

Interview keywords/topics: Ireland and Appalachia, Community

Interviewer: SF

Interviewee: LM

This interview is part of an Oral History project for WRC 2202, a Spring 2024 course about Ireland and Appalachia. This semester we discussed different ways of using and understanding historical information, and we are creating our own historical documents in this project.

SF ([00:02](#)):

Okay. How do you want to be remembered?

LM ([00:05](#)):

Um, someone who's kind like, I just don't want to be remembered in a way that's more negative. Um, I just don't want to be remembered as like being angry or anything. So just not negatively <laugh>? Uh, [00:00:30] yeah. Someone who I really want to gain wisdom throughout my life. So someone who just went through a lot of growth, I think that would be something I'd be proud of. <laugh>.

SF:

Um, how would you describe your hometown home community and what makes it special?

LM:

Um, I'm from Raleigh, right in the 10 minutes from downtown in North Hills, [00:01:00] which is like kind of a mini city. Uh, it's <laugh>.

SF:

Um, what do you like about Raleigh?

LM ([01:17](#)):

Um, I like how much there is to do without it being a huge city. Um, like North Hills is like an outdoor mall [00:01:30] slash city. Like it's kind of a small, you know, I like how there's so much to do and a lot of fun places to go. Um, there's always something to do in Raleigh and if you go downtown there's always a lot of festivals and like, yeah, I love the outdoor festivals. There's a lot of food trucks and art, art vendors and stuff like that and it's just real close, 10 minutes, really [00:02:00] convenient. But I do want to get out of North Hills a little bit 'cause I've just been there for so long. Yeah. But there are good people there. It's really easy to make friends. That's good. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

SF ([02:17](#)):

Is there anything you don't like specifically?

LM ([02:20](#)):

Sometimes it can be overwhelming. The North Hills area is expanding really fast. A lot of people are moving to Raleigh. We just don't really [00:02:30] have the room. Just like in Boone. Yeah. Um, a lot of skyscrapers going up but there we don't have the traffic pattern for it, so there's always a lot of traffic

right outside my house, I live on a dead end and there's a stoplight that is always three minutes long and you can't go anywhere and it's right onto the busiest street in North Hills, so it just kind of stuck but it is walkable, which is really nice. [00:03:00]

SF:

I love that. how were you impacted by COVID-19? How did it change you and what did you learn about yourself and those around you?

LM (03:27):

Um, I was really shy back then, so I really enjoyed the time alone and I liked spending time, uh, on my own in the house so I could do more projects. I did a lot of puzzles and I learned, [00:03:30] um, of course how much I love music. And also I spent so much time like in my own head, I sort of discovered some things about myself that I think were very beneficial. Um, I was in a relationship with a guy who wasn't that great at the time, but so we like kind of stayed together but didn't really grow because that social aspect wasn't there. So [00:04:00] we just stuck together for longer than we should have because neither of us like had the space to grow individually, socially. Like when we got back to high school and the incoming freshmen came in, they seemed a lot younger than the freshmen before us because those kids like didn't have the social community to grow up like they would in middle school. Like Yeah, you have to go through that pain. [00:04:30] Painful, embarrassing phase in middle school. And I feel like the middle schoolers at the time kind of missed that <laugh> and they're a little behind. Everyone's a little behind, but I think middle schoolers got it the worst. Yeah. Um, but for me, I enjoyed the alone time and time with my family.

SF (04:50):

Do you think Covid to 19 is still impacting you?

LM:

Um, sometimes I wish I'd had more of a high school experience [00:05:00] 'cause all that time alone, like I said, I didn't really grow socially and I've always been kind of awkward and introverted. I feel like an extra year of getting out of that would help me now. But I'm proud of how I've grown up to this point. I just sometimes wonder what it would be like if I'd had a little extra time.

SF:

Yeah. Um, do you think coming to college helped a lot with that?

LM (05:39):

Yeah, [00:05:30] especially in Watagua 'cause um, we're with the same people all the time. It's really easy to make friends. College is just good to make, like get closer to people. Especially when you're in like a nice community like that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and people want to be here, which is the difference between college and high school.

SF:

I feel like that's true. Yeah. Yeah. Um, what are you proudest of so far in your life?

LM:

[00:06:00] Well, I had to grow up pretty fast lately. Um, yeah, it's mostly social things. Like, I don't know how to explain this. I've just matured a lot in the past year. I've started noticing um, when people are treating me poorly, which I didn't [00:06:30] really notice beforehand. Um, and I'm getting a lot better at setting boundaries and being more independent, which is something I really struggled with. I mean, I liked being on my own, like alone time, but I still have like a dependency on someone, like a boyfriend. I haven't been single since eighth grade up until two months ago.

LM ([06:54](#)):

And going through that past breakup was the hardest thing I've ever done. But [00:07:00] I'm really proud that I did that because um, I just need to discover myself and I'm going through that, which is really hard, but I'm proud that I'm finally giving the time to like really focus on me and stop worrying about other people so much. Or being dependent on somebody else for happiness. So it's a process I'm it's um, it's been a very [00:07:30] like grow up kind of. Yeah. Smack in the face moment. <laugh>, um, that came out of kind of nowhere but I'm still like, you know, going through that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I think I will be proud soon if I can stay on this dream. Yeah. <laugh>.

SF:

That's good. What are your opinions or beliefs about going to college and the value of a college education?

LM ([07:58](#)):

Um, I would say if [00:08:00] you're able to go to college, do it. Um, especially, well anybody who can I feel like should 'cause it's been a huge learning experience both academically and also like socially and just life in general. You get to live on your own but with people your age, which is really nice to connect with others your age, which I [00:08:30] feel like sometimes can be difficult. Especially I think if you're not in college and you have to work, um, just immediately after high school you kind of miss that transition between childhood and adulthood. I think college is a good transition 'cause you're learning how to live on your own but in a dorm there are a lot of people who can help you. It's not as serious as like an apartment lease. Um, [00:09:00] yeah. Stuff like that. And it's a walkable community, which is becoming more and more rare these days. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> And I think walkable communities are so nice 'cause you can just go wherever you want whenever and see people and be outside. Um

SF ([09:21](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

LM ([09:24](#)):

And of course college education is pretty important. I mean I don't think it's necessary to [00:09:30] live, but if you want a certain job, you know, getting a degree would be very helpful.

LM (09:42):

Sorry, I'm checking the questions really quick.

LM (09:47):

Okay. Um, so I'm an art major but I don't want to be an artist. I said uh, if you can go to college you should, even if [00:10:00] you don't really have a certain degree you want. I feel, because for me, I came in not really knowing what I wanted to do, but eventually, I found out I really value travel and I'd like to be a flight attendant and work in hospitality, which you don't really need a degree for, but I still want to be here for the community aspect. And I chose to study art because it was the only thing I was really passionate about learning [00:10:30] about. I'm just not a very good learner anymore. I used to be, but I've changed. Um, and art is like physically interactive, which is something I really love about it. So even though I'm not planning on using my degree, I still just value learning something new. Yeah. Um, less career-wise and more like fulfilling. So I think even if [00:11:00] college isn't something you need for your career, it still will help you develop into who you want to be and you discover like your interests. It's just valuable for I think anybody. Yeah. Sorry, <laugh>.

SF:

Are there any clubs or organizations that you're connected with?

LM (11:28):

Um, I'm in Watauga Community College. Wait, Watauga [00:11:30] Residential College, sorry. Um, which is a group of I think 130 incoming freshmen get, uh, you apply and then you get accepted or denied and I think they accept 130 freshmen every year. Um, and we all live together in the Living learning Center, which we live there and we take classes in the same building. So, um, [00:12:00] being a Wataugan is a minor that you can do. Um, part of being a Wataugan is taking certain classes with Watauga professors, um, and they're all very like special people. I feel like they contribute something more than you would get from like an average lecture class. Like they have very specific themes and topics. Like I took a class called um, [00:12:30] metamorphoses of Life and Death and um, that was very eye-opening and the classes are very small. It's like 13 people so you really get to talk with and they're also other gans so you get like really close with these people.

LM (12:51):

Um, and then you also see them in the hallway 'cause you live together. So it's just a great way to connect with people and the professors. [00:13:00] Um, I'm doing the minor just because I've taken so many Watauga classes and I love them so much. Um, yeah, it's been a very great experience. We also have a garden outside of our dorm, which is so nice. And um, our freshman year we had weekly lunches together, so it's a time where you can see these same people that you live with and take classes [00:13:30] with and just have a, like a really nice tight knit community. Um, and I feel like everyone in Watauga is very, a very interesting person. Um, they all have very specific interests, uh, which is really neat. Um, I would highly recommend it to anybody who can do it.

LM (13:54):

Yeah. Yeah. I think I answered that. Yeah.

SF:

Um, what's [00:14:00] your program of study? How did you choose it and what do you feel is valuable about it? Okay. That's like, you kind of already talked about that.

LM:

That's the question I was looking for, but I didn't see it. Uh, whatever. Um, yeah, I'm a studio art major. I think I'm gonna concentrate and drawing and painting because um, I didn't think I liked drawing until I took a class with <inaudible>, um, who's a professor here of course. [00:14:30] She really opened my eyes to how to draw in my own way and she pulled out like aspects of my abilities that I didn't know I had, which was just really valuable. Um, yeah, I really value the professors here in the art department. Um, they're all very passionate about what they do and they care about every individual student and most [00:15:00] of them, if not all, all the ones I've taken, are able to really get to know you on a personal level and bring out your skills, which I find so valuable because it's not like draw this, you know, here's how you mix paint. It's more of this is what you're struggling with, but I know that you have this talent so lean more into this aspect of your ability and [00:15:30] you'll thrive. And then they'll like help you learn with specifically what you're struggling with. It's very nice. Yeah. I guess that's about it.

SF ([15:42](#)):

How would you describe the current climate on campus?

LM:

Um, I think Appstate's Climate has kind of declined since I've been here. Um, as an art student we, [00:16:00] the way hall, our art building has been under construction for the entire time I've been here. I thought it was supposed to be done before this semester. Uh, but that's not happening. Um, and it's brought the art students together, which is really nice, but for the wrong reason. Um, because we've been fighting so hard to like be heard [00:16:30] about all the problems with Way Hall. And my main problem is we're just not getting the education we paid for. It would be fine if they were reconstructing way Hall if we had somewhere else to do our classes. But for next semester I could only take one studio class because they're either off campus or not offered.

LM ([16:55](#)):

Um, or just in a really difficult place [00:17:00] to learn. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Um, so there have been a lot of like protests and stuff, which has been difficult because we don't feel heard by the people in power here. I think Appstate is a great community. It's just the people in power are not listening to the students as well as they, we would like to be heard. Um, just not getting the response we feel we deserve. [00:17:30] Um, I think that's the biggest problem with the community here. And uh, another thing that's kind of focused on the art students is we feel that like the football scene.

LM:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> is overly invested in football for sure <laugh>. Yeah. I like App State, but I feel like football is way more hyped than anything else. Yeah. And it's just like, I wish there could be [00:18:00] some focus on other things at app.

SF:

I agree.

LM:

Um, and then there's the whole LGBT community situation. Um, I came to app thinking that it would be like one of the best schools in that way. Yeah. Um, and I think at least a good fraction of the students are very, um,

LM ([18:26](#)):

Accepting of that community. But [00:18:30] I feel the vibes of App State, like higher ups Yeah. Are just um, kind of pushing away from the community. Yeah. Like the whole changing to Spring Fest and something, um, I've noticed is there are a bunch of, uh, sculptures around campus that have, they switch out every year. Um, [00:19:00] I noticed that the only one that has been taken down this year is one that was about pride. Um, it was a figure of a mouth and then it was covered in Rainbow and like had a megaphone looking thing and it was the artist was saying how it's about, um, pride, you know, being genuine about who you are speaking up. Um, and that was taken down and I'm not sure why [00:19:30] all of the other, um, sculptures that I know of have been there and they're not going anywhere. Yeah. So I'm just like, I'm kind of sus on that <laugh>. Um, yeah, it's just Appalachian has surprised me. Like there's more conservative aspects to it than I was expecting. Yeah. Um, [00:20:00] I thought it would be like really woke like, um, accepting of LGBT community and I thought the arts would be like a huge deal here, but I guess I was wrong. Um, but I still think the students are pretty great as smartest. That was a lot <laugh> I'm yapping.

SF ([20:29](#)):

No, that's good. What lessons have you learned this semester about understanding or interpreting history?

LM ([20:36](#)):

Learning history on a more personal level is more valuable to me. Like you read textbooks and you get the events, but you're like, Hmm. But I feel like if you can talk to somebody that went through a period in history, that is the most valuable thing that you can learn from. But if that's not accessible [00:21:00] then, um, finding firsthand sources. Um, I feel like when I read about like summed up events of history, I don't really feel much for it. Um, or it goes over my head, but it's more, I think it's just more connecting when you, [00:21:30] um, can find sources that are more like specific. I don't really know how to explain what I'm saying.

SF:

Yeah, that makes sense.

LM:

I guess firsthand sources. Yeah. Basically. Um, I don't know what else to say. Okay.