years old though when Roger came along and then 10 months later Paula came along.
- JE: So then it seemed like Bud and Ruth-
- LM: Bud was Paul's oldest brother. They lived in Waco, Texas. They came to Tulsa for a while but they didn't like Tulsa. Well, Ruth didn't because her mother lived in Waco. She wanted to be where her mother was. So that's how we got Tulsa.
- JE: When they moved to Tulsa, you and Paul then moved to Waco?
- LM: Yes. And then when Bud and Ruth went back to Waco, we returned to Tulsa.
- JE: So then you swapped again? And then in February of 1937 you had all your belongings in a Model A Ford automobile?
- LM: Yes. There was one boy driving a Model A, with our stuff in it following us. It was our driver that worked for us in Waco, and he went with us.
- JE: And it was cold in February, the temperatures were cold?
- LM: It was cold. John was a little bitty thing. He wasn't very big. We would pull in places and get milk and stuff for John so I could feed him because he was still on a bottle. He was so little.

- JE: Didn't you have problems with one of the tires?
- LM: Oh yes. We started having flats all the way to Tulsa. We thought we would never get there. We started at two in the afternoon and I think we got there at midnight. The plant was right there at the corner of 11th and Delaware and the living quarters were in the back. And that was already set up for us because that's where brother and Ruth lived when they were there.
- JE: So you couldn't sleep in? You had to get up early the next morning?
- LM: Oh yes. I got up early the next morning to start making pies and Paul was delivering the pies made the day before. His brother left a delivery there. They made the pies for us to deliver that day and he had a route to run, and then I just got up and made pies for that day.
- JE: So there was no rest was there?
- LM: No.
- JE: And so that's how you got started then rolling into the business?
- LM: Yes.
- JE: Along about this time, World War II came along and Paul was deferred wasn't he?
- LM: Yes, he got a deferment. Because I had John, you know he was a little boy.
- JE: Right, he was 4-F, so he was staying home with the business. Also about the same time another pie company was called Mrs. Marshall's Pies.
- LM: Yes, no relation to us at all.
- JE: And tell us about their pies.
- LM: They were great pies, but their pies were just for restaurants. They made 9-inch extra special pies for restaurants in Tulsa.
- JE: They were considered some of the best.
- LM: Oh yes, their pies were really good.
- JE: Mr. Marshall one day came to Paul, your husband and he asked if you wanted to buy his business?
- LM: Yes, Archie came to Paul. Because you see, he didn't like the pie business at all. His brother and his mother had the pie business and he wanted to live in California, Archie did. But he came back to run it for his mother until they could do something. And they were going to dispose of it and that's when he talked to Paul about buying it.
- JE: I think the total price for that company was \$15,000?
- LM: Yes. I don't even remember how much we paid out it wasn't very much, but we paid it out.
- JE: I think you are able to pay \$3,000 down and then you paid it of?
- LM: Yes.
- JE: That business was good for you?
- LM: Yes, because they had a wonderful name and they had good pies and we got a lot of

good recipes. And so that really helped us to get into the really good pie-making business.

JE: Because your pies were smaller. Yes, we made pies just for grocery stores. They were about 6 or 7-inch pies, little fruit pies. They were not even fried pies, they were baked pies. Fried pies came along a little bit later and they just swept the baked pies off of the market. We didn't even make baked pies anymore.

Chapter 7 - 4:36

Ray Kroc

John Erling: But then Paul was in Chicago and he saw this pie truck that said "frozen pies" on it.

Lilah Marshall: Yes, and he got the idea that that's the way we ought to go. He could see the future of frozen pies. And that's when we started developing frozen pies in our line.

JE: Then Howard Johnson's restaurants, they were going to open on the Turner Turnpike?

LM: Yes and Paul went out and got them (as clients).

JE: He just went in to the Utica Square offices there and-

LM: Paul sold the idea to them to buy the pies.

JE: in the 1960s then, Paul went to Chicago?

LM: Yes.

JE: And he went up to McDonald's?

LM: Yes he went up and met with Mr. Kroc.

JE: What did Paul say to him?

LM: Well he got the meeting with him and they just hit it off. It was something that McDonald's needed and Paul just happened to approach them at the right time.

JE: You are talking about Ray Kroc?

LM: Yes, he was quite a little guy and he was the one that made McDonald's go (a success).

JE: He bought the company from the McDonald brothers in California in 1961. Ray Kroc was actually selling these multi-mixer milkshake machines.

LM: Yes, he was. He was selling those mixers.

JE: So then he thought he could partner with the McDonald's brothers and he could sell these mixers to all of their new restaurants?

LM: That's right.

JE: Then they would open and franchise more McDonald's. And so in 1961 he purchases it in the McDonald's becomes the biggest fast food operation in the world. So you went to Chicago I suppose?

LM: Yes, they had parties you know we were selling McDonald's pies so we got invited to go.

JE: What kind of a person was Ray Kroc? You met him and you talked to him?

LM: He was a very out going guy. He was really likable and he was a good salesman and he was smart.

JE: It took about a year before they got the okay from McDonald's.

LM: Yes, for the okay for all of them.

JE: For the test market in Joplin Missouri and Springfield Missouri-

LM: Yes and they did so well that they did not hesitate about putting them on the market.

JE: So then it was in 1966 that's when they decided to go national and I understand they didn't sign a contract?

LM: They never signed a contract. It was a handshake.

JE: And it's been basically a verbal agreement or a handshake even down to this year 2009?

LM: We never had a contract. It was just on our word and their word.

JE: Didn't Henry say, "Well, if you don't like my pies then I understand?"

LM: That was the way that we went into it. I mean, we either please you, or we are out.

JE: Right. For Paul to go national then he needed to buy equipment and he needed about \$250,000? In the 1960s that was a lot of money.

LM: Yes. And he (Kroc) came down and helped us get the loan.

JE: And he went to the bank?

LM: Yes, he went to the bank for us. He went there and stood for us, you know, McDonald's did.

JE: And Ray Kroc?

LM: Ray Kroc OK'd it. Well, it was really Lionel Root was the one that was carrying the ball, but he couldn't have done anything without Mr. Kroc saying, "Okay." He was one of their salesmen. He was a good friend, a real good friend.

JE: So he was the one that you worked with back and forth with on the McDonald's deal.

LM: Yes.

JE: This was a pretty exciting time wasn't it?

LM: Oh yes. It really was. That was the first really big break that we got.

JE: Also along in here Paula was working during the summer of 1968 and 1969 and she worked part-time there?

LM: Yes and went to school.

JE: Paul, your husband, he had a health problem?

LM: He had heart problems and he was in the hospital with some serious heart problems for a while and he had to slow down. But he rested enough and took care of himself that he got to where he could go back to work again.

JE: Paula started working full-time didn't she in 1970?

LM: Yes. She had her little ones and she and her husband had divorced and she had the job

of raising those children and so that's when she went to work.

JE: And then you saw that she was very talented?

LM: Oh yes, and she loves the work.

JE: And your son John was also involved in the business?

LM: Yes, he's still involved, just not actively anymore. But he is on the Board. He and Paula talk all of the time.

JE: Didn't John work to make the company a success in Canada with McDonald's and he worked up there?

LM: Yes, he was involved with all of the McDonald's stuff.

JE: But then Paula finally took over the company in 1984?

LM: Yes, John had some health problems that wouldn't let him work like he needed to work. He just didn't have the health to do it anymore.

Chapter 8 - 3:34

Hard Work

John Erling: I'm going to jump back to when Big Daddy asked Big Mother to make pies. She made pies all day long for Woolworths.

Lilah Marshall: Yes, she had five girls and they all helped. She would get them in the kitchen at night and they would make all of the pies. She had five daughters that all helped.

JE: She worked long hours. She had to have worked 12-, 13-, or 14-hour days.

LM: Yes, she worked hard, she really did. She was a ramrod, she really was.

JE: It sounds like the two of them made it happen?

LM: Yes, they did.

JE: But you made many, many pies yourself?

LM: Yes, (laughter) a few. I had all of the formulas and everything. I had it easier than she did.

JE: But it still was hard work, wasn't it?

LM: Yes, it was. It was hard work. I mean it was steady work for sure.

JE: And to be standing on your feet for that long had to be hard, but that was back when you were in your 20s.

LM: Oh yes. I remember the first day I ever worked all day and I wore shoes that had heels. Boy, when I got home that night, Mama said, "Go lie down on the couch and rest a few minutes before dinner." I did, but I couldn't get up when she called me to come eat. I was so stiff. (Laughter)

JE: But you knew it was because of your shoes?

- LM: Oh yes, and I was doing stuff I had never done before. I hadn't ever had to work.
- JE: But you just had this work ethic?
- LM: Yes. You know you knew you had to do something for your money. You had to learn to do something, and that was just there. It was just wide open for us.
- JE: But as you saw this company grow, it must've been terribly exciting for you and Paul?
- LM: You know at that time we didn't realize it. It just seems like it was supposed to happen. You just didn't realize what you really had. We didn't. It was at a time when what we were doing was needed, and that is what made it so easy to get into the market.
- JE: And nobody else was doing this?
- LM: No, they didn't want to fool with it. And so that was something that we were able to build on, something that nobody else wanted to do.
- JE: So then the equipment that you had, you couldn't buy that anywhere?
- LM: Paul helped make it and design it. He had a friend that was a machinist and he could do all of that stuff. He was the one that really helped us to build it.
- JE: So that's how you were able to grow it, was to make your own equipment?
- LM: That's right. Nobody else had it. Nobody wanted to make it or wanted to fool with it. And so this guy was our good friend and he was good at doing that. So we just lucked out.
- JE: Floyd Langford was his name.
- LM: Yes. He was the reason we were able to get into it as quickly as we did.
- JE: It seems like when you take hard work good things just start happening to you.
- LM: That's right. You hit the right mark at the right time.
- JE: As you look at this, you can't even believe the story probably to this day?
- LM: It just seems unreal. It really does.
- JE: I'm sure you have words for young people who will listen to this interview. What would you say to young kids who want to get into a business?
- LM: Well, they just should know that they really want to do it and then find out all the ways they can get into it, the easiest way and the cheapest way. Go from there. Learn the way. They have to make their own way. It would be a different way probably than we made it, but they will figure it out.

Chapter 9 - 4:52

Beijing, China

John Erling: What was Tulsa like back then in the 1950s?

Lilah Marshall: Tulsa has always been a good pie town. It was always ready to grow it seemed

like, Tulsa was, always.

JE: Do you remember some of the names of the restaurants that you sold pies too?

LM: There was one right down in town called Bishops. It was not a chain, just a big restaurant here in town that was really recognized and that moved a lot of product. Silver Castle or White Castle, those were the restaurants that were prominent then. Somebody had a chain of those here.

JE: Did you work six days a week or seven days a week?

LM: Usually six days. We would start on Sunday and get through on Friday, (Laughter) and then get ready to start on Sunday again.

JE: Oh, you worked Sunday through Friday and he took Saturday off?

LM: We were making product or getting ready to make product, but we really weren't producing those three days. But we were getting busy to do it again the next week.

JE: Did you ever get away and do something else other than work, work, work?

LM: Oh yes, we went to Dallas to see his folks about once a month. We would just drive down there for the weekend and see his mother and dad and his sisters and then come right back home.

JE: I suppose his mother and dad would be very interested in asking lots of questions about the business?

LM: Oh yes, both of them did. They were always ready to help any way they could.

JE: Because that's where it all started.

LM: Yes, Big Mother and Big Dad. I mean it was a two-way street with them. Big Mother was the one that really set the pace. She was really the one that was full of energy, but Big Dad was always willing to help. So they would just get their heads together on something and it would happen.

JE: Were there any times that you thought that you wouldn't make it?

LM: Oh yes, (Laughter) a lot of times. A lot of times you wonder if you could even hang on long enough to make it. But we were always fortunate, we really were. We came along at the time it was needed. We were just able to get a toehold, so that made it good for us.

JE: When you took out that loan of \$250,000 from the bank, did that make you nervous?

LM: Yes it did. It did.

JE: Then you had to hire quite a few more people?

LM: And the plant to make pies.

JE: Did you think "Wow" you took out the loan and you expanded the plant and hired all these people. That had to be a little nerve-racking?

LM: No, we never worried. I mean we just knew it was going to happen I guess. We just had it there and had to do it and so we just did. We just didn't stop and think it can't be. We just knew it had to be.

- JE: When I asked you if there were some times when you wondered if you could make it, do you remember one specific time?
- LM: Oh yes, (Laughter) every day.
- JE: Every day?
- LM: Yes, every day. (We would ask) are we going to make it today? But we were in the right time for that product. There weren't any others around. We just happened to get a product that was needed. We just lucked into it, really. Paul was really smart on the market though, on what would go and what would sell and he was a super salesman.
- JE: You were back making the pies, so you were very good yourself.
- LM: I was helping some. Paul was a wonderful salesman, he really was.
- JE: When he, because of health reasons, stepped back from the company, then he kind of worked with McDonald's?
- LM: We became really good partners.
- JE: You worked with together in other parts of the country in getting BAMA and getting the pies set up and you worked together?
- LM: Yes. Yes we did. They wanted the product, McDonald's did you know. And so all we had to do is cooperate. Because they wanted somebody to do it and there wasn't anybody really that wanted to do it. There wasn't really any good market at the time or any money in it.
- JE: So it's really something when you think that it was test marketed in Springfield, and Joplin, Missouri, and now you are manufacturing pies in Beijing, China?
- LM: I know. (Laughter) Beijing, China, and boy they make them over their really fast!
- JE: They in fact have two plants in China?
- LM: Yes, we do.
- JE: Paula has been a good leader hasn't she?
- LM: Oh yes, she's a good leader. John was too. His health didn't hold up as good, but John was a big help. The McDonald's people really loved John. You know he could get bend their ear any time he wanted it. So he could get stuff done because we were good friends with the buyer, and he believed in us and he listened to us. And if they wanted to do something, they would come to us and give us the first chance to make whatever they wanted.
- JE: So, John had that liaison, he was back and forth with McDonald's and they really liked him?
- LM: Yes, he was really good with McDonald's. They loved John.

Chapter 10 – 4:12**Governor Murray/Vice President Cheney**

John Erling: One of the big honors that BAMA received was in 2004. BAMA was awarded the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award by the U.S. Department of Commerce. BAMA was the first company from Oklahoma and the second food manufacturer to be awarded this honor recognizing excellence and quality.

Lilah Marshall: That was due to Paul.

JE: But it was also due to you.

LM: Yes, all of us helped do it, all of us.

JE: And it was just last year in 2008 that you opened the second plant in Beijing, China.

LM: Just down the road from the other one. Well, it's 200 or 300 miles away.

JE: Do you have any stories to tell us? Did your mother and dad take a trip in a Model T and you had some kind of a car wreck? You were on your way to Wewoka?

LM: None of got hurt very badly. My mother, the car turned over, and she was thrown out. It was a touring car and we didn't have the sides up on it. And it threw her out on the running board. She got thrown out but it didn't hurt her. That was the closest we came to having a tragedy.

JE: Did you take lots of trips to Sulphur Springs?

LM: We used to go down there because my Mother had bad stomach problems and she would drink that sulphur water.

JE: And so you took these trips to Sulphur, Oklahoma because of the springs there?

LM: Yes and because of my mother's health. We would camp out there in a tent. We would stay there for two weeks and live outside and cook outside and she would drink that water.

JE: Did it help any?

LM: Yes, it seemed to.

JE: Did you drink it?

LM: I don't remember that I did.

JE: That would have probably been in the 1920s?

LM: Yes it would have been.

JE: Is there a governor of Oklahoma that stands out in your mind?

LM: Yes, who was the guy that had the mustache?

JE: Bill Alfalfa Murray?

LM: Yes, that's who it was and I got to shake hands with him when I was in the 8th grade.

JE: Really?

LM: Yes, our whole class did. And he was in his office and we went by his office and he came

to the door and shook hands with all of us.

JE: Do you remember any other famous person that you met? You were in Washington for the Balridge award?

LM: Yes, I went to that.

JE: Did you shake hands with Vice President Dick Cheney?

LM: Oh yes. I stood right by him.

JE: Well, you deserved to be there and I am sure everybody was proud that you could be there.

LM: Thank you.

JE: I know that Senator Charles Ford has been adding pictures to the State Capitol and he has these pictures that are commissioned and so they will place some of the famous people that we have had in our state in those pictures. It was a huge mural and I understand Paul's face was painted into that.

LM: Yes.

JE: How many grandchildren do you have now?

LM: Nine.

JE: So I guess you would like to see some of them grow up in the business and get involved?

LM: If they want to. If that's what they love, I would. But it's a hard row if they don't really love it.

JE: And isn't that the message? You have to really like what you do?

LM: You have to like what you do and know what you're doing.

JE: Because then, you'll work long hours if you like doing it?

LM: That's right.

JE: You probably didn't always work for money did you?

LM: No, we worked just to eat sometimes. (Laughter)

JE: And then you took pride in putting out the best pies around?

LM: That was always fun.

JE: And what was your favorite pie?

LM: Well, I guess it had to be apple. Good old apple pie.

JE: Well thanks for telling us your story.

LM: You're so welcome! I hope I've helped some.

JE: You've helped a lot and believe me that it starts with you and Paul and that today BAMA Pie is one of the finest companies in the country.

LM: Thank you. Paul worked hard, he really did. And he had such dreams for BAMA Pie too. He always did. Nobody else had the dreams that Paul had. He always wanted to leave a good image of BAMA.

JE: And he sure left a great image didn't he?

LM: He sure has.

JE: And he couldn't have done it without you.

LM: Thank you.

Chapter 11 - 0:18

Conclusion

John Erling: This story of hard work should be an inspiration to all. BAMA Pie is successful today because of the hard work ethic of Paul and Lilah Marshall. And to learn more about BAMA Pie we suggest you visit their website bama.com and our "For Further Reading" section on VoicesofOklahoma.com.