Voices of Southern Hospitality: An Oral History Project

Interviewee: Woodward, Henrietta

Place of Interview: Starbucks Coffee Shop, West Ashley, South Carolina

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Abstract: In this interview, Henrietta Woodward discusses her youth in the area formerly known as unincorporated Charleston County, her career in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and her hopes for how the Lowcountry will develop in the 21st century. Mrs. Woodward recalls racial segregation during her youth, as well as the strong sense of community in her childhood neighborhood, Union Heights. After graduating from the College of Saint Teresa, Mrs. Woodward worked several different jobs, before beginning a career at HUD. Since her retirement, Mrs. Woodward has worked with the Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities (LAMC) to mitigate gentrification and rising housing prices.

Biographical Note: Henrietta Woodward is a lifelong resident of North Charleston, South Carolina. Born during the years of Jim Crow, Mrs. Woodward spent her childhood in the sUnion Heights community. After receiving her degree from the

College of Saint Teresa in Winona, Minnesota and working several different jobs, Mrs. Woodward began working at HUD as the community development manager for Charleston County. Since retiring from HUD, Mrs. Woodward has worked with LAMC on social and environmental issues affecting minority communities in the Lowcountry. In particular, Mrs. Woodward works with LAMC on issues of gentrification and rising housing prices.

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: AG
Interviewee Initials: HW

AG: Okay. This is Angus Gracey sitting down with Henrietta Woodward on March 12th in West Ashley, Charleston, South Carolina. And my first question is, where did you grow up, Henrietta?

HW: What was considered at that time the unincorporated Charleston County, in a community called Union Heights.

AG: Okay. And where, where is that exactly, or where was that?

HW: Union Heights is situated between this, what is currently now the city of North Charleston in the City of Charleston. They used to call it the Unincorporated Charleston County. And so it's south of, south of the city of Charleston.

AG: And when you were growing up did spend time in the outdoors or on the water?

HW: On the out, outdoors, but not on the water.

AG: Okay.

HW: I grew up in a very, what we would consider low income community and, but we spent all of our time as children on the outside and as a, as a, even as a teenager, if we wanted to go to the water, because of segregation, we had to travel to a place called Atlantic beach. It's about a 45 minute, minutes beyond Myrtle Beach to go to, to a real beach. And get into water because we weren't really welcomed on Folly, Sullivan's, Isle of Palms. We were not allowed on those beaches.

AG: Sure. When did that, when did that change?

HW: I'm trying to think. I know it probably changed in the late sixties, early seventies, because I can recall in high school, and I graduated from high school in 1969. I can

recall that even then we took trips to Atlantic Beach rather than visiting Folly or the Isle of palm or Sullivan's Island, where we currently visit all the time.

AG: Was it, was there an official change of policy that allowed those beaches to not be segregated, or is was it more of like a gradual...

HW: I think it was more of a gradual and then you know, the changing of, of society, you know, the changing of what was going on in terms of integration. And I think with Dr. Martin Luther King coming in and you know, just saying that everybody should be treated equal and all of the Civil Rights policies probably change that for our community.

AG: Sure. And how long has your family been in Charleston for?

HW: I would say my family's been in Charleston for around 90 years, 96 years, I'm gonna say 96 years. My, both my mom and my dad moved to Charleston from a rural area called Holly Hill, South Carolina. And so they moved here to get jobs at the Naval Base.

AG: Okay, interesting. Did you have any siblings growing up?

HW: Siblings? Yes, I am the fifth of a family of five children. I'm sorry, 12 children.

AG: Oh, wow.

HW: We had a big family.

AG: No kidding.

HW: Yeah.

AG: And what were some things that, you said you spend time outdoors, what were some things you enjoyed doing as a child?

HW: We did a lot of role playing games. For instance, there was a young guy that lived three or four houses from us. Apparently at the age of 12 or 13, he decided that he wanted to be a minister. And so during the course of the summer, he would have us go to our homes and we would get dressed up in our parent's clothes, like we were going to church, and we'd be sitting out, and he would just, he would preach and read the Bible to us. And, and there were times when you'd find like road, a dog that had died. And so we would have a funeral and everybody would be crying, and he would preach the funeral. It was, it was fun. One of the things that I realized later in life is that some of the games that we played were very strategic, and also taught us, and taught me, some things. And the one in particular was there was a game called Red Rover, Red Rover, and it said, 'Let Henrietta come over'. And then you had five, six, seven, eight, nine people holding hands linked. And so your objective was to run and break that, that chain. And so to do that, you would have to think who was the weakest link, you know? So it taught me how to strategically think about any problem that I am about to, to get into, what is easiest, sometimes the easiest, but what is the quickest that I could accomplish this goal and get it done effectively and efficiently? And so even on the run, it could've been like a 50 yard run, right to where the group was holding hands. And if you to pretend that you're going to go and go through one set of hands and then you did switch up at the end because then people didn't expect you to do that because they thought that, that 'oh, I know exactly who he, she's going to try to, you know, get through'. But it was, it was fun. We did a lot of, like for instance, Halloween, you know, we'd go out and we buy our children costumes now because we can go in

the store and buy them. But when I was growing up, we took old clothes, who, our parents make up. We found all kinds of gadgets to, for Halloween, to dress up for Halloween. And I think that that was what really made many of the people that I grew up with to be very creative, you know, because we didn't have a lot. So whatever you had or didn't have, you had to use your creative ability to make it work for you and your family and your friends, so.

AG: Sure, sure. So it sounds like there was a pretty pretty strong community growing up?

HW: It was. It was. And we had a, actually, because of the strength of our community, about eight, nine years ago, we started having what we call the community reunions. So every two years we will have a community reunion and people would come. The first reunion we had, people came as far away as California, Nevada. And so we, our first reunion we got about close to four to 500 people that were living away, hadn't been home. My sister came and she had seen, she had been away for 20 years, and she ran into some friends that they graduated from high school together, and they had not seen each other since high school. And so it was just a great time of reunion, and getting together and, and so everyone just thoroughly enjoy it and decided that we should do this like every two years.

AG: Sure. So professionally, what have you done in your career?

HW: Well, when I graduated from high school, I decided that I did not want to stay in the South, and I moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. And I stayed there for about six months because I thought that I was going to the promised land, as you would say. I thought Philadelphia was dirty, And it was not very appealing, so then I decided to come back home and go to college. I went to school at Claflin College for a year, and

then transferred to an all girls school, in a place called Winona, Minnesota at the College of Saint Teresa's. And got a, a bachelor's degree in social work and a bachelor's degree, I had a double major in social work in psychology, and I came back home, did social work for five years and then was disillusioned with social work. I was, I just couldn't handle it. I would, they'd put me in a department where it was for children that were being abused sexually and physically by parents or family members. And I was just, did not like that. And then I got offered a job working in my community as a community organizer. HUD was coming in to bring in a special housing program. And I came in and served in that capacity as a community organizer for about two years. And then the executive director of the program left. I was given his position and worked as the community development manager for Charleston County for the next 35 years. Left there and worked in a nonprofit organization that was building affordable housing for the elderly. And I stayed there for nine years. And so...

AG: Can, so the job that you were at for 35 years, can you just give me an example of what you would have been doing?

HW: Okay. Well we would, would have to write for, grants and we did housing rehab, we did infrastructure. For instance, there's a community, in the County, it was Red Top, and it's right off of Highway 17 South. And there was no infrastructure, water or sewer infrastructure there. And that the water table was so low that the health department was no longer issuing permits for them to get septic systems. And so what we did was we received funding from Farmers Home, from the Community Development Block Grant Program with HUD. And we put in some infrastructure, some sewer lines and water lines and people were able to then, that connect and get public water. There were maybe 10 families that where they live the water, the, the, it was, the water would not perk. And so we could not even give them, let them connect to the new infrastructure. So they'd, what they call a, a consolidated kind of a septic system, it ran

back. And that was back in 1980, and it was those things were like $5,000 a piece. The average septic system and well at that team was really running about $2,500, but because they had to do something different to make these families able to get clean water, they were costing us about $5,000. We've had, and we had had notices from, from the medical community that some of the children there were being affected physically because of the water. I heard, I remember one woman had went to the doctor and the doctor told her that he could, her, her insides had a brown residue of dirty water.

AG: Oh my god that's terrible. Where's that water from, exactly?

HW: It was coming from a, from from her yard, you know? But where she lived, and I think what happened was the septic system that they had, it was not dug deep enough for them to get really clean water. And so...

AG: That's terrible. Are those problems still prevalent in Charleston?

HW: I would say not. I know that there are, the Charleston County is still providing septic systems in wells for families. And I would say the rule, Johns Island, Edisto, Awendaw, and McClellanville. But there's, you know, there's still, the last time I spoke with someone in that community development department, they still have a list of families that are still needing wells and septic systems.
AG: That's crazy to think about.

HW: Yeah.

AG: That's terrible. That's, that's a nice transition to the environmental issues. And what do you think are some environmental issues facing Charleston, and North Charleston, the extended area? Just some that come to mind?

HW: Well, some of the things that we see that, from some of the chemical companies that have either moved away from some of the low income communities out, out with, they do, like for instance, trucks, the systems. We have found that many families, people in different families, they have asthma, they have some certain, we, we, we think there, there's certain cancer is there. Asthma is, has been really prevalent in the Union Heights community because of all of the chemicals that, that's from the, that was from the old Navy Base and from, there's another company, Westvaco used to be, near Union Heights until they moved. But those, those were the kinds of things that as a result of them being there and not really providing environmental issues, or for taking care of environmental issues that we've, we, we, we think that there's such a big correlation between cancer, or was it cancer, asthma, bronchitis in the community...

AG: And Union Heights specifically?

HW: And Union Heights specifically. And also I would, I would venture to say there's a community called Accabee and Chicora-Cherokee, Rosemount, also, it probably fit into those categories with people. Yeah.

AG: Are those predominantly African American communities?

HW: Predominantly African American communities, absolutely.

AG: So, when did these problems become apparent to you and others in the community?

HW: I think that people always known that there was these, this correlation between the chemical companies and some of the illnesses in the community. But I think it was, I would say in 1990, I'm trying to figure out, remember when LAMC became very active. And they've created, actually, an environmental arm. It's called C-CRAB, and they're now doing monitoring. They've put up monitors and the, there's a link between the environmental issues in those communities and the illnesses that they've been finding. So I would think that they've been become very aware of that back in that early, maybe 1990. I'm not sure.

AG: Sure. And, I mean, what has been done to address some of these, some of these issues? Some of these residual issues?

HW: Well, some of the things that they are doing currently is that they have monitors. They have set up monitors in certain communities, to monitor the air. And then they have monitors that eventually, that some residents, they wear, to try to figure out, you know, what are the correlation between certain diseases such as asthma and, and the environment. So to tell you specifically what are some of the results that they have had? I can't right now because I think that these monitors has been going on for a couple of years, and I don't have all the data to tell you what they have found, but I know that because of what they, what they have been finding, is the reason why the community has been able to get some in mitigation funds from the State Ports Authority, because it's, because of the environment that, it's really, they have what they call an Environmental Justice Grant. And that's because of the, the effect of the environment on, on those communities, seven mitigation communities.

AG: Okay. What does an Environmental Justice grant entail? Does that cover health care?

HW: Okay. The, the grant that the LAMC received from the States Port Authority covers, covers education, affordable housing, environment. They are looking at different environmental causes, things that were causing causes by environment, and also education. And so they've been given this grant, they said to mitigate some of the negative effects of, of the Port's Authority moving onto the old Naval Base.

AG: Does that cover the Paper Mill? Do, does it effect the Paper Mill?

HW: Yeah.

AG: It does?

HW: Yeah.

AG: Do you think it goes far enough for it to help these communities that are affected by this pollution?

HW: Absolutely not. One of the things that they have found too is that some of the, they have, they have ponds where neighbors, some of the neighbors would go to fish and they're saying, now they're saying to them, be careful. Don't go fishing in this particular pond because, it's, the fish is not, it's just they've found that there's poison there and so they're still working on those. Because this, a lot still needs to be done because they're, they have only started doing the environmental arm of this project maybe the last three or four years, four years.

AG: And these are problems that have existed since you've been here?

HW: Yeah, they're problems that existed. They're problem that, that was existed that some, and in some cases, and we kind of, people kind of knew that they existed, but now they're finding that they're able to identify because of the systems that they're using. They're able to identify the correlation between what they thought and what really is happening. The actual and...

AG: The science is caught up with the anecdotes from the community of...

HW: Sure.

AG: People being affected.

HW: Yes.

AG: Interesting. Can you speak to how, like say the Paper Mill for example, affects different communities within the Lowcountry?

HW: I can't speak to it to, to all communities, but I know that the Paper Mill, when it was operating near the community that I grew up with, I know that there are, there are certain kids in the neighborhood that parents thought that because of that, the odor that was in the air, that it affected some of the children's health. I can recall in the morning at six o'clock in the morning, the home, it seems like my entire community, there was a distinct odor, and we knew that it was coming from the Paper Mill. And it affected our community. At the time we really didn't know what the pinpoint to say, 'how was it affecting?'. But anything with a foul odor, as foul as that was, we knew it had to be something wrong that, that would eventually affect someone's health.

AG: Sure. Can you recall any sort of efforts to address that when you were growing up?

HW: No.

AG: No?

HW: Our parents were, you know, they were low paying. They were too busy worrying about supporting their family and trying to figure out any environmental issues, even if they even knew what environmental issues was. And I'm not saying that our friends were ignorant, but sometimes in life there's so much going on, you have to choose your battles, you know, and they're, most of a family of 12. Most of our communities, we had large families, and it's just getting our, our families, my parents, our parents, getting everybody to fed, dressed, educated, you know, that was about their limit at the time. So, I think now people are a lot more because of the, you know, the how society has changed. People are a lot more aware of, you know, their rights in terms of environmental issues in their communities. So, and then we didn't have strong laws, or policies about environment. You know, how they should, people should protect the environment. So...

AG: Sure. And you think, you think it's a coincidence that there was so much pollution and communities that couldn't necessarily advocate for themselves at the time?

HW: Sure. Not just environmentally but, in other means. As I, as I began working in the housing industry and looking at economic development and community development, I realized that, for instance, we, where I grew up, I-26 literally came through my neighborhood. There was two streets that were completely divided so that the interstate can go through. So those families were relocated out of their homes, out of their communities so that they could build. And they do that because most of those homes were not appraised at a high value. And so when the state, or the city, when

you're looking for projects, you look for project that's gonna cost you the minimum to build. So what they did was they, they go through, I mean its historic. They went through African American, low income, family communities to accomplish what they want.

AG: Sure. When you were at HUD, did you see anything like that that's still prevalent?

HW: It's still prevalent.

AG: It's still prevalent today?

HW: It's still prevalent in Charleston today.

AG: Can give me an example of a community that's been sort of relocated in the past, say,10 years?

HW: Okay, yeah. Well let's see how old, I mean, let me think of how, how old the Ravenel, Arthur Ravenel Bridge is.

AG: I think that's 2004.

HW: Okay. So a group of, of a lot of those families that lived on the East Side were dislocated to bring the bridge through. Then there, there was another community in the city of Charleston, off of Washington Avenue and there's a condos up there. They moved, there was a project, a low income project. They moved on those people, families off of that project to say that because there was something in the environment, something in the, in the ground where it was not habitable. However, they have built four, $500,000 condos where people would kind of already living. So...

AG: On, on that same ground?

HW: On that same ground, even the, the Aquarium, a lot of black people moved back there in projects, where their Aquarium is. But they were moved out because environmentally it was not safe for them. But it happens all the time.

AG: Sure. That's a good transition. So I have a question about tourism and Charleston's natural ecology. Do you think there is some sort of like, do you think because the tourism industry has taken off in the past say 20 years, 20, 30 years, there's been more of an effort to protect the natural ecology of the Lowcountry.

HW: I think there's been a large effort to protect certain historical sites because of tourism, because people come to Charleston or in the Lowcountry to see certain things. And so those are, had been protected, but not, even now they're not being, if you go downtown, and downtown Charleston is like, where is Charleston? You know, because of the growth, the hotels are taking over, you know? A lot of the historic look is no longer there. And so, it's, they catered to, I think that there's a huge effort to cater to tourism in our area, but not to preserve. That's why you have lots of groups that protests things like the larger hotels, you know, I'm trying to think of another site.

AG: I mean, do you think Charleston has developed at the expense of the marginalized communities.

HW: I think they have, I always say that had some of our earlier politicians who thought that they were really making progress in terms of bringing different industries and bringing different businesses into our area, especially downtown Charleston. And if they, if those, if they had really thought about some of the effort that they made to

make Charleston, put Charleston on the map. I think some of those efforts that has been made has been detrimental to the city of Charleston. Especially when we come with, when you talking about affordable housing. Affordable housing is nowhere near the city of Charleston, and those, and those families that one time live, well I'll say African American families that lived on the, on the peninsula, they can no longer live on the peninsula. So they cannot afford to live on the peninsula because of the cost of housing. Just like for instance, the east side, you have so many absentee landlords that when things got to a point where they saw the progressive move of the city, then those absentee landlords were willing to sell. And so the people that were living in those, and most of them were dilapidated housing anyway, they couldn't afford to purchase it to remain there. So, as a result of that, the city of Charleston has created a land trust, is trying to make affordable housing perpetual so that it will always remain affordable or else the, our, our peninsula Charleston will become another, I always said it will become another Hollywood. We can't afford to live there.

AG: Sure. But do you think it's maybe too little too late for those efforts?

HW: Not for the land trust efforts because the, because I think that the city has some land that they're going to use to build those affordable units. And then what they've done is also they, they, they're focusing not only on the, just the peninsula, but they're focusing on the West Ashley part of the city of Charleston too, in terms of affordable housing. Now the efforts they're trying to keep a number of low income families on the peninsula, I think that that effort is lost.

AG: Really?

HW: They'' never be able to afford it. I mean, there are businesses in downtown Charleston that can't keep employees because they, number one, their employees

can't afford to live in downtown Charleston, and they live so far out sometimes it's hard for them to get back and forth to work and they don't get paid, you know, a decent livable wage. So it's been hard for them to keep employees. I think that, I think that the student population helps them in terms of getting people to work in the hotels and in the restaurants, you know, and that industry. But even the hospitals with doctors, I've heard people come in and under medical fields, it's difficult for them to get housing that a decent and affordable, really affordable to them. So it's a, it's a huge problem right now, affordable housing. I think I would say affordable housing is number one, and then our schools are horrible schools.

AG: The schools, the school system?

HW: The school system and those, and what was the low income communities? Do they build new buildings but the system is not producing good students.

AG: Why is that? Is there anything that comes to mind?

HW: One thing that I think is that teachers are not really given a freedom to really teach children. They're so busy trying to ensure that they meet a goal, a testing goal. They have to be tested so they have to have this and they have to know this, and they're so busy working on getting them prepared for a test if they're not getting the basics. Sure. Some of the kids not getting them. I just started working with the North Charleston High School booster club and I have been told that at least 40% of the students there, high school students, can't read at a third grade level.

AG: Really? Wow.

HW: So it's, it's bad. Don't know. Actually, I was in a meeting with the superintendent of, the superintendent of school on Friday, Friday, and that was one of the questions that was asked: 'What is, how are we failing our kids?'. What is it that the children are not learning what they need to learn to move on? You know, many companies now, I know Bosch, I know, what is it, Mercedes, Volvo, Boeing. I can tell you when Verizon first came to Charleston, they, they had a hard time finding their workforce. Verizon at one point, I had came in to work with a nonprofit I was working with, and so what they did was they, they did like a six, they created a six weeks course on working with people on how to interview, how to dress for success, and so it was just, those are kinds of things that I know when I was in school, we were, I think that we were prepared to go out to work in a workplace after high school if you didn't want to go into college. Not many of our students are ready for that right now. I am talking with the superintendent at school. I see that they're, they are working toward that goal. But if we don't hurry and do something, we gonna have a lost generation of kids out there can't read, can't write. And so it's going to be difficult for them to, to survive. So what happens, so when you, when that happens, the whole society pays for it. So, you know, pay for what is needed now or pay for it later.

AG: Sure . And that'll only add to the cycle of like if, you know, if you can't get a job, you definitely can't pay for housing in Charleston.

HW: That's right.

AG: So that's these systemic problems.

HW: Hm, that's right.

AG: Can you tell me a little bit about your, about your involvement with the Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities?

HW: LAMC was created some time ago when a group of neighborhood residents had decided that because the, how's the State Ports Authority was coming on the base, that they wanted the Ports Authority to, to answer some questions on, you know, would they foresee this happening? And someone said, 'Well, we believe that your efforts and what you're going to do in terms of his not moving on base', but they're going to, they were going to create a new rail system on, on the base'. They were going to close down one of the, two of the exits in those communities. We felt that as it was gonna negatively affect the residents. And so they were able to negotiate with them to receive like maybe I think as a four point five million dollars to mitigate, trying to mitigate the effects of what will happen when the base, when the housing of, when the Post Authority came on the base. I know one community, Chicora-Cherokee, they have lost close to a hundred houses in their communities that was next, adjacent to the base, because now Palmetto Railway is going to be building 24 intermodal rail system to accommodate the Ports Authority. And so when, when that negotiation for those, that four point five million dollars that they were getting, which I think was just a penny in the bucket, cause you want, you to telling people I'm gonna, you're gonna lose all these housing, these can be communities are going to be negatively affected but we want you to address the environment issues. We want you to address the housing issues, we want you to address the job issues, and we want you to address the education issues. You're asking seven low income communities, grassroots people initially, to address these efforts with four point five million dollars, and basically less than 15% was designated for any kind of administration costs. To get all of this stuff running, you have to have, you got to have people that has the skill set, and you've got to pay people. I mean right now, LAMC has finally, they have a part time executive director and so, and, and they have a working board. Had it not been for the working

board and the working committees that work, sit on those boards, we probably, they probably wouldn't have been as far along as they are. They've accomplished a lot. One of the things that, when they initially received this money, one of the things that they did was they had someone that come in and do a revitalization plan, and in that event revitalization plan, they addressed all of these issues. But the one that I have been assigned to, it was affordable housing because that was what most of my expertise was, was in. So I was able to create a community land trusts, set up a, a board. We've been applying for grant funding to build affordable housing in these communities. The great thing about a land trust is there is a 99 year lease. The families who would purchase a home from the land trust, they will own the home, the improvements, but they will never own the land. We, they, they will lease the land for them. And the common cost for the leasing of a land trust piece of property is about $35 a month. And some of the mitigation monies that were set aside for affordable housing in one of the communities, they have purchased, well and two, maybe three of the communities, LAMC has purchased just about 45 lots. And maybe some of the lots may have had some old dwellings on it. And so that, though, that property is going to be, that inventory of properties are going to be transferred to the land trust for development. So as of January we currently have secured close to $200,000 to try to build by the end of the year, we want to break ground for at least two houses. And then from then on, our goal is to build five houses a year, and more if we can get the funding.

AG: So is the idea behind those houses to sort of like, rebuke high, rising housing prices?

HW: Okay. There's two, there's three. Displacement, gentrification and the rising costs of housing. That's what we're, our goals are to prevent those things from happening.

AG: Where does, is the funding from the federal government?

HW: Well actually some of it. Some of it is what we call the Home Funds. H-o-m-e. It's called Home Investment Funds. And some are coming from a state foundation, actually two states foundation. And then we are out just, we're now working with two local philanthropists in the city that, we're talking with them about how they could help us further our cause with affordable housing.

AG: Okay.

HW: And, and our, the land trust board, and that's it. We have no staff. And so we have a working board. Everybody on that board is doing something to make it work. Just, just on yesterday I met with our vice chair and we were writing a grant to the Sisters of Charity to ask for funding to bring a staff person on the staff.

AG: Interesting. And is this sort of the first of its kind in the community?

HW: Yes, and actually there is in South Carolina, there was one land trust organization in Green, I think it's Greenville, but they're not active at all. And I went to, I traveled to Salt Lake City, Utah once to a conference. I didn't even, I didn't even know what the concept of a land trust was. And I was introduced to a land trust, and I went to one of their national conferences. And so when I got there, I was looking at the attendees list and there was someone from the city of Charleston, and what I found was that the city of Charleston was also creating a land trust. So it's just the two of us in terms of land trusts for affordable housing, and we're all maybe six months apart from starting out. We're doing a few collaborative things together, but our mission is the same as affordable housing. But the road that we're going to take is probably different there. The, it's my understanding that Palmetto Land Trust their, they're looking to build houses, that starts maybe about 190, 200,000 plus. It is a goal of Community First Land

Trust to build houses no more than about $150,000. And then seek for subsidy to make that even, to make, even to make that affordable to the families that we would like to live here.

AG: Okay.

HW: We will be serving families that are 60 to 80% of the area median income.

AG: You might have mentioned this earlier, but where are you all breaking ground for this land trust?

HW: We're, no, we're going to be breaking ground to, building our first two houses, and we probably won't do that until November of 2019.

AG: Okay, so it's still...

HW: So the fund, yeah, because the funding that we have been approved of will not become available to us until after the, the budget has been approved by Congress.
AG: Sure.

HW: And that's back in, that's in October. That's if, if it's, if the bill is signed, the budget is approved.

AG: Yeah, that's a big if.

HW: So we always have to wait on that. I've been working with community development funds since 1979, and it usually always comes through. We have, the pot is a lot smaller now than when they started back in 19'. When the count, when the

Charleston County started getting Community Development Block Grant Funds, that was in there back in 1987. And the reason that happened is that when the Naval Base closed, I found something in the legislation that said, if you had a naval base that's a hundred plus years old, you are, you may be eligible to become an urban community. And the difference is that an urban, in an urban community, you don't have to apply for funding on a yearly basis. It will just annually come to you. And so we did, the county, we didn't have the population, but the city of North Charleston was already what they call an, an urban, not an urban, but a community development, oh, I can't, I'm having a, anyway, they were receiving, Community Development Block Grant Funds. And so we asked the city of North Charleston to relinquish, they were called an Entitlement Community. And so what they did was they so told HUD, 'We rule will relinquish all of our rights as an entitlement community, and we will add our population and with the county'. And so the agreement was then with the county and the city is that whatever money that we would normally get we get, we will get that. And then our staff, the county staff, then we'll became responsible for the, all of the administration of, of the grant. So all of the monitoring, being responsible for all of that. Making sure everything is, is done properly for when HUD comes into check. And so it's been a really good marriage because then the county, we could, we were, we were only eligible to apply for funding on the state level. And then on a state level they choose what priorities whether it was infrastructure, whether it was community, economic development, whether it was housing. And for the most part, the state always wanted, their first priority was infrastructure, because they were doing a lot of economic development. And so most companies need that infrastructure. And so it just got to the point that we could never be eligible to apply for anything. And that's when we applied to become an urban county. And that was granted to us. And I was just talking with this, the mayor of North Charleston, Keith Summey, who really helped us in terms of agreeing to relinquish their entitlement, and, and, and to join in with us. That we probably since then, Community Development Block Grant Funds and Home Funds, we brought in

almost 90 million dollars into this community since 1987, that was just that one grant, one pocket of money.

AG: And that's from HUD?

HW: From HUD.

AG: From HUD? Interesting, interesting. Okay. Well I'm, that's almost all the questions I have. I have a couple of light ones regarding southern hospitality just to finish up on.

HW: Okay.

AG: So can you tell me what southern hospitality is in your opinion, if anything?

HW: I think when people say that it is southern hospitality is that people are more apt to smile with you, to say hello to me. And are very courteous. My husband was from, from Detroit and I remember we were at the store one day and somebody just waved at me and say, 'Hi'. And he said, 'Um, who was that?' I said, 'I don't know', and he said, 'And you waved at them? I said, 'Well, they said hi!'. But you know, he grew up with, that was just not, not the thing to do. I remember another time someone came to visit me, right? We were just dating then and someone came to visit me and he looked through the peep hole and he said, 'Were you expecting so-and-so?'. And I said, 'No, but you know, open the door.' He said, 'Well, if you weren't expecting them, why would you open your door?' He said, 'There's a telephone booth right around the corner. They could have called and said, at least I'm in the, in the area'. But that's just the way he grew up, you know? And that's the difference I think with southern hospitality, people are more open with each other than they are with, then I would consider northern states.

AG: Sure, sure. How would you explain it to someone not from the South? Like, how, what would be a good example of southern hospitality for someone say from New York?

HW: Oh, how would I explain it? I guess I would tell them that people are open. You can ask questions, directions. They're, they're willing to help you and don't know you. If you seem to be in, I mean I, many times people will just come up and say, 'Well I am from so-and-so and I need directions there. I have even gotten in my car and said, 'Well follow me cause I don't think that you would, if I gave you the direction, you won't really find it'. I don't think that you'd get somebody from come a northern state to be that open. It's just the, the, the, the way people react to each other. They're much lighter conversations. People will even speak to you. I just left, and it's not even a northern state, but I just Maryland with my daughter and I go to, we, we'll go to the grocery store, we go to a restaurant, you know, just shopping and people are just like not very friendly, you know? And here, I think it's, here people will smile at you, wave at you, and say hello to it. Just that, that to me it's just that simple, other than we have these crazy southern dishes that they say that we have. But it's just the way people communicate with each other.

AG: Sure. Has it changed at all in your lifetime. The notion of southern hospitality?

HW: I don't think so. I think, I don't think so with people that, that are from this area. I think sometimes when people who have migrated to the area that you see that difference there, even though they live here, you know, that they're not real, they're not real southerners, you know? But I mean, I think, I think, I think it's still people there, and I think that's why we draw. I think that's why people are drawn to southern states now, especially Charleston, because I don't think people are generally nice...

AG: Sure.

HW: On the open, on the out, you know, on the, on the up and up. But I know, I know that my husband and I, it was a concerted effort that we were not going to move back to Detroit because we wanted our children to grow up in a place where they can feel comfortable. Where they wouldn't have to feel like, afraid to go out.

AG: Sure. Okay, well that is all the questions I have. Do you have any, any final thoughts?

HW: Wanna turn that off?

AG: Yes.

HW: My final thought is I wish I had these questions. . .