

## Voices of Southern Hospitality: An Oral History Project

**Interviewee:** Barnes, Dorothy

**Place of Interview:** Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities Center, 2125  
Dorchester Road, North Charleston, SC

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**Interviewed by:** Gracey, Angus

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**Abstract:** In this interview, Dorothy Barnes talks about her upbringing in Dewey Hill, a segregated neighborhood in North Charleston. She provides details about her family history, including how her parents ended up meeting and marrying. She describes the agrarian lifestyle of the time of her great grandmother and the work available in the fields or in households. Barnes reminisces returning to her past home and seeing the changes that have taken place over generations. Throughout the interview, she recounts her experiences as a young girl and how her tight-knit community influenced her as a person and her views about the modern era.

**Biographical Note:** Dorothy Barnes was born in 1946 in a small community called Dewey Hill in the North Charleston area. Growing up, her father worked for General Asbestos and Rubber Company Main Mill. As a child, she spent time with other children in the neighborhood, playing baseball and hanging out by the riverbank. As she got older, it was necessary to move from Dewey Hill to Liberty Hill because of the closing of the asbestos factory. She left for college on a scholarship and found work at North Carolina State University. After, she returned to Charleston where she still resides with her husband.

**Project Details:**

Beginning in the summer of 2018, student researchers from the College of Charleston conducted oral histories for the research project, *Voices of Southern Hospitality*. The project documents diverse opinions and stories about southern hospitality in Charleston, South Carolina, but also offers a deeper and more intimate history of a changing community. Over the past thirty years (early-1990s to 2018), the Charleston peninsula and its surrounding islands have experienced rapid economic growth and rapid cultural and ecological changes. The *Voices of Southern Hospitality* project chronicles this profound transformation with the personal histories of Charleston residents.

The project was launched in June 2018 with funding from The Committee for Innovative Teaching and Learning in the Liberal Arts and Sciences at the College of Charleston. In addition to documenting important stories, the project was designed to train College of Charleston students in oral history research methods.

### **Interview Begin**

**Interviewer Initials: A.G.**

**Interviewee Initials: D.B.**

**DB:** And I hope you can understand what I'm saying.

**AG:** Okay. This is Angus Gracey. I'm sitting down with Dorothy Barnes at the LAMC Center, and it is April 29th, 2019. And so, my first question for you is where did you grow up?

**DB:** I grew up in a neighborhood called Dewey Hill.

**AG:** Okay.

**DB:** And that's in North Charleston, South Carolina.

**AG:** Okay. And when did your family first arrive in Charleston?

**DB:** I cannot answer that. Let's see... My father, when we're talking family, my father and grandfather. This is all on the [inaudible] side. I cannot tell you exactly what city,

state the family originated. My... I do know that I have family that were from, like, Eutawville area, that's South Carolina. I don't know if there is another state involved. I do know that the DNA analysis of a number of family members, that there is quite a--I call it mishmash because it's very varied when you look at nationalities. So, I come to the conclusion that we, especially because we're African Americans and knowing how a lot of the African Americans got here and the mobility of our trade and that sort of thing, that what some family members who've had their DNA evaluated, truly represent America because they have... And I mean, it is amazing at the mixture. Okay. So, I do know that I have not had it done for myself. We--those of us who are in this area are here, but there are a number of family members that I do know that have moved away. A number of--mostly the males. When they were able to, they didn't like South Carolina. They made their homes elsewhere but kept in touch. And as a result of that, I know them, have a number of family members that have migrated, if you will. They're in Florida and the Northeast area. Not many that have gone to the West, the West side. But, like I said, quite a few.

**AG:** Okay. And what did your family do for a living when you were growing up?

**DB:** Okay. And growing up, starting with my dad, my dad worked for the business called Raybestos or General Asbestos. This company owned the property of my birthplace called Dewey Hill. And that property, Dewey Hill, was occupied by black and whites. The communities weren't exactly joined. They were--all the whites were in one area, congested area, unified, if you will. And all the blacks were in a unified area. I do know from growing up in that area that there were many more homes there--I'm talking physical homes--than what I was accustomed to during my time there. And these people had moved away, and a number of them ended up perhaps where we are right now or went to the Liberty Hill area. So, there is--that history is beyond my scope, but I do know that because we saw evidence of it where there was a house maybe burned down or whatever. And there were other sections and roads that led to those sections, and these roads were the ones nearest the water. The Goose Creek, I guess; those waters. And it was those waters that my uncle, this is my maternal uncle, which is, well, when my mom... Let's see. When my mother came to Charleston from the...not Eutaw, from the Holly Hill area I believe, but when she came here, she stayed with this uncle I'm referring to. So, he's an uncle to me because he's her uncle, but he is a great uncle for me, obviously because of the generation. The...let's see. But the uncle was... Well,

my mom came to... So that became her home and she--this is pretty neat. She met my father because of her uncle because they worked both at General Asbestos. So, Mom met Dad because my uncle knew my dad, and that's how they got introduced and they fell in love and they got married. The uncle is the one person that the--what do you call it?--the matriarch of the family, my mother's grandmother, my great grandmother. She sent Mom here because Mom would be safer. No, it's not a segue, but it's, you know, it's the truth. You wanted to know how. My mom was sent by her grandmother and that grandmother, my great grandmother, was indeed the head of the family. And she, obviously like I said, because for her age and everything, she went way back. She did... She knew how to--shoot, what was it?--plant sugar. She knew how to do certain kinds of farming, like rice planting, that sort of thing. All different kinds of things. But she... If I had slightly older family members, they could give you more detail. But she had that as an upbringing. And she had sisters; and her sisters, they were groomed to be servants.

**AG:** This is your grandmother's...

**DB:** This was my grandmother's--my grandmother's sisters. They were groomed to be servants and others worked. They made their living farming. Okay. And the grandmother, she was, like I said, the head of the household. She pretty much... She was, she was the one. She had three husbands. The first husband lost his life. He was a logger, I think, chopping down and sending these things down the river and that kind of stuff. So, he had an accident, and there were no children. And then she--so that's the first husband, and I can't remember the last name, but anyhow. Then she married, and this husband...oh, what did he do? I can't remember. But nonetheless, okay. She married this one, and they started having children. And those children were mostly boys, and they were taught to farm. When it came to girls, my great grandmother did not want the girls to be farmers. So, they were groomed to be servants. And that's what she did. And my mom would talk about it because she benefited as a little girl. She remembered how they dressed and all of that. And in the course of all of this [inaudible], my mother would teach her girls, and her girls could be generations apart from her. But the girls, like remember I said she was there head of the house. She taught them how to act, behave, that sort of thing, and she groomed them as such. It turns out that my mom didn't want girls--my great grandmother didn't want girls working in the fields and stuff. So, my great grandmother arranged to have my mom

get jobs working indoors instead of out there in the field. And so--and pursuing that, it turned out that working indoors was not a good thing for Mom because she was, they tried to--the head of the household tried to take advantage of here, and Mom let my great grandmother know about it. So, all she had to do was hear something like that 'cause she wanted to know. She got it and [inaudible]. So, when this incident came up, she said, "Okay, that's it,"--because she just wasn't going to put her in the fields-- "You're going to Charleston." So, my great grandmother got my mom here. That's why she came because she was at the point where now it's time for her to, you know, be doing something. And what this person tried to do with Mom, that shut it down; my great grandmother was not going to have it. As a matter of fact, she... There were--I think that was the last one that my great grandmother tried to groom to work as a servant. She got her out of here. So, Mom came here to stay with her uncle, and my uncle obviously took care of her.

**AG:** Were there more jobs in Charleston? Is that why she came here?

**DB:** Yes. Uh huh. And, you know, with the military and everything, restaurants, she targeted those. She did not--she never did target coming here and then working in somebody's house and that kind of stuff. So, she--Mom can... Let's see. I'm trying to think. Mom talked about Colonel Sanders. You know who I'm talking about?

**AG:** Kentucky Fried Chicken.

**DB:** Exactly. Yeah. Mom was saying that she remembered when he was, I guess, touring and he was promoting his chicken, you know, the way it tasted or whatever. And she said that she met him, and I said, oh. So then, somehow or another, Mom was able to get into restaurants as cooks and stuff because cooking was something that the great grandmother taught them as well. Obviously, they're going to work as a servant in somebody's house, they need to know how to cook and that kind of stuff. So, with the training that she was given, she was able to move forward with that. So, but she not only did that, but she would--with the people that knew her, and the fact that... I don't know, maybe just because they knew her, she ended up getting more than one different kind of opportunity. So, there she was, like, networking, but everything had to be OKed by this uncle and he needed to let my great grandmother know how she was doing, blah blah blah. So, remember what I said, Mama met my dad and through--by

her uncle, her keeper, the one who was--and he was accountable to my great grandmother. She always wanted to know, you know, how things were going 'cause he knew, he knew exactly what his position should be. And so, Dad was pretty good. So, he said, "Yeah, so I let him talk to her," and they ended up getting married. And that ended up in my dad--that's how my dad became my dad because of the circumstances that happened up in the Holly Hill, Eutawville area. Okay. So, he sent her here because he did not want, I mean, she did not want none of the girls working in the fields and stuff, just so you can do better. So, Mom came here and when they decided that... My dad had asked my uncle for her hand in marriage, and the requirement would be that he also had to ask the great grandmother. Yeah. So that's what, you know, my mom just knew that's uncle's idea, but it's what she says. And so, he got the blessing, which was a good thing. So, that--what do you call it? Like, networking and I'm sure that's nothing new to--well, it shouldn't be. I don't think that's anything new to anyone like me. Like, that's the story; I know about it. And the great grandmother, like I said, she had the knowledge with all the farming and stuff, she raised chickens. Not that--it does not make her unique. I'd put it in perspective, but she was the one that--she did that and she taught it.

**AG:** Was that common in the community?

**DB:** I would think so because even though they were in, like we say country, she was up there, you know, they had the open fields and stuff. There was cotton, not so much tobacco, but there was, you know, certain crops. It was... That area was ideal for that crop obviously, you know. I learned that there were huge pecan farms and stuff like that up in that area. So, whatever that wide open space was used for, they did the best they could with that, and you know, [inaudible]. I've met some of the people 'cause Mom knew about them, and we've been up there, and she remembers where certain ones were, and she would go. And now she's tapping on the door, and it's not the folks that she remembers. It's the maybe second, third, or fourth generation, but they're still there. Those that farmed the pecans, those things, the grands, I mean, great grands and that kind of--they're still there. And they taught me some--I got a chance to meet them. Mom wanted, she said "I want some good pecans." And we rode up and she's said, "Now, wait a minute," because things have changed with the landscape, but she says, "Okay, go tap on that door." (laughing) I did. And I asked, "Are you...", trying to think of the names. I can't remember, because my mom just told

me about it when we were there, but anyhow. And the guy says, yeah. He says, "I'm about three generations later, you know." So, I said, "Well, do you still do this?" He said, "Oh, yeah." He says, "Not so much." He says, "We have a bunch of it." And Mom mentioned her family's name and he said, "Yeah, yeah, we know them well." She said, "Well, do you have any pecans?" And he says, "Well, yeah, we do." And I'm looking, I'm thinking about the time of year and I said, huh. And he says, "Well, you know, they freeze well." And he says, we have--he called it a cooler. He says, " We got plenty in the cooler." So, he said, "Hold on." He filled up a box and it was ice cold and he says, "Here. Give these to her." And so, we did that. But... So those, you know, generations are still there; some have moved, others have not. But I guess, historically, everybody that had anything in common with what I had can probably tell you the same thing. So, that's how people--that, I think, is how you make it, you know. And with, let's see, with accountability within the family and respect for that. That's how we made it. So, with my uncle and some of the stories that I have learned, I've learned from younger ones who were even closer to it than me, but Mom shared some things with me and did not do the same thing with, like, a younger brother. I've got a brother that I can be his mom. He was born my second year in college.

**AG:** Oh wow.

**DB:** Yeah. So, they decided to have one more, and he ended up being the tallest and the wisest of all of us. A generational gap, you know. It's amazing, the difference in the, I guess, the learning curve or whatever. But it is amazing. So, he didn't experience a number of things that we experienced, but we were taught how to be safe. We were taught, well, everything started in the church obviously, but we were taught. Now what... Dewey Hill, I told you about my mom and my dad, so how they ended up being my mom and dad through my great grandmother sending my mom here because she didn't want any kind of harm to come to her. And, like I said, she looked out for them. I figured it out later on. There's nothing new under the sun. She knew what could or could not happen, and I've learned that it's possible that within the family supplement that has happened. So, she's speaking from either personal or some close association experience and she didn't want that. She guarded her family. And that's how... I guess that's how we all make it for the ones that really care. So, one person can make a difference, and she did because of what she did. But she, like I said, she lived quite a long life. She met my husband before he was my husband. And her words to him was

she called me her child. She did. I thought I was special and the rest of them told me, said, well, that's what she said to me too. So, I thought it was just me. They said no, it wasn't. But with her, it always felt like she loved me, had no intention of saying she didn't love. So, it's also, like I say, she loved me and because she showed it. And it was a personal thing. It doesn't have--there's nothing that needs to be shown or revealed in a crowd. That was like the one on one. So, she was a pipe smoker.

**AG:** This is your...

**DB:** The great grandmother. The pipe smoker and some others. And I have, fast forward, I have... I had a cousin. I had a cousin that would say things like, "The great grandmother, she lived to be over 100 and she smoked. So, why can't I?" I say, "Well. The reason why you shouldn't--I can't say that you can't because you are, I can't say you can't smoke because you are a smoker. But the tobacco that you're taking in," I said, "it's designed to keep you coming back to smoke more and more." I said, "What she had, that wasn't the case." And I said, "Because before she got here, people were smoking, and it wasn't doing it." I said, "She lived to be that old because she took care of herself." And I said, "It's not just the tobacco. It's a number of other different things. You can't say that you'll be fine because she smoked." I said, "That's an excuse." Alright. So, that's that. Mom, through... call it migration or change of scenery, because she did that, she met my dad and here I am.

**AG:** Here you are.

**DB:** And then beyond me, there are four more. The other three, about two years apart. And she waited quite a few years and then wanted to have one more and so then she had my brother when I was in college, my second year in school. So, that's how we got here. Now we--when I say "we", family-wise and on Dewey Hill--we had black and whites, but there was a...we call "line of demarcation." We had these houses occupied by whites and the others by the blacks. And... Let's see. We went to different schools. We were bused from Dewey Hill to Liberty Hill. Now, Liberty Hill, at that point, that's a newly built school, Liberty Hill for the elementary and then Bonds-Wilson was for the high schoolers. Okay. Now, for the black and whites, schools were separate. Prior to that, it was a section called Reid Hill. I think it's R-E-I-D. Reid Hill. And it was a place where people--you could go and they had, like, a center for, like, they would take care



of your pets, like where they needed to get rabies shot. That kind of stuff... Not only the pets, but medical for folks as well where you would go and get your vaccinations and things like that. I told you I was born in 1946, so this was right around the war and stuff. Okay. So, I'm just new to the planet. I don't have any kind of recollection or anything because April, 1946, I wouldn't have, I'm an infant as well, so right on the cusp of things being different. So, I am sure that my dad did not... Yeah, he did not go into any part of the military. Right. You know, I was trying to think. But, later, I'm trying to think, he, being the first born and his father, you know, losing my grandmother in childbirth, my grandfather became a merchant seaman. And so, he traveled quite a bit and my dad stayed with my grandfather's family. And all that, like I said, preceded me. So, that's history that precedes all that. But my dad and my grandfather, that's the line, you know, of kinship, and my grandfather did remarry, and he had nine more.

**AG:** Oh wow.

**DB:** Yeah. Everybody believed in... Or didn't believe in birth control, but everybody believed in having a family. So, in the case of my mom, my mom is the second of three girls. And each...well two are... My mom was now recently deceased, and her sister is here. She moved from the Holly Hill area here, and she met her husband up there in the Holly Hill area, but they moved to Charleston because of her husband's work, and he's now deceased.

**AG:** So, you mentioned that you moved from Dewey Hill to Liberty Hill?

**DB:** Ah well, the family... by the time... When the move from Dewey Hill came about, it was mandatory.

**AG:** It was mandatory. Why was that?

**DB:** Okay. The factory, General Asbestos or Raybestos, they are in the asbestos business, those shingles and number of other things. And with that business and with business changes, I don't know the chemistry of it, but when those things came about, they started to learn that there was a problem with it. Then it's not [inaudible] anything, but they're no longer in business. So, what happened was, with the demise of all of that, they shut down. And remember what I said about the housing, the property and all that; it was all owned by Raybestos. And they--so, when they decided that that's

what they were going to do, everybody had to leave. And as a result of that, the area where Dewey Hill was, the entire area, that was, I guess, barricaded because they actually had some--and still there had been, like, with the property, they have sold it and I see they got things like the tank farms and that kind of stuff there instead. Now, sealing off the Dewey Hill area, which puzzled me is that, well, there's no access to it and that I can remember, 'cause I'm living up at northeast now and when I came here, you have a tendency to go back and, like, walk on home ground. I said, I wonder how it looks now. And I go and there's a sign, there's a fence up and a sign that cautions you about stuff and not to create any dust. And so, those signs, to me, were scary. And I had pulled my car up 'cause I'm driving, this is off Virginia. That's how, you know, that was a roadway. Virginia and... Virginia Avenue or Virginia Road or whatever, where we would turn, that would be-- we would reach... The first thing, structure, that we would reach would have been the church; the church where my memories start about church because I can remember—remember now, I was born in '46. I can remember as a little child sitting, and someone would have to have to pick me up and sit me on the bench. And when you're sitting on the bench, everybody else is sitting and my feet, it's not even past the benchmark. I'm sitting back and I can't see much because the lighting was, you know, dark, but there would be singing and stuff in that church. And now, if I fast forward to where I'm a teenager, we're no longer in that church, but we're still on Dewey Hill. And another church had been built. And in that church you could see lighting and everything, and it was closer to home 'cause we walked to church. And so, that was, like fast forwarding in time. The whites were on the front part. I never really walked through the white section. I don't recall how many rows or blocks there were, but that was the section and beyond that was curb and a dirt road, a steep dirt road that went down because there'd be... That church that I--remember the first one? That was hard to see and dark and all that. It was on a hill. In other words, they must have dredged out that road. And that road gave access to... It was, it was apparently actually leading to the water, but it would take you down this steep road and then out into an opening. And then there's, first thing I see would be a store on the right and you go down a little further and there's that church, the church that I can remember where I, you know, grew up and everything. And beyond the church, you'd go back and there's a grove of peach and plum trees that someone planted. I'm suspicious of my uncle or not, but it's kind of odd to see, you know, all of those things growing together. I'm sure that my uncle did it. The one that my mom stayed with when she came to Charleston

because he too had a--I call it a victory garden on Dewey Hill in front of where he stayed. Houses used to be there, but the house is no longer there. It's good dirt. So, he would grow and give away a lot of the vegetables and stuff or put into the freezer a number of things that he grew. My mom even had a few roles where she had... I called her the victory garden, and she was teaching us how to water with a dipper and stuff. And we would--we would tell you; she could actually see us from our house, from her standing on the back porch because it was safe. But she wanted us to make sure that we put the water on the vegetables that she's trying to grow. And so, we are the age now where we got to... we were given a job to do. And she would do that, but then my job being the oldest would be to teach the others and that's how things get passed down one to the other. And it was something to do. We did things like we played with neighbor kids. We played with folks maybe in the other block, the older ones would get us together and we'd have an impromptu game. We would play baseball, and we could do it. We didn't have a field to play in, but we would do it in the street. So, if a car's coming, you just stopped the game, let the car come by. Or if the car saw us, rather than to have us interrupt the game, they would simply go to the next block and go around us and let us play. So, we had that freedom because it was sharing and understanding, you know. Your neighbors. Your neighbor would be anybody that lives in the community.

**AG:** So, it was a pretty tight-knit community?

**DB:** Yeah. How we had gotten to that place where whatever changes that may or may not have come out from the factory, keeping this in mind, this is all that property that belongs to the plant. Nobody owned anything. The house, nothing. Nobody owned anything. And I think preceding these, kind of, arrangements, there were folks that stayed there that did not necessarily work at that plant. Eventually what happened was only people that worked at the factory could stay in that community called Dewey Hill. It was, like, a restriction and right on the cusp of that is when my mom and dad got married because they were married, but there was not a place to stay. So, what Mom says that they did was they got married and we met the preacher that married them, and he was a resident of Dewey Hill. As a matter of fact, he stayed. Right. And he's now retired or was retired when I learned about him. Elder, I think, Cohen was his name, but anyhow, he married my mom and dad, preacher that married them. Rather than to move in with someone else, which is what they were doing now, they decided,

Mom and Dad, that they would just keep working. They're married now. Mom says, "I'm gonna stay right here with my uncle and you can stay where you are. And we're working and we're both working, and we would pool our money and continue to look for a place." And while in the process of doing that, it turned out that a house became available and Dad's still working at the plant at Raybestos. And so, he got that house. And so, that rule change about only those people that work at the plant can live in that community helped my dad, 'cause my dad was already--had been at the plant working and he needed a place and he got it. So, and that's where I was born and three others.

**AG:** What year did you have to leave Dewey Hill? Do you remember?

**DB:** Okay. Oh, boy. Now see... I'm now I'm out of Dewey Hill--me, because I went on to college. And... Let's see. '68, '69.

**AG:** Okay.

**DB:** Something like that. I graduated from high school class of '64 and... Yeah, like, '68, '69, something like that.

**AG:** Okay.

**DB:** And everybody had to leave. Now, here's the neat thing. A number of things, changes came about. Union, you know, where the employees... There was no union until--Oh, Lord. Some pretty close in time when it counts for that. I'm now--actually, I'm out of high school. Trying to think... Some of these things, it didn't bother me because--but with the changes, when changes start, they tend to accelerate.

**AG:** Can you think of some things that caused change? Some developments? Maybe building of the interstate or--

**DB:** I would think that... See, it's not a change that's significant to this place, this town, that plant, whatever. It's this thing with the union. With the union. Folks... Let's see. It was new to me, even, but here's what my dad told me. We were talking, and I just wanted to know how was things. He said, "Oh, pretty good", and said, "We're trying to make it" and I says, "I don't understand." I said, "What do you mean you're trying to make it?" He said, "Well." He says, "We're on strike." I said, "What? What does that mean?" He says, "We're not working." I said, "Why not?" He says, "We're on strike so

that we can make more decent wages." I say, "Wow!" He says "Well, yeah. So, that's what we're doing." And I hadn't long started working, so I said, "Okay, well..." Now I got--I went to school, I got a full scholarship for college, and I was fortunate that here I am in college, getting ready to go and got job offers. So, I was just calling to say everything was, you know, pretty good. Calling. And when Dad said that they were on strike and I say, well, okay, well. It helped me to decide what job offer I would take. So, I went on and here I am, starting to work. So... And getting a place--I never thought about, you know, well, how am I going to do this? I always, what can I do to help? And, so what I did was I actually talked to the folks that wanted to hire me and I said, "But to start," I says, "It's important that I take care of some things as far as my family goes. So, here's what I would like to do." I said, "I want to--like to be able to have a place that's very close to work that I don't need transportation. I don't need this, that, blah, blah, blah." So, and got it just like that. He says, "Okay, here's what you can do." So, I met this beautiful couple. They had children grown, and they were gone. And so, they were like grandparents to me. They met me and they liked me, and I stayed with them. I--what was it? Like \$8--\$8 is what they wanted from me a week, \$8.

**DB:** Wow.

**DB:** And, I said, well, you know, I says, "Well, I needed work out working at North Carolina State, and I can walk to work." See, they were right at the campus, and I didn't have far to go or anything. And I ate there. And so, I didn't need much to live, and every penny that I could, I would send it and I did that, you know, for them. And the striking thing, it didn't last very long. But then Dad said it like happens in most places through communication. People had worked together. Remember what I said about the--where they stayed and all. The whites were here, and the blacks were there. They were there together, and they were all on strike together and they unified everything. And the treatment of the employees. I mean, they had [inaudible], all of that. They were like one, and it meant that by them all sticking to the guns and working together, the things they were asking weren't unreasonable. And it turned out that this thing with the asbestos and all--oh God, you know, later on, bomb. That's like... It takes quite a while to see what harm can come from it. But then, you know, that showed up. And long story short, that's why it's no longer valid. The, you know, that business and, a lot of the--a number of people got hurt behind that and some... What they hurt or the harm that was done wasn't evident for years, but then bam, there it is. So, that's-- what

do you call it?--like, life. And it's not unique to just this area; that's that business. And unfortunately gone, but this thing with that sign that I saw warning folks about--they keep pulling up to this fence in a car, gravel, ground and dusty, and it's warning you about kicking up the dust. And I said, well, what? I went there one time 'cause I had pulled up to it. I said, well, you can't even get through this. It's all fenced off. But then, now there's a business that goes down this road, the road on which that was the very beginning of Dewey Hill where the whites were. And now it's paved, but you still can't get access to anything beyond what you can see. And when you look, there's 526, that goes right on over Virginia Avenue. It goes right over Dewey Hill, and then there's that water. I said, oh my goodness, I do hope--because this thing with cradle-to-grave, accountability of anything that's manufactured from its birth until it's no longer valid or whatever, is important. And I hopefully don't even want to think that anything like that is masked and that something like that, as bad as it is, could be there because I'm concerned about the water, the creek, you know, the water and where we played on Dewey Hill. We played near the water's edge. And my uncle or someone planted plum trees and peach trees and that sort of thing. They fished from the bank. My uncle had his boat, and he would go out into deeper waters and fish as kids. And this is a confession. I never did learn how to swim. I swim like a rock. There's something about my makeup or whatever. You put me in the water, I'm going straight to the bottom. I tried to learn how to just float. I can't hold--capacity, maybe lung capacity--can't hold enough air in me that will keep me afloat. I can do like this, but I'm going--I'll be on the bottom, doing the same thing, trying to float or to swim. So, there's not enough air, and it's this left lung. And when I take the physical, they do this thing where you blow into the tube, you know, you take a deep breath, you know, deep breath and blow, blow, blow, blow, blow. And you got a coach that's saying, "Keep blowing, keep blowing, keep blowing." I've got all that I can out. And you see that poor needle just go down to zero. You know, and it (makes ding noises), and this printout, talking about this side right here. I've had pneumonia. Thought I was dying, but I went in and they told me, and this is what--and I says, well, as a child, I think they called it hay fever. I used to have a lot of those. And I don't know whether it's the asbestos or what, 'cause way back when, when folks left, when they went in to work and whether they drove or they caught the bus or what, their clothing, would have that in their hair and stuff, they would take that stuff home. My dad worked in shipping and receiving, but I don't think he started there. But nonetheless, I used to have lots of episodes, and it could or could

not be--'cause the hygiene, those requirements that they had... When people worked in that room or whatever, in that unit where the stuff was blowing everywhere, there was no requirement for personal protective equipment, that kind of stuff. And they would walk to work or rode to work. Wherever they went, they were depositing a lot of that stuff. And I may or may not be the result of it. But I've got this...I've got it. So, you know, whatever it is, it's, I guess, long-lasting, and things have to build until you get to a certain point. And then says, "Well, gosh, you know, you've got something." But those... There are a number of people who have lost their lives behind that, not knowing and--

**AG:** The rules.

**DB:** Right. Not, you know, not knowing, but now you know. So, there's always... There's never a bad time to stop if something's doing harm, to shut it down and do no additional harm, you know, so harm is harm. So, but then some people--oh gosh, and I've seen the grief on some folks behind that, not knowing.

**AG:** I'm sure.

**DB:** Yeah, not knowing. So, it's unfortunate, but I guess it's all a part of life.

**AG:** Sure.

**DB:** Yeah. Now with the community... So much cars. With the community, it's like close-knit. And if somebody had a problem, the community had a problem. They were always, and still are, very supportive, even though we're not all in one local area. For those who are still here, we communicate and, you know, continue to take care of one another. There was a philosophy that it was a community filled with parents and children and we had more than one parent. And that's how it is. I don't think that it's unique to Dewey Hill, but this is the experience that I had there. Now, you take Skip, who you was talking to. Skip--I don't know that he was born where he is. It could very well be, and he's fortunate and his mom is still here. My mom was much older, but...and she's doing quite well. But in all communities, you've got different levels of love, but it's so overwhelming the kind of respect and support that you got from a place called Dewey Hill in that, like, when it comes to church, preachers, deacons, Sunday school superintendent--and if you were new to the community, you would

stand out like a sore thumb because you have to learn, and you see and experience how we do things and how we did things. Parents would tell us things like... I understand, and here they are talking about something that happened so far away from home and we wonder, well, how in the world--how do they know that? And Mom would say things like, "Well, you know, I've got eyes in the back of my head." Those eyes we're the best thing that could've happened to all of us. And we appreciate it. They looked out for one another.

**AG:** For sure.

**DB:** And did it without telephones and cell phones and stuff like that. But they would get the word out. I've learned that from a great grandmother, one that lived to be very old, they did the very same thing. And we're talking about people that lived, I mean, big distances apart, but they communicated with one another. They did it, and they were always mindful of the children. They took the approach that all children were theirs and they felt responsible for them. They were never, like, "look the other way" and... As far as I'm concerned, life goes on. It continues and it's no different from what we see and do now. We've got ways of communicating quickly, but as long as we keep doing that and those who are caring, those who are actually just really caring. If they care, then they don't sit back and do nothing. They try to do something about it. All of these things that we're doing now is because we care. And there are some who don't have--or they've not been bred to be that way. They don't have much of a choice because that crusade, it continues, and they would end up being highlighted in that they're the odd ones. And it doesn't work. So, doing good, a little bit of good is enough to curtail all the badness. Life is full of good and bad.

**AG:** Sure.

**DB:** That's what makes life, but it's the choices that we make. Now, historically, we're scattered, you know, because of the shutdown, closing the use of a certain area. It's forever gone. The people are scattered in that they're in different places. But we find ways to communicate and do the very same thing that we were doing in one little localized area and take it with us because it's in the heart, you know, it's in the heart. And we take that to... not the next level. We continue to do the good that we were taught to do because my great grandmother had not continued in the ways that she



was accustomed to doing because she moved. And then... maybe I wouldn't be here, I don't know, but maybe I wouldn't be here. My dad passed in the 70s from the plant. He would say that, "Well, you know, I didn't work in that department where they handle all that bad stuff," but my dad ended up with a problem with his lungs, emphysema. And he had an operation, some sort of a procedure where the doctor would go in meticulously and clean out the alveoli sacks. I think he said that's something that can be done only once, whatever. But he did that, and that helped a lot with the breathing. Yeah. You know, and he was a smoker. And I'm going way back when, talk about Lucky Strike and Camels and that kind of stuff. This thing about... What do you call it? The being laced with things to keep the person coming back for more and more smoke. Maybe that's hogwash, maybe not. It's something about what he was doing. And he may have started at a very early age with the smoking. But me being the firstborn, I got fond memories of it was just me and Dad 'cause it was just me.

**AG:** Sure.

**DB:** And then there are others who have come along, but with him, I can hear his deep voice with my ear against his chest. I'm in the swing and he's laughing and talking to that same uncle that he worked with that introduced him to my mom. Same man, laughing and talking with him. And they're smoking and I'm right there with my head against this and hearing them laugh and stuff. Those are my memories because as a baby, an infant, those are things I experienced often. And that swing would lull me to sleep, you know, that kind of stuff. But they were smoking and going on, both of them. And so, you know, who knows? Like I said, who knows? I've got--I told you about the thing with my lungs, and I didn't smoke but I inhaled more than my share of it.

**AG:** Sure.

**DB:** And this thing with exposure and learning about hazards and things like that. Yeah, a lot of people get up in arms about a lot of things. But there is, you know, choices that you make and the ones that you don't make. We've gotten smarter but not necessarily wiser.

**AG:** Sure.

**DB:** You know, knowledge and then what you do with it. That's a different thing. But the community is a community. We can break it down into little segments and stuff. But where I lived, it was a place that wasn't chosen. It's a place that I can look at and I'm thankful for what I was given, you know, the kind of people that were involved in my life and a number of them still there because even the offspring, you know, we carry that with us. It made us, and some things stuck, some didn't.

**AG:** Sure.

**DB:** But we're smarter now. We are... When it comes to, like, these things, I can answer. I just learned how to--I figured out how to turn the volume down so that it doesn't create a problem if I'm in a meeting or in church or something like that. But, you're young and a lot of things that we do, like, you know, I heard you and with confidence and this is great, like, with your tests and everything. Done, you're on to the next thing. That's good. Real good. But the common--what do you call it?--the common goal, as to what we do for each other is important. I think that's why you don't have as many people involved in that sort of thing. That's simply because of who people are. And we're in our own world, but I don't know where a number of these things come from that would lead people to want to help others. But I can see that if we don't do anything, the tendency is to screw up and do the wrong thing over and over and over again.

**AG:** Sure.

**DB:** So, whatever little right is being done, it's very valuable because think about the rate at which things are happening. What bothers me is that with the younger folks is that they are, I don't know, misled. And what I mean by misled is like whatever is popular and not necessarily what is right. And then unfortunately, too many people walk around with their hands like this, and instead of this way where you can do more. You can't... It's like, I don't know. It's like... The focus is off, and the only thing... Well, no, I take that back. The focus, it is off. And I don't understand. I don't understand why most people are comfortable with themselves, or maybe they have blinders on, and they can't see. Well, I don't know. They can't see, but the world needs more and more and more... A few people, they can do a lot. You know, just by nature of the fact that, good is just as... How do you say it? Good is just as...

**AG:** Subjective?

**DB:** Yeah. As anything. Not to... I don't know. I can take a little bit of good and muddy the waters.

**AG:** Okay. I think that might be a good place for us to stop.

**DB:** Okay.

**AG:** I think it's a nice little closing.

**DB:** I can do a lot that way and something in me that won't deter me, you know. Just continue to do that.

**AG:** Well, thank you for your time and sitting down with me today.

**DB:** Thank you.