

Aimee Davidson is the youngest of three daughters of Bill and Carla Albertson. She currently lives down the street from her parents and is married to Ryan Davidson. This interview was conducted outside, on her parent's front porch.

Toan Ngo [00:00]: This is Toan interviewing Aimee Davidson on July 18th, 2007 at 11:17.

Aimee Davidson: Go get your red sweatshirt and bring it to auntie [saying to nephew].

TN: Aimee, if any time you need to go anywhere (Shelby [daughter] should be good) we'll stop (Okay [laughs]).

TN: Okay. So this... they revised it a little bit so the questions are different from what I interviewed Jamie [sister], but it shouldn't be too different.

TN: Alright, so first question. What is one of your favorite foods?

AD: Chicken, I eat lots of chicken.

TN: What kind of chicken do you like to eat?

AD: I barbeque a lot.

TN: And how often do you eat that?

AD: Probably, three or four nights a week I would say.

TN: Do you usually make it or does Ryan?

AD: I usually do. My dad burnt us out on beef growing up so...I don't eat it that much.

TN: Would you raise chicken if you want, if you could?

AD: We're actually gonna get some more again. We've had them before and my dog got to all of them. They weren't in a cage. (Oh man...) So we're building a coop this time [laughs].

TN: And... likewise, what is your least favorite food?

AD: Potatoes. I don't like.

TN: Really?

AD: Cuz we, growing up, we had steak and potatoes almost every meal as a kid. And I just would... if I never had potatoes again I would not care [laughs].

TN: So whenever your mom makes potatoes, you don't eat it?

AD: Not usually.

TN: I see. The last time we had baked potatoes.

AD: Yeah I didn't take one. (Oh okay...) [laughs]

TN: Does she know about this?

AD: Yeah. (Okay.) Yeah I'm not a potato fan.

TN: What about Ryan? Does he...

AD: He loves potatoes... so he'll get frustrated cuz I'll rice instead of potatoes or noodles and he'll... please just make potatoes!

TN: Now... do you ever eat French fries or other forms of potatoes?

AD: I'll eat French fries... that's it as far as potatoes though.

TN: So what did you eat for dinner yesterday?

AD: Chicken. [laughs]

TN: Barbeque?

AD: It was actually baked chicken. Yeah. And noodles.

TN: Are you usually the cook at home?

AD: Yeah. Ryan doesn't get home until probably 6 or 6:30... so I usually have it ready when he gets home.

AD: Don't walk with that [inaudible] [to kid]

TN: Okay so... here's the information thing about the food system. Thinking about the food system more broadly, what are the three things that you appreciate about the food system in your community?

AD: Oh gosh...

[Child talks in the background]

AD: We do a lot of hunting. So I would say maybe I appreciate that cuz we eat a lot of venison and that when we go hunting. I enjoy cooking food and I guess I enjoy eating food [laughs]. (Okay.)

AD: Go tell Grady [son]! He'll go help ya. [talking to kid]

TN: Likewise, what don't you like about the food system? Three things that you don't like.

AD: In Lakeview, we don't get a lot of the... we used to just get really basic stuff. You can't buy specialty, like any fruits and vegetables that are just [inaudible]. They don't get here. So that's rough. I don't know... it's hard to grow food here too because it freezes so late. And the season and half the time it'll freeze before it's ready. So that makes it hard to... other than zucchini it's hard to grow anything here. And buying food here is very expensive (Okay.) compared to other places.

TN: What are you comparing it to?

AD: I usually go once a month to Klamath, shopping cuz prices in Safeway... there are a lot of stuff almost half the price in Klamath (Really?) than it is here, unless it's on sale.

TN: Okay... but with the gas cost, do you think that's effective? I do for me cuz usually my mom and I will go together once a month and split the gas and a lot of times I need like for Grady and Shelby, they all need clothes or shoes or something that I can't get here anyway. So for us, I'd probably be going over there anyway for other things.

TN: They don't sell clothes here?

AD: Not particularly... like you can't buy socks or underwear or kids' shoes at all in Lakeview. There's some various clothes but I actually... my aunt Barb has a clothing store but I think my kids are too big for the clothes she has now. So yeah... I'm usually going over anyway for other stuff.

TN: When your... when your sister comes from... Ashland right?

AD: Medford.

TN: Medford?

AD: She works in Ashland.

TN: Oh, okay. Do you actually tell her to pick things up for you?

AD: She will sometimes, she'll get frustrated cuz we'll all call her and give her a list of things to get. And we'll get all irritating to her. So a lot of times we don't ask her anymore. But sometimes like if I really need... I bought the kids a [inaudible] this summer and she'll bring me the cleaning stuff and all that but you can't buy here of it. (Okay.)

TN: Did she actually tell you that she was frustrated? “Stop calling me...” [mimicking sister]

AD: Yeah... she... my mom... my mom irritates her. She'll just give her a bit long list of things to get. So I try not to unless I have to.

TN: Oh okay. Well I guess that covers question six without me knowing it. I'll just ask you anyway. How does your house hold get their food? So you go to...

AD: I go once a month to Klamath. Usually a couple of times a week I'll go in and get milk in town at Safeway. And... some fruits and vegetables I guess, not a lot.

TN: Now... I know Ryan hunts, how much of the food do you get from hunting?

AD: Well... it depends like this year we didn't get any hunting tags so we're not gonna have any meat from that this year. So just depends on the year. (Uh huh). But if we do get like a deer or elk, we'll usually have it one or two nights a week. (Oh okay.) Pretty much until it's gone.

TN: How long does it take an elk to be done?

AD: I don't know... well sometimes we'll have it for a whole year. And then sometimes it'll be like six or eight months and it'll be gone.

TN: So that's just one animal (Uh huh.) for a family of three.

AD: Of four, yeah.

TN: Of four... That is a lot of food.

AD: Well and then like on the elk, the back strap we eat.

TN: The back strap? What's that?

AD: It's like a pork loin of... elk.

TN: I still don't know what that is.

AD: It's... it's just the best meat on deer or (Okay.) elk and it's right on the back bone. It's like these big loins of meat. And then a lot of time the front shoulders and the hind quarters, we'll send and get pepperoni or jerky made out of it. So... a lot of the meat, not usually what we cook for dinner that's just jerky or pepperoni that we'll take hunting or whatever.

TN: Ah... okay... interesting.

TN: Do any of the meat you actually feed to your dog and stuff?

AD: Not usually... Well... we cut it up ourselves so a lot of fat or whatever we'll give to them but... it's not a lot of waste on it.

TN: Okay... well... do you or your family face any challenges in getting the food that you want to eat?

AD: I don't know... I like a lot of... like... Chinese food and that kind of stuff and you can't even buy a lot of the stuff in Lakeview if you want that kind of thing. (Yeah.) So if I'm really craving something and I can't get it in Lakeview that's frustrating.

TN: How far is the farthest you've ever driven just for one meal?

AD: I don't know, we don't go out a lot. I'd guess you'd say Klamath which is 90 miles cuz mom and I'll go shopping (Okay.) and then get excited... “where are we gonna eat!” (Yeah! [laughs]) So it's 90 miles, from Lakeview so I guess it's 85. Yeah about 80, 85 miles.

TN: Well... that's about how far from where I live to... to school. (Yeah?) Yeah.

TN: What is the history of your or your family's involvement with food in the past?

AD: Like... what do you mean?

TN: How... say what did your do in the past and how does he get food? Or did your mother do anything?

AD: Dad has hunted. Just like we do. Which mom didn't cook very often, she didn't really enjoy that. Dad used to raise... our family every year... they stopped doing it... I don't know why... we used to do potatoes. And every year all of the family and everyone would get together and it was the potato picking day. (Oh right.) But I don't know... I don't think they ever went to Klamath. I don't know when we started doing that... shopping. (Okay.) So it was pretty basic with my family. We just shop in town and she was the once a month big trip. Like I do and once a week just for... here and there stuff.

TN: Now... when you were little... was there a Safeway here?

AD: Uh hmm.

TN: Really? And... was your dad a good hunter?

AD: Yeah... he always brought stuff. He hunted a lot of geese. (Oh.) So we would have... I wouldn't really would say we ate that for meals so... cuz mom didn't like it. So we would go to grandpa's and he'd cook it like for breakfast. (Oh yeah?) Or you would have jerky... he made jerky from the geese.

TN: Geese jerky? (Yeah.) How... what's that like?

AD: It's really good! Dad used to make it but you gotta be careful... cuz there's bb's in it. (Oh yeah.) From... so you'd have to chew carefully when you eat them...

TN: You kill them with bb's?

AD: Well... it was a shotgun shell. (Oh... okay.) Which is the bullet is full of tons of bb's. (Oh) So you'd have to really watch. Like you just remember as a kid... biting on a bb so you'd have to pick through it [both laugh] when you eat it. (Oh man.)

TN: Okay. You might have mentioned this but if there's anything else... are there some stories connected with food in your family? Past and present, any thing...

AD: Grandma and grandpa every weekend would have hotcakes and a lot of people still go... do that (Yeah.) And then just the family traditions like... I guess... every holiday, the whole family gets together (Uh huh.) for meals and usually each holiday's the same things so you'll always know what you're gonna have (Yeah?) for each different thing.

TN: Is it good enough that you still excited about the food there?

AD: I don't know if I'm more excited the food or just seeing everybody. (Oh okay.) For the family stuff...

AD: And then every Saturday growing up we had tacos. That was our... and now it's Thursday. They changed it after we all left. (Oh that's weird.) So that was the thing... Saturday night, after church we rented a movie and ate tacos [TN laughs] while we were at home.

TN: You watched a movie every... each Saturday?

AD: We had... yeah it was movie night. We go after church, rent a movie (Oh okay.) and then come home and have tacos and watch our movie.

AD: I don't know... a lot of all my food stuff is usually revolved around family (Right.) in some way.

TN: Do you have any like... really funny story? Something hilarious?

AD: About food?

TN: About family and food if you want... anything.

AD: [laughs] Not really...

TN: Here I'll tell you a sample story. This is an interview with a friend and she told a story about her dad and he was a really bad cook and his wife got sick so he had to cook... right? And so he had to make pasta. You can imagine how easy it is to make pasta. And he took the pasta out of the box... and put the whole pasta in the bag into the boiling water [AD laughs] and cooked that like it was a bag of rice thing... you know? And... in the end he just had melted plastic and pasta together.

AD: The only thing I remember to this day is my mom used to like cabbage... and we hated cabbage. (Uh huh.) So in our old house... just before they built this one... we had friends over and she was making us eat it and we didn't want to so we were taking the cabbage and flinging it... on the ceiling just to be brats and it was it was up there until they tore the house down... there were bits of cabbage that they just left because... I don't know if it was really funny to mom... and she left it so for years there were chunks of cabbage on the ceiling that we were putting up there [laughs].

TN: Did it ever happen that you were just eating a meal and then one of the cabbage pieces fell down on you?

AD: [laughs] I don't remember but there was cabbage up there a long time.

TN: Okay. [laughs] Are there any special family recipes that you and your family enjoy?

AD: Grandma when all of us got married gave us her hotcake recipe. (Oh!) Which... we don't ever think it tastes like hers it must be (She's hiding something? [sarcastically])... [inaudible] touch she puts in there.

AD: I'm trying to think... my mom has given us some Italian. (Uh hmm) Cuz she loves Italian cuisine.

TN: Have you had the hotcakes from your grandpa? Are those the same? (Uh hmm.)

TN: So she's not hiding it from him? [jokingly]

AD: There's... there's just something they do... I don't know cuz they gave us exact measurements and they just put it in so (Uh huh.) or it's just maybe because they're making it and it just... tastes better.

TN: Do you ever watch her do it?

AD: I have watched her do it. I usually don't even bother making it, we'll just go there on weekends and it 'em with them. But I guess that was probably the most memorable food thing that's... growing up there... on the weekends and having hotcakes. And we still do... I'll take my kids there now, on the weekends, to do that.

TN: Are you or any of your family members involved now in growing, raising, processing, selling, delivering, serving, or making food for the public?

AD: No...

[Kids make noise]

TN [16:39]: Do any of the groups you belong together, like church, or work, or Rotary, or something... do they offer meals to others?

AD: No... I know... around Christmas we'll do like can drives at school (Okay.) for the food [inaudible] in Lake County food share. And they really... everywhere in the

community has drop-offs and you... a lot of the kids I know at school has like a couple weeks, then you bring as much as you can in. But as far as like serving food... (Uh hmm)...

TN: How do you think that farmers and ranchers are faring in the community?

TN: Any hardships or opportunities?

AD: I guess they okay here... it's rough, like my dad raises cattle and in some years you do really well cuz prices are up and then some years we don't even make your losses on the sell out of cow and hay... So it just depends on the year, it's good or bad.

TN: How have, say the last five years, been?

AD: Cows have actually been up. Really good cuz everyone on the low-carbs diet (Yeah!) are keeping the meat prices up. So lately he's been doing really well.

TN: So you think the wheat farmers are having a horrible time with the (Yeah I'm sure.) Atkins diet? [both laugh]

AD: Prices have been up really good though the last few years, so...

TN: Do you know the price?

AD: Well I know like... it just depends like... if you take a pregnant cow on to the sale or a cow with a calf on it you could get fifteen hundred dollars with the cow and calf and maybe a little bit less if she's pregnant. I'm trying to think... I don't remember what just steer prices are. It depends, most people sell them in the fall. So prices usually go up. In the fall is all he Oregon around Eastern Oregon, that's when most of them sell. Oh gosh... I'm trying to think... what it was. I want to say it was last year, when dad sold, he was getting them at a dollar-twenty a pound. And it was usually five or six hundred pounds a piece. [daughter talks in the background] So when you go sell a hundred steers at that price then you can usually pay cuz you'll have loans... sometimes, you know, for pasture or equipments. So last year I think he had enough to pay all of them off and some years you don't make what you owe. So...

TN: Okay... I forget what I was gonna ask...

TN: Okay... what do you know about how low-income, disabled, or elderly people get food in your community.

AD: I know it's really rough for the elderly. A lot of them don't make hardly enough money even to eat. And then like my grandparents are lucky cuz they have so much family. We'll go in and be shopping for them in the winter so they're not driving in the bad weather conditions... But a lot of other elderly... I don't even know what they would do. Cuz when the roads get bad they don't drive.

TN: Yeah... Yeah... Your grandparents seem tough though.

AD: Well we... the kids... kinda cut them off in the winter about driving. Cuz my grandma would like to drive, no matter what. And she can't see well in the winter snow and ice on the road. It's scary so all of us will call... "We're going to town! Get your groceries list, we'll pick up!" or we'll go pick up their prescriptions for them, when we're in town... so they won't be driving in and out.

TN: How old is your grandma?

AD: Her and both my grandpa will be 83 this winter.

TN: You think you'll have any problems when you're old? [jokingly]

AD: Well... [laughs] I hope not. I would like to think I would still be here so... I don't know...

TN: [inaudible] closer to town?

AD: Yeah... Or hope my kids bring me out stuff. [TN laughs]

TN: Do you know where the food comes from that is eaten in this community?

AD: A lot of stuff at Safeway is Oregon. I know a lot of milk and eggs and a lot of the meats and chicken are Oregon Washington. A lot of... all the potatoes I think or most of them are Idaho... or Oregon. So... I think a lot of it is as local as you can get. (Right.) And I know a lot of the berries and all that's Oregon and California in there right now. (Uh huh.)

TN: What I've been wondering is that people eat meat a lot... of course. (Uh huh.) But a lot of it, is it their own meat? They usually just buy meat from the store.

AD: A lot of people (Uh huh.) like mom and dad are out but a lot of people will take cows in... there's a butcher shop in town. And now I would imagine most people here do that. They'll take in and they'll butcher the whole thing and package it all according to family size. So a lot of stuff's all packaged and stuff but it came from their cows that they just had butchered out.

TN: Is it the Lockers? [name of establishment in town] (Uh hmm.)

TN: When was the last time your dad butchered a cattle?

AD: They actually just ran out a couple of months ago. And mom didn't... she's really picky. She thinks that the flavor... and it is different with each cow, it'll just be a different taste to them sometimes. And she did not like the last one he had butchered so she swore they're gonna buy meat for awhile. She didn't want to have that meat again.

TN: Well... do you eat any local food? Yeah...

AD: Ummm...

TN: Okay... How do you think the community could make more local food?

AD: I don't know... A lot of people grow their own and just keep it. But on the weekends they'll have a farmer's market. It depends on the weekend. And a lot of times I will go in there and buy and that's all fresh... people from the county that they grew. I just think it's rough here cuz the weather's so unpredictable. As far as produce or whatever... Can't count on anything making it...

TN: I remember... the first day I went over to your grandpa's house for breakfast, I saw him cracking some eggs and I asked him "Are these eggs local?" and he asked me "You want the eggs over easy?" [both laugh]

AD: We actually have our neighbors. They had chickens not to butcher... all they get is the eggs. (Oh yeah.) So I know a lot of people probably do that though, they'll bring us... they'll get so many sometimes. "Here! Take the eggs!" (Oh. Okay.) But I don't know...

TN: Cuz chickens... they lay eggs like everyday (Uh hmm.), right?

AD: And if you take them... then you can eat them. And if you leave them they'll sit on them. (Yeah.) But... I don't know... Not a lot of people have chickens anymore. It's probably cuz all their dogs. (Yeah?) Yeah... this dog [referring to her grey dog: Missy]... she sees one and it's out, they're in trouble.

TN: Oh is that the one that...

AD: She killed about eleven chickens in probably two minutes.

TN: Two minute?

AD: She just... is not nice. (Aww... man...)

TN: Missy, right?

AD: Yes...

TN: Okay... Are there way that you would like to see the food system changed in your community?

AD: It would just be nice of the stores that carry more selection. And that is why I go out of town... because, they don't have a lot of... you just get what you get and if you don't like it then... too bad.

TN: Have you heard or read about how people are changing their food system in one way or another in other places?

AD: No... I don't... No... I'm so busy, with my kids and everything I probably don't pay attention. [TN laughs]

TN: And... Okay... Are there other things about the food system in your community that you think is important for us to know?

[kids talking/playing in the background]

AD: I don't know... maybe people appreciate more a little of meat and stuff that you get from farmers and ranchers here. Cuz it's probably a lot harder work than they... you know, they just go buy it... they don't see all the... getting up to vaccinate and feed them and it's a lot of hard work to raise up a cow. (Right.)

TN: I guess your dad tells you a lot about that?

AD: Well... you know growing up we help... every year we help him hay and during calving season it's twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week you have to be there. So if one's having a problem and you're not there then you're gonna lose a calf and maybe the mom... so you're losing lots of money. You're not right there all the time.

TN: So you had to be in the Yocum valley?

AD: No well... in the winter he moves them back here. (Okay.) And he usually brings them to my grandpa's and that's where they all have their calves... is at my grandpa's. And we'll go in shifts. Like three in the middle of the night, three or four times a night, people go out and check the cows to see if any are calving or having problems and you do that all day.

TN: [inaudible] Three or four times a night?

AD: Some dad... you know, when the winter... is up (Uh huh.) a lot.

TN: And you help with that.

AD: We help... I try to help a lot in the day and Ryan will sometimes will go. Right before bed he'll go or in the morning before he goes to work and then during the day we'll try to let dad sleep a little bit so we'll go help him check a couple times just so... he doesn't help and only call him up if there's a problem or something.

TN: Okay. And last question is... What is your view of what your community will be like in twenty years?

AD: I bet it will be a lot the same as it is cuz it hasn't changed since I was a kid. I don't think there's a lot of draw for people to move in here. Unless you're born and raised... you wouldn't like it. (Okay.) Ryan and I were both born and raised here and had no desire to move. And I know a lot of people come back. So... But most people... I know a lot of families from the prison have moved in and absolutely hated it cuz the lack of stores and shopping and food and they all moved back.

TN: Oh you mean the guards? (Uh huh.) Okay... not of the prisoners. [chuckles]

AD: No. Of their families of the workers that move here. A lot have moved and left. So I think you either really like it or don't. But I don't really see it getting any bigger, it's been about the same since I was a kid.

TN 07-18-07 Interview with Aimee Davidson

TN: Okay Aimee, well thank you very much!
AD: You're welcome!