

**Interview with Charlotte Jones**  
**14th November 2018**  
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**6363 St. Charles Avenue**  
**New Orleans, LA 70118**  
**Interviewed by: Shane Begg, Monica Guarnieri**  
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**Abstract:** Charlotte Jones is a Historical Interpreter living and working in New Orleans as a tour guide and carriage driver. Originally from Florida, she moved to New Orleans in 2007 to attend UNO and has remained ever since. A self professed “history nerd”, Charlotte shares her love of New Orleans and its history with her customers.

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[00:00:01.13] Shane Begg: Hi! So, I'd just like to start by - say your name and what you do for a living?

[00:00:08.13] Charlotte Jones: My name is Charlotte Jones and I am a tour guide and a carriage driver in the French Quarter.

[00:00:18.07] Shane Begg: Okay. So, I saw that one of the things that you describe yourself as is a Historic Interpreter. Could you describe what that is?

[00:00:24.13] Charlotte Jones: Oh, you saw my Twitter, huh?

[00:00:25.00] Shane Begg: Yeah

[00:00:26.03] Charlotte Jones: Yeah, so basically, in some ways I guess I'm an ambassador to the city and telling stories about our past and our history. It's mostly to tourists but occasionally there's locals as well, you know. But it is about taking that history and relaying it to someone else.

[00:00:45.28] Shane Begg: Okay so, I guess we're going to rewind a little bit. Where are you from or where did you grow up?

[00:00:51.17] Charlotte Jones: I'm originally from Florida. I grew up outside of a small town called Ocala , pretty swampy; very similar to Louisiana in a lot of ways. I moved here in 2007 and part of the reason why I moved here was I went to the University of New Orleans. And I've been here... 11 years? Yeah.

[00:01:12.29] Shane Begg: Okay, so how did you wind up choosing UNO, here. instead of somewhere in Florida?

[00:01:19.28] Charlotte Jones: Uh, UNO they were... I was very interested in their History programme. I thought it was a good fit and they were also trying to get students back in because this was only two

years after Hurricane Katrina. So I got a decent scholarship; I definitely still needed to take out loans, but they knocked out the out of state fees, which was a huge help and I wanted to live in New Orleans so...

[00:01:44.17] Shane Begg: Of course, of course. Okay, so how did you find yourself in the tourism industry?

[00:01:53.26] Charlotte Jones: Currently? Or the first kind of tourism job?

[00:01:58.04] Shane Begg: I guess, the first tourism job.

[00:01:59.27] Charlotte Jones: At the American sector? The American sector, I applied to be a hostess there right before they opened in 2009, 'cause I was hoping that could be a segue into a job at the World War II Museum. So, I did that job for almost a year, then moseyed on to something else. Now, my current job in the tourism industry, I was actually directing a children's non-profit here in New Orleans and I kind of just hit burn out and I had to... I had to find something else to do. And so, this job's been really great.

[00:02:40.03] Shane Begg: Oh yeah. Okay, so what would you say ignited your passion for history, and especially New Orleans history, because it seems like that's kind of like what your line of work is.

[00:02:52.20] Charlotte Jones: Oh, so this is really corny, um, so when I was thirteen years old my parents and I were taking a trip from Florida to Austin to see my grandfather. And, on the way through we stopped in New Orleans, it was my dad's idea, and we did a little day trip. And we hit up all the touristy spots: we saw the breakdancers at Jackson Square, I still have a picture and a little souvenir from one of the living statues, we walked down Bourbon Street, took the streetcar all the way to Carrolton and Claiborne and then came back. So, it was a really memorable trip. Other than St. Augustine, Florida; this was my first trip into a big historic city, and it was the highlight of my trip, other than seeing my grandfather of course. But I remember every moment of that day, and it always stuck with me.

[00:03:46.03] Shane Begg: Was that, like, in the back of your mind when you chose to come to UNO?

[00:03:49.21] Charlotte Jones: I think so, I was just, on the whole way back from Austin I was like "can we stop back in New Orleans?".

[00:03:57.07] Shane Begg: Yeah! Okay, and so you mentioned working for non-profits. Is there any other prior work experience that you've had before?

[00:04:08.16] Charlotte Jones: Oh plenty. But, um, I've worked for Louisiana State parks, also working with children, a couple of the different schools around here, outreach programmes particularly. So, and then a couple of part-time gigs including the American sector when I was working through college.

[00:04:28.29] Shane Begg: Okay. Would you say there's any surprising similarities or differences between working for the carriage company and the outreach program for children?

[00:04:38.23] Charlotte Jones: As you heard me joke earlier, sometimes working with mules is a lot like working with children. Lets see... so, outreach programme, the job itself not so much working with mules, but with actually talking to people and presenting kind of a history to the city, I think in a lot of ways that's similar to doing outreach work, particularly with kids 'cause I would bring kids down to the French Quarter; we'd do field trips, they'd learn a bit about the urban history, urban planning, history of the city and architecture in particular. And so, in that regard it is very very similar because I'm basically taking tourists on thirty minute field trips on a carriage, or hour.

[00:05:33.27] Shane Begg: Okay. So, can you take me into like what your daily schedule is like for your job?

[00:05:40.09] Charlotte Jones: So, I get to the barn in the afternoons, I'm back on night shift nowadays, and I get my mule Chica out of the barn. Sometimes, depending if it's warm enough, give her a bath. I have to put her gear on her, which composes of a saddle, a harness, bridle lines; hook her up to the carriage, and our barn is located in the Treme, so it's actually right under the interstate Vieux Carre

exit. Take her on down the line, we park in front of Jackson Square, wait to load up my carriage, and generally you try to get eight people on board, so five or six are kind of good to go. And, generally, most of the time it's a thirty minute ride. We go through the French Quarter, deal with a lot of- sometimes you deal with a lot of chaos, and other times it's perfectly fine. Come back, let her have a break, fifteen minute break, generally while she's on her break I try to load up the carriage again.

[00:06:50.18] Shane Begg: So you said your mule's name was Chica?

[00:06:53.02] Charlotte Jones: Yeah.

[00:06:53.29] Shane Begg: How did he or she get that name?

[00:06:56.12] Charlotte Jones: She came to us from a ranch in Texas. I haven't looked at her adoption paperworks yet, but apparently it's- she's kind of out in the middle of nowhere, occasionally pulling around a Cinderella style pumpkin carriage for weddings, things like that. And so, she came to us from Texas about a year ago, and she's been on the road with me for nine months now, just about. I think whoever had her before just, they called her Chica cause she's a girl. So, that's at least what her adoption paperwork said so that's why I've been calling her that.

[00:07:31.22] Shane Begg: Do you feel like you enjoy working with animals in your day to day work?

[00:07:36.22] Charlotte Jones: Yeah, if you saw my Twitter it's all Chica! So... um, it's not like that with every mule. That's also, it's like working with children, you know, where, obviously you never want to hurt them or anything like that. But there's just some where it's just like "uh-uh I don't want to drive that mule, I know how he's like".

[00:07:53.21] Shane Begg: You always have your favourite.

[00:07:56.05] Charlotte Jones: Yeah.

[00:07:58.08] Shane Begg: Alright, so would you say you enjoy riding at night or during the day more?

[00:08:10.16] Charlotte Jones: It varies. On the day shift it can be more competitive with other drivers. There is also, a lot of times, a lack of space at Jackson Square 'cause there are a few different companies and there are a few different barns and carriages, so if it's a Saturday there's going to be about thirty carriages out there, and there's only parking space for about fifteen. So, that can be frustrating and, because it's an issue of supply and demand right there. Too much supply, not enough demand, and then the drivers get even more competitive with each other. And your kind of dealing with more delivery trucks, in some ways more noise. So, I switched back to night shift recently just 'cause it is a bit calmer in that regard. But also the drawback with night shift is, it's generally not as busy, and you have to deal with the tomfoolery of drunk people, also traffic, parades, fireworks, things like that. So, there's more hazards in some regards. But once you get into the quiet residential part of the French Quarter, you actually kind of feel like you're in old New Orleans in a bit.

[00:09:32.05] Shane Begg: It has that, sort of, ambiance. Street lights and everything. Okay, so, you were talking about competition. How do you think you get the edge over the other carriage companies?

[00:09:49.10] Charlotte Jones: Well, that's where it's also interesting. Each company, you're kind of working as a team but you're also working against each other. Amongst that there is also the other companies and drivers out there. We have... it's basically like pickup lines in some regards where you're trying to say something either the wittiest or the most professional, or the least professional to get them on the carriage. So, we call those 'hack lines' since we're hacking, we're trying to get them on board. And, so, sometimes when I'm trying to get people on a carriage, they're walking by, I say "good history, bad jokes" and it gets a chuckle, you know, or they'll at least look at me - 'cause a lot of the times they're just walking by like this. So, that's kind of the main way we try to get people on board. There's also, like, a reservation system, things like that.

[00:10:52.14] Shane Begg: Yeah, so, do you find that more people make reservations or do you find that you get more people through, like, cat calling.

[00:11:00.22] Charlotte Jones: Most of the time you're doing just fine trying to get people on board on the street. Now, there's another company that I used to work for, they're trying to switch over to mostly reservations. They've really built up their reservation system. And so, on some nights it can be really slow. The folks who don't have the reservation system might be watching the other carriages roll around us, but most of the time it's about even keel.

[00:11:26.00] Shane Begg: Okay. So, do you feel like there are any skills you had before going into carriage driving? Or any specific skills you had to develop in order to work?

[00:11:44.09] Charlotte Jones: I am... nowadays I am very much more receptive to criticism. Two years ago if someone yelled at me for no reason I would have cried! And now, I just throw it right back at them. So, I have definitely become a lot tougher in that regard, where it takes a lot for someone to say something to me unsolicited and for it to bother me. I think that's one of the big things. Now, in terms of physical endurance that's a whole different ball game where you have to be able to multitask, think quickly, handle yourself well in emergency situations, handle your animal well in emergency situations, things like that.

[00:12:30.27] Shane Begg: Are there any frustrations you have during work? If so, how do you take out those frustrations?

[00:12:37.17] Charlotte Jones: One of the big frustrations we have to deal with I would say, especially on night shift, is drunk people. It's not so bad when they're just like "oh hey! I like your horse! You know? That's fine. But sometimes, say I'm going, not even on the hectic part of Bourbon Street, but I've had people hit my animal, they've threatened me, they said all kinds of ugly things to me. They think I'm an animal abuser, which is the exact opposite of what I do, what I am. So that can be pretty frustrating. And that's kind of the main bulk of it. You know, I mean every job place has its other minor frustrations. And the weather, it gets really cold out there in Jackson Square, or really hot.

[00:13:33.06] Shane Begg: So you were talking about animal rights activists, how do you deal with that stigma even though it's obviously not true.

[00:13:44.04] Charlotte Jones: A lot of times you just learn to roll your eyes and let them keep walking. Sometimes people are actually open to a good discussion about what the job actually entails, how we actually treat the animals, and some just scream at you and keep on going or look for a fight. We've had one man who has been harassing us relentlessly for the last few weeks. He's finally calmed down a little bit, but in the later parts of the summer he was just driving around, ironically with giant diesel truck, yelling at us about animal rights and that we should go vegan. It was a little strange but.

[00:14:26.12] Shane Begg: So how difficult is it to multitask having to control a mule and then also having to spit out facts about New Orleans.

[00:14:34.08] Charlotte Jones: It can be quite difficult. Sometimes I lose my train of thought. Basically, a little visual, rolling down the street. I'm turning around to talk to my people so they can hear me better, I can make eye contact, and then I try to give it maybe a few seconds of that and then I turn back to make sure there's no hazards in the road, anything like that. For the most part, Chica is pretty aware of everything that's going on. She's pretty calm about it, but every now and then something pops out that's gonna scare her and you just have to be ready for it, but that's what those lines are for. That's my direct, literally, line of communication between Chica and me.

[00:15:18.23] Shane Begg: Did you actually have to get a license to be able to ride a carriage?

[00:15:23.13] Charlotte Jones: I have a buggy license, a tour guide license, I had to take defensive driving online which was funny, and I also had to pass a drug test.

[00:15:33.11] Shane Begg: Okay, so, I've heard - I'm actually from New Orleans so - I've heard things of tour guides in the French Quarter kind of either embellish or make up stories about the city. I was wondering if, I'm not accusing you of doing that of course but -

[00:15:53.03] Charlotte Jones: I tell people when I'm making something up.

[00:15:55.04] Shane Begg: Have you ever, or do you know about any tour guides that do that?

[00:16:00.00] Charlotte Jones: Some of the old school buggy drivers, the ones who have been doing this for thirty, even forty, years they tend to tell the stories that they heard that are embellished and in some ways they keep on going. But, I think people have learned that there's a certain amount of folklore and I like to give them a pass because they're a little bit up there in age, so, it's like "yeah, you have fun". And it seems like the customers have fun which is kind of the big, the main thing at the end of the day. I love telling people about the history of this city but, it is not a history class, it is, in some ways an entertainment tour. So, I might - I don't embellish but I'll tell people whether or not we're really looking at folklore or if it is accurate, or if we're just not sure. You know? So...

[00:16:53.25] Shane Begg: So, in your opinion, it's like the customer is above, not historical accuracy but, like - you don't have to be completely accurate to make it a fun time?

[00:17:05.24] Charlotte Jones: I think some drivers can cut corners and it's okay. And, you know, I think we have a younger generation coming in and they're trying to actually be accurate so - with their history - so....

[00:17:20.24] Shane Begg: That ties in well to - so, how long have you been doing the carriages?

[00:17:26.02] Charlotte Jones: I've only been doing it for two years so I'm actually pretty new to the game.

[00:17:29.16] Shane Begg: So, even though you've only been doing this for two years, have you seen any change in the tourism section of New Orleans?

[00:17:37.20] Charlotte Jones: Um... I've noticed that, particularly in our industry, it's mostly families on board and baby boomers. We're not getting as many millennials or - what's the next generation, Gen Y? I think...

[00:17:53.09] Shane Begg: Gen X?

[00:17:53.17] Charlotte Jones: Gen X? No! Gen X was the one before me. So, Gen Y? Yeah. I'm a millennial. So, Generation Y, we're not really seeing that. Not as many millennial. There's still some, but I think part of it is they instantly feel like there are certain stereotypes of the carriage industry in the ways that the animals are treated which, again, is not the case. So, I've noticed that demographic. But, also, in terms of the industry itself the drivers are, over the last few years have become, are typically now younger caucasian women as opposed to the generations past where it's primarily African American men, quite a bit older.

[00:18:46.10] Shane Begg: Do you feel like there's a reason why they're hiring more - well, maybe not hiring but -

[00:18:50.09] Charlotte Jones: I don't think it's a hiring process as it's more of an interest, of who's actually applying for these jobs. And it's kind of similar to veterinarians, they're typically women nowadays I think. I don't know the stats on this but I read this recently - so, maybe it's not true but - that field is primarily caucasian women.

[00:19:14.01] Shane Begg: So, is there any one experience - either good or bad - that was very interesting or... good or bad?

[00:19:26.16] Charlotte Jones: There's been quite a few! It is by far an interesting job. Let me try and think of something more recent... That's a broad question. Do you want any specifics?

[00:19:42.29] Shane Begg: Let's just say, like, an experience that's just really bad.

[00:19:59.00] Charlotte Jones: Just about a year and a half ago I picked up a family from St. Louis and Royal Street. We have a small hack stand over there and, it was a family of four. They weren't kids, it was actually two older adults and then one of their elderly parents. We did an hour tour so, it was an instant \$200 booking which was a good way to start the day, and we were going up Frenchmen Street with my mule at the time Praline. Now, Praline had a couple of issues here and there, she was only on the road for a few months - about six months, maybe longer - and I was not aware - I'd only been

driving for a month or two - that she was afraid of garbage trucks. Now, we were in front of the Spotted Cat and the garbage truck was in front of us. It was pulled over to the side and I thought that we could work around it and apparently, well, she refused to go by and that's when I found out, later on, that she was terrified of garbage trucks. It was about a struggle, I got her to stop and look at Snug Harbour and, while she was stopped long enough I told the family to go ahead and step down. I wasn't sure what was about to happen, and I was in a small carriage - the ones where you can face each other. Now, Praline and I tangoed, that's a good way to put it, where she kept trying to turn around and I kept trying to make her straighten out. And at one point, while we were doing this tango, I was able to get my manager on the phone. She was on the way to come help and eventually Praline pulled a U-turn. In the process we dented Bicycle Michael's truck - sorry, it's not funny but, later it was funny - and, so, there was a perfect little dent in the door from the tire of the wheel, or, the rubber of the wheel, actually bumping it. So, she pulls the U-turn and then she flat out charged down the street. I had the lines wrapped around my hands. I was yelling "woah! Woah!" and it sounded more like "bah!", and I was pulling back as hard as I could and there was no stopping her. Sometimes I joke with my people, even though it holds truth, that - I took this line from the woman who trained me how to drive - it's a leather contract that the mule can null and void at any time. And that's exactly what happened. Now, we were running the wrong way down Frenchmen Street and right in the intersection of Chartres and Frenchmen Street - the irony of the Praline Connection being right there was not lost on me by the way - there was a car and luckily a beer delivery guy yelled at him to stop (or her, I don't know who it was). So, she was stopped in the middle of the intersection and I yanked to the left as hard as I could and, somehow, we went to the left of the car without scraping up the side of it. I have no clue how that happened, I kind of blacked out from adrenaline, and it wasn't until we were right at the fire station at the foot of Frenchmen Street that I was able to turn her back the right way. And then we ran up Esplanade through the Marigny triangle, which was the path that she's used to going back to the barn, and we ran all the way back to the barn with no other issues. So, it easily could have been a \$10,000 accident. It was only a couple of hundred because of the dent in Bicycle Michael's door. So, that was by far probably the worst day I had on the job and, I came to work the next day and my boss was, like, "do you want to start training mules?". So, that's when I started to learn to work a little bit more with them, especially newer mules.

[00:24:07.15] Shane Begg: You just went back to the barn? Like, you were done?

[00:24:11.19] Charlotte Jones: That day, yeah. And then, I couldn't get off the carriage I was like \* shaking \*. So, I couldn't move, I was frozen. And then that's when the tears came, I was like "aahh!". So, it was definitely a memorable day, probably one of the worst days. Now, in contrast to that the best days are just, not only when you're rocking, you're doing a lot of tours, but it's just, the weather's perfect, the days are nice. I know I've had a few crazy days where it's just been a lot has happened at one point and... I don't know, I'll get back to you on that. But, overall, my worst day was substantially worse than most other drivers have dealt with, you know, that's not an everyday thing, that was a, hopefully, once in a career type of thing.

[00:25:20.06] Shane Begg: Just one last question from me. What is actually the costume that you wear like?

[00:25:24.21] Charlotte Jones: There's no costume.

[00:25:26.22] Shane Begg: You just wear regular clothes?

[00:25:27.26] Charlotte Jones: Wear regular clothes. Sometimes, I mean I like to - this is also just my own eccentricness but - I like to decorate hats and wear them out there. Sometimes you want to wear something that might draw a little bit more attention, like sequin or something fun. One of the other carriages, they're uniformed - one of the carriage companies, they have to wear uniforms out there. By far the best dresser out there is David Carrier, who's been driving for a few decades now and he's known publicly as 'the Purple Man'. So, you'll see him out there, his carriage is purple, his gear is purple and he's dressed head to toe in purple. And he looks really sharp.

[00:26:14.21] Shane Begg: Alright, well, I think we're ready to take a little break right now? We're going to switch up the interviewers.

[00:26:21.08] Monica Guarnieri: It was really cool just hearing you talk to Shane and finding out a bit more about your background and how you came to be where you are. Shane's actually from here whereas, as you can tell, I'm not. So, I'm just really curious about you doing what you do and I was wondering about the history that you talk about on the tour: is it very old history, kind of 18th/19th/20th century? Or do you take it more recent?

[00:26:48.08] Charlotte Jones: It's generally, kind of, the founding of the city. I really only get up to about the war of 1812 by the time I come back. On the thirty minute ride it does go by pretty quickly. But - this is also from me being such a history nerd over the years - I try to make it all flow, good transitions and segways from one topic to a next or one building to a next. And I definitely throw in some contemporary stories as well. This year has been fun because of the tricentennial, so, I've been throwing in a couple of little stories there, such as, the barge canal ploughing into Mardi Gras World.

[00:27:34.04] Monica Guarnieri: Wait, what was that?

[00:27:37.01] Charlotte Jones: Right around the inauguration of Mayor Cantrell, the inauguration was held up at Mardi Gras World and - I think it was the same day, that might be something I'm embellishing on my tour - a barge canal on the Mississippi river ran into one of their warehouses. I tell people it's okay to laugh about because no one got hurt, which is true. So, that's kind of a fun way to talk about, like, "we literally crashed our own birthday party", which is very New Orleans.

[00:28:06.11] Monica Guarnieri: That's a good line.

[00:28:07.11] Charlotte Jones: Yeah. So, I'll talk about some contemporary stuff like that. The Mardi Gras beads incident with the drains earlier this year, when they were cleaning out the drains and they found forty-six tonnes of Mardi Gras beads -

[00:28:25.09] Monica Guarnieri: Oh wow.

[00:28:25.27] Charlotte Jones: Yeah, so. People love that story.

[00:28:28.04] Monica Guarnieri: That's a good headline. So, what about you personally, is there a particular era that you're particularly interested in, or is it kind of just all of it? Is there more recent stuff that maybe you've delved into yourself?

[00:28:44.14] Charlotte Jones: I just, I love the city. I've been doing a little bit more research about the agriculture and livestock industry in New Orleans. As you can probably guess it's related to mules. But that's not something I talk about on my tour. But along the way I've been learning a lot about some of our early founding stuff, history. My background and what I really enjoy telling people about is the cultural legacies of New Orleans. Music, art, things like that.

[00:29:28.05] Monica Guarnieri: Those are the kind of things, I guess, that would also rope in more millennials.

[00:29:32.20] Charlotte Jones: Yeah. The problem is, too, you only have someone walking by to really advertise. I mean, of course there's flyers and advertisements and stuff out there that the companies put out but when you're just trying to get someone who's walking by you can't get into too much, basically. You just go: "history! Architecture! culture!". Sometimes that helps.

[00:29:55.22] Monica Guarnieri: What about, for you personally? I'm curious. You're a non-native, but you were inspired by that trip when you were thirteen, as you mentioned before, and I was just wondering how it is to come to a city with no - I'm guessing you don't have any family connection to it?

[00:30:12.00] Charlotte Jones: No.

[00:30:13.15] Monica Guarnieri: Would you say you feel connected here? You feel almost like a native?

[00:30:17.17] Charlotte Jones: I think so. Of course, that's like heresy around here sometimes. But, I've lived here - and I tell people this, too, when they try and give me slack about being a transplant - I've been here my whole adult life. I didn't have much say before then, so. Of course, over the years I've

had circles of friends that I don't really hang out with as much anymore or made new circles of friends, and when I first came here I was working at the Waldorf School, I was the aftercare instructor, and so I actually made friends with families in New Orleans as well. That's helped a lot in that regard, where I kind of have my surrogate Bywater family. I'll go over for dinner, things like that, so that's always a good help.

[00:31:08.06] Monica Guarnieri: Yeah, that's really cool. I mean, you've talked about the stereotypes or the myths of the transplant, are there any stereotypes or myths of the city's reputation that you have to debunk on your tours? Like, tourist questions or tourist assumptions?

[00:31:25.19] Charlotte Jones: Definitely some stereotypes around Bourbon Street, and how you get beads, if you know what I mean.

[00:31:33.24] Monica Guarnieri: I do, yep.

[00:31:41.24] Charlotte Jones: I think that's really it, in terms of debunking myths. Now, there's actual stories or histories that sometimes you have to be a buzzkill about, Lafitte's blacksmith shop being the main one. About, "this is where the pirates were blacksmith-ing". That's not quite the case but, you know, again it's kind of, you're also piggy backing off of stories that have been told for decades now.

[00:32:10.09] Monica Guarnieri: Just again, going back to when you're doing the tour, is there something that's your personal favourite part? Favourite monument or favourite spot?

[00:32:26.16] Charlotte Jones: I don't get to talk about it as much as I would like to but, the intersection of Chartres and St. Peter has an absolutely phenomenal history, of the Cabildo, the church, Jackson Square, the buildings behind it, pirate's alley. There's just a lot happening in that intersection. So, that's always fun, to kind of stop there for a minute and to do a refresher about the Spanish influence in New Orleans. My favourite tour to do which I don't get to do a lot, especially now that I'm back on night shift, is actually a Treme tour. That's a lot of fun and not a lot of people request that tour because they don't know that the Treme is back there. That's a fun time to talk about, more of cultural practices in the city,

second lines, jazz funerals, just even getting out of the French Quarter a little bit, without it being the Marigny which is also so much like the French Quarter in some ways.

[00:33:28.25] Monica Guarnieri: I was just about to ask you, if you do manage to take your tour that often out of the French Quarter and, if you do, is it mainly Treme?

[00:33:36.03] Charlotte Jones: It's, well, a lot of times when it's the hour tour you're going to go into the marigny neighbourhood, that's what most people want to do. If you have a mule who likes to pick up the pace a little bit you can actually hit up both the Treme and the Marigny in an hour tour. And then, this doesn't happen a lot, but every now and then you get a customer who's willing to throw down quite a bit of money to do a garden district tour, which is, a good day. And it's fun! It's a complete break from the usual routine.

[00:34:11.03] Monica Guarnieri: Is there a favourite neighbourhood that you have of the city? Outside of touring, just for you personally. Or is it all in the French Quarter?

[00:34:20.19] Charlotte Jones: Probably the Treme, Bayou St. John. I mean they're all great in their own ways. Now, of all the neighbourhoods I've lived in in New Orleans, Treme was by far the safest and in a lot of ways the most fun. 'Cause you're walking distance to the Quarter, you're right there near everything else, it's a quick bike ride to other parts of the city, or car ride. So.

[00:34:48.06] Monica Guarnieri: I think, I'm not sure exactly when, but there was that big interstate that was built through Treme? And was some of the neighbourhood lost to that?

[00:34:59.18] Charlotte Jones: Yeah, 'cause historically it was a prominent African American corridor and they erased so much of it to put up the interstate. That was the 50s or 60s - see that's where that, not embellishment comes in but, you can't get everything accurate all the time.

[00:35:24.25] Monica Guarnieri: I suppose, you could say, what happened to that area of Treme is kind of reflective of a lot of the city. I was just wondering if, in your time living here and being here, you've

experienced a lot of change? Or have you witnessed a lot of change, especially with things like gentrification and stuff like that?

[00:35:43.14] Charlotte Jones: There has been a lot. When I was at UNO you saw a lot of recovery, especially being out by the lake. So, there was vast differences there. And then, as I was done with UNO I was primarily a downtown girl living either in the Treme or the Marigny. I never lived in the Bywater. You definitely see those waves of gentrification coming in and, unfortunately, I know I'm part of the problem, even though I was not buying up property and turning it into Air B&Bs or whatever, but I was also kind of one of those like "oh here's cheap rent, I'm going to rent this spot". And, then eventually I was also getting priced out. So, it's a cycle.

[00:36:34.03] Monica Guarnieri: For sure.

[00:36:35.21] Charlotte Jones: It's a difficult cycle.

[00:36:39.18] Monica Guarnieri: I was just curious, I know that we've gone from serious to lighter, but just for some more fun questions - is there any kind of classic New Orleans thing that you've just, like a secret shame, that you've just never done. Like, never had a Poboy. That's impossible but something like that.

[00:36:57.24] Charlotte Jones: There was one I was just talking about the other day. I've had a Poboy , I've had a lot of Poboy. I've never been to Poboy Festival though, which I feel like people kind of admonish me for.

[00:37:12.23] Monica Guarnieri: I went the other day, it was good! It was my first time, it was good.

[00:37:19.12] Charlotte Jones: I've never been, so, there we go. I was not a big fan of Mid-Summer Mardi Gras. I only did that once and I was like "never doing this again. It's too hot and I'm in a costume".

[00:37:31.25] Monica Guarnieri: What about regular Mardi Gras, is there a favourite or even your own little tradition that you have for Mardi Gras?

[00:37:44.18] Charlotte Jones: I generally try to catch Zulu, I catch it right at Basin Street, it's actually very close to our barn so that works too. And then, it's into the Quarter, into the Quarter and the Marigny. I generally try to wrap up the night at Frenchmen Street, that's been kind of my little self tradition for the last few years. And it varies, so.

[00:38:09.27] Monica Guarnieri: That sounds fun. And, probably me coming at it as someone that's new to the city, from someone who lives and breathes it - you can tell -: say you had a friend coming into town for a day and you had a day together in the city, where would you take them? Is there a particular spot or even restaurant that you would take them to?

[00:38:33.28] Charlotte Jones: It's really grown on me over the last couple of years. I have become partial to Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop, which is the ultimate kind of New Orleans touristy spot. So, you can kind of see the irony there. That and, I mean, even though I see the French Quarter every day there's always something new to see, to learn, and coming out of the gate it's down to the quarter whenever I have a friend in town. Then if they need to get any kind of Bourbon Street thing out of the way, go ahead and get it done, and then we can go to the more localized spots, areas; whether it be Frenchman Street, or even just going down to the bayou in City Park, things like that.

[00:39:25.00] Monica Guarnieri: Yea. I know this is kind of a difficult question but, if you could maybe think about a kind of essence, or something like, could you say what makes New Orleans New Orleans. Because I've heard a lot of people say how different it is from the rest of the U.S., obviously compared to outside the U.S. but just even within the states how different it is.

[00:39:54.02] Charlotte Jones: So, the toughest question of all, this city has seen three hundred years of struggle, perseverance, disasters but also recovery, and it's never; as other cultures have come in they've blended together, whether through force or assimilation or just for fun, that feeling of calm through chaos never leaves. It's totally ok to be yourself, it's no issue whatsoever slapping on a sequin

dress on a Tuesday morning, or stumbling out into the street because you're so drunk, or whatever. Or whether you're part of high society and you're kind of in your own bubble that way, so this city comes with no judgement, which is one of the great things about it.

[00:40:59.00] Monica Guarnieri: Yea that's really cool. I know it's one of the oldest cities in the states, and with kind of an area that has so much rich history, would you say what's kind of the key maybe for New Orleans future, looking forward. Maybe something that we should...

[00:41:19.09] Charlotte Jones: Not trying to compete with everyone else in the U.S. That's the key.

[00:41:25.20] Monica Guarnieri: In what way?

[00:41:29.04] Charlotte Jones: Not trying to be Nashville or LA or Cleveland or New York, just keeping what we've been doing in some ways.

[00:41:41.18] Monica Guarnieri: Awesome. Just one final question before we wrap up. Do you have a plan, maybe for your career after, or are you just enjoying doing the carriage tours around right now, or is there something that you would like to do.

[00:41:57.09] Charlotte Jones: I can see myself being a buggy driver for a while. I really enjoy the job. I mean, you still have your, sometimes you're not sure about, am I gonna pay rent this month if you're not getting rides during the slow season. But overall, I really enjoy it. Now I have applied to Tulane for one of their master's programs so I'm waiting to hear back on that, and I've also recently been appointed to the board of the French Market Corporation, so that's going to be some kind of crazy volunteer work that I am excited and terrified about. We'll see what happens there. But, I'm pretty content with where I am right now.

[00:42:51.00] Monica Guarnieri: Cool. Well thank you so much for your time it's been really, really interesting to talk to you.

[00:42:56.07] Charlotte Jones: Thank you guys.