Interview keywords/topics: Ireland and Appalachia, Community

Interviewer: JA
Interviewee: AA

JA (00:00):

<silence> This interview conducted in Belk Library on November 4th, 2024 as part of an oral history project for WRC 2202, a fall 2024 history course. This semester we discussed different ways of using and understanding historical information. We are creating our own historical documents in this project. My name is JA and I'll be interviewing

AA (00:22):

AA.

JA (00:23):

Okay. So first question, where do you consider yourself to be from and what is your hometown like?

AA (00:29):

So I'm from, uh, the Lake Norman area in North Carolina, near Charlotte, um, in a town, it's called Cornelius, and it's about 35,000 people, I would say in that town. Um, everything is very close together in that town. So, like, where I grew up, you could drive five minutes and be anywhere within the suburbs. So it was interesting because when I came to Boone, you have to drive, like, 30 minutes to get to somewhere, like, I don't know, like you just have to drive further. So, it was a change because I'm just so used to, like, getting in the car, walking to the grocery store. So it was very different. But.

JA (01:22):

And how did growing up there shape you?

AA (01:24):

So I grew up in, like, all of the neighborhoods were very, like, they were right next to each other and my high school was also very big. Um, like there was 600 kids in my graduating class. So it's just different because, um, like coming to App and being here, like it's sort of normal to me. Like a lot of my friends grew up in smaller towns, like where they have to drive like 45 minutes to get to the mall or, like to the grocery store. And um, it's just interesting because I've been around so many people, like, surrounded by people because we're all mushed into this small town like for my entire life. But yeah.

JA (02:13):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Alright. What are the main current events or political topics of 2024 that you're interested in?

AA (02:22):

So, um, I wouldn't really consider myself interested in politics, um, obviously, but the election coming up tomorrow, um, that's been something that I've been trying to keep up with, but more like local and like my parents are very into politics, which I guess is the reason that I'm not because they're kind of always talking about it.

JA (02:45):

I get that, yeah.

AA (02:45):

And it's like, it's just a very stressful, like, topic I guess. And so I try my best to be a little bit informed but like not clueless, but not be in the thick of it where everything is so stressful.

JA (03:02):

Yeah. So concerning the election, how has your experience on campus been with the election?

AA (03:09):

So I remember starting last semester, so spring semester, um, people like started asking, have you registered to vote? And like, it was like, maybe I got asked once a week, but, um, as the election became obviously ongoing, um, I've been asked like this past week, I've probably been asked multiple times a day and it just like, it does get annoying.

JA

Yeah.

AA

But, 'cause everybody's asking me all the time, have you voted or who are you voting for? Which I grew up like that was a big change because I grew up knowing like, you don't really talk about who you vote for

JA (03:51):

Yeah.

AA (03:52):

Which, it's interesting because I've been asked by people like, who are you voting for?

JA (03:57):

Yeah.

AA (03:58):

And that's just sort of something I always thought like, oh, you just don't really talk about that.

JA

Yeah.

AA

So it's definitely been an experience. Um, yeah. <laugh>.

JA (04:08):

Yeah. Do you think this election will have a big outcome on the country in the next four years?

AA (04:14):

Yes. I think either way there's gonna be, it's just, it's very, this election is very different. From past ones because I don't know if it's particularly the two candidates that are running. But it's just very like personal and I almost feel like it's geared towards our generation in that like the, like petty comebacks or like the quick wit, like they're just trying to like keep everybody involved in it. But I don't necessarily think that's a good thing because, like, with presidential like campaigns and stuff, it's supposed to be a bit more professional than what it's been like. So.

JA (05:01):

I see that too. Yeah.

AA (05:01):

But yeah. I think the outcome is definitely, either way there's gonna be, obviously people are gonna be upset either way, but yeah, I think and then there might be protests, like it's definitely gonna shape.

JA

Yeah.

AA

And I think it'll have a big impact on the school as well.

JA (05:18):

I definitely agree. Yeah.

AA (05:18):

Yeah.

JA (05:20):

Alright, so how do you get news and information about what is happening locally, statewide, nationally and or globally?

AA (05:27):

So since I'm not super into politics, most of the time I'll like see something on TikTok that's like crazy or outrageous and I'm like, there's no way this is true. And then I'll go and, like, look it up to see how accurate that actually is. Um, because social media obviously yeah, they inflate every single story, but um, it's hard to find a good news source.

JA (05:56):

Yeah.

AA (05:56):

Like there's always gonna be some sort of ulterior motive because it's just how it is these days unfortunately. But I try to look at multiple news sources to actually try to find the middle ground between them and figure out what's actually true and what's not. But I think when it go, when it comes to coming, like finding news and information, you just have to keep an open mind of okay, they're probably a little bit biased one way or another and try to find the neutral. But most of the time I'll just look at a bunch of different news sources and try to figure out what's actually accurate.

JA (06:37):

Are there any specific news sources that you see do a really good job of staying neutral?

AA (06:41):

Um, like within the U.S no <laugh> most of the time, like, you have to look at news sources from other countries or like, and even sometimes they're a little bit biased, which is interesting because you would think that, like, they would be the most neutral because they're not in really that involved. But I mean they are involved obviously with like allies and stuff like that. But um, yeah, most of the time you just have to look.

JA (07:10):

Yeah.

AA (07:11):

Far and wide

JA (07:12):

<laugh>. Yeah. I agree. Right. And would you consider yourself well informed on what is going on locally, statewide, nationally and globally?

AA (07:19):

I would say moderately informed. I wouldn't say that I'm like, I could go out and like explain to somebody perfectly what's going on, but I would say, like, there are certain things that make a little more sense to me than other things, if that makes sense.

JA (07:37):

Yeah. Is there anything specifically important that you stay, try to stay informed about?

AA (07:43):

Um, just like the super important policies that like are gonna like change the election, like inflation and like cost of homes, stuff like that that like would impact me in the next couple of years. But yeah.

JA (07:59):

Right. And why do you think it's important for people of the future to hear about your experiences of the events of 2024?

AA (08:06):

So I think specifically this year is gonna be very important obviously with the election and that's gonna change drastically how things kind of run from here on out. But just in general, like I think it's important to stay informed about what's happened in the past. In order to kind of have an understanding of how you got to where you are so people of the future will maybe listen to this and say, oh this is what, you know, this person thought and went through every day. Just to kind of like give some context almost.

JA (08:44):

Yeah. Right. So how and why did you decide to attend Appalachian State?

AA (08:51):

So it's kind of a long convoluted story as most peoples are.

JA

Thats good

AA

But um, so I grew up in North Carolina obviously, and my family was always, um, big UNC fans.

JA

Yeah

AA

Which I personally don't think makes any sense because both of my parents went to App State.

JA (09:11):

Yeah.

AA (09:11):

So, um, when I was applying to colleges senior year, I was looking at UNC, Wake Forest, NC State, all of those big schools. And um, I really wanted to go to Wake Forest and then I got waitlisted, but my mom actually talked to me into applying to App.

JA (09:32):

Yeah.

AA (09:32):

Because she was like, it's just a good safety school. Like you might like it there, you never know.

JA (09:38):

Yeah.

AA (09:38):

And then I applied to The Honors College and I ended up getting into The Honors College. And since I got waitlisted to Wake Forest, I actually did get off the wait list, but it was so expensive that my parents were like, there's no way you're going there. And um, I just realized, like, UNC was way too big of a school for me. Like, I don't think I would've really enjoyed it there. And I have friends that go to UNC and it's just seems like way too much of a struggle for them there, so I just didn't want to go there. And um, so yeah, I got into The Honors College and I decided to come here. Yeah.

JA (10:23):

Now Wake Forest wasn't as expensive as it is and you had the choice to go there or stay at App State, which would you choose <laugh>?

AA (10:30):

Well, I don't know. The thing that I've heard is that you can't really transfer into Wake Forest.

JA

Ah

AA

Because none of the credits line up. But also I think I still would've come to App State. Because Wake Forest, it's just kind of like, I feel like App is just a good size school, Wake is a little bit smaller.

JA (10:53):

Yeah.

AA (10:54):

So I don't know that I would've enjoyed that as much.

JA (10:58):

Yeah.

AA (10:58):

And there's also like the diversity here is something that's like very talked about.

JA (11:06):

Yeah.

AA (11:07):

Which is kind of crazy because like where I went to high school and, like all, like UNC and all of those places, they don't really talk about their diversity that much. And like I remember when I applied I had to like write out a thing that was, like, how you would add to the diversity of App State and I was like, I don't know, I'm white girl. But like it's just interesting to think about, like, the avenues that they think are important.

JA (11:33):

Yeah. Alright. So how has the recent hurricane Helene affected your studies at Appalachian State?

AA (11:40):

Wow. Um, so when the hurricane first hit, I remember, like, nobody really thought it would be that bad. But, um, Thursday and Friday, I also live in a dorm this year as a sophomore, so, um, I wasn't really personally affected. Like I didn't really lose housing, my room wasn't flooded, which some people, I got really lucky with that, because some people on my floor, their rooms were completely flooded.

JA (12:10):

Yeah.

AA (12:10):

So, um, just luck of the draw I guess. But I went home that Saturday right after it hit because the roads, like, to get to where I'm from were fine. But some people, like they couldn't go home at all. But I took a bunch of my friends home with me because they couldn't get home. So I was just like, all right, everybody come on. And um, we ended up being home for three weeks and that was almost three weeks. And that was definitely interesting just having this huge break in the middle of the semester. Like, right when things were about to be like we were about to take midterms. And, like, all this stuff was about to happen. And, um, as far as like coming back and getting right back into it, it's been an adjustment for sure. It's very similar to Covid, I would say. Um, minus the Zooms and stuff. But like, even when Covid first hit, we got like a month off of school. Like, it's just been, it's been an adjustment because coming back it's like I'm used to being like, it almost felt like a spring or winter break. Like, and it's just hard to get back into it. Especially when some teachers are like, okay, we have to cram all this stuff in because you need to know it for the classes you were taking next semester.

JA (13:24):

Yeah.

AA (13:24):

Like I'm in Chem Two right now and that's been very difficult because I've had to take like, multiple tests and, like, we've had to skip labs and like all this stuff and, um, it's just been, it's been an adjustment for sure. Especially 'cause I'm not a person who likes change very much. So that's been very tough.

JA (13:45):

Yeah. And how has the hurricane affected your friends and your family?

AA (13:50):

So my family was fine. Um, my friends, my roommate, her family was in Asheville, so they got hit very hard.

Speaker 3 (13:59):

Yeah.

AA (13:59):

And um, like they didn't have power, wifi, water, for like almost a week I think. So they ended up staying in my house as well. So when we were home, like, we had a full house for a little bit, which was fun because um, my brother's in college right now too, so it's just been like my mom, my dad and me, um, over the summers and stuff. 'cause he recently moved out.

JA (14:25):

Yeah.

AA (14:25):

And so it was fun to have a big full house again, but at the same time it's like at what cost? Um, but yeah, it's just been, its been crazy.

JA (14:41):

Yeah, it has. Alright. Are there any clubs, organizations or communities with which you've connected?

AA (14:47):

So, um, as I said earlier, I'm in The Honors College. Um, and I'm also a part of the Child Advocacy Club, which has been super cool because, um, in like with what I want to do specifically it doesn't really have to do with children. I'm a psychology major and I want to do cognitive neuroscience research, so nothing to do with kids really. But it's been super cool to, 'cause I love working with kids. I work at a summer camp over the, um, summer.

JA (15:16):

Yeah.

AA (15:16):

But, um, it's been super cool to be able to like still be involved with kids in a way that like, that benefits people, but like doesn't, I don't, I don't know. But

JA (15:30):

Yeah,

AA (15:31):

It's just been a really cool experience to be a part of that.

JA (15:34):

Yeah.

AA (15:34):

And helping the community, especially with the hurricane and everything happening. Like we've been able to go and volunteer and like help people kind of bounce back from that.

JA (15:43):

Yeah.

AA (15:43):

But yeah.

JA (15:45):

And you said you're majoring in psychology. Do you wanna work with kids as a psychology?

AA (15:50):

I don't

JA (15:51):

as a job? No?

AA (15:51):

Which is interesting because that's the whole reason I joined the club was because I knew like since I won't be able to work with kids in the future, I might as well like get all that out now and like, because I do love kids, but, and it would be nice to work with kids, but in what I want to do. It's like, it's just not really feasible.

JA (16:16):

Yeah. Yeah. Right. How would you describe your community at App State?

AA (16:19):

So, um, I would say the community of like the school as a whole. I think before, I think it's very different now post hurricane than it was before. I think before like obviously last year we had the protests about the chancellor and all of those crazy things happening. Um, and that kind of brought together a certain community within the school. And I think like post hurricane, it's kind of brought together everybody. Because like people that you may not have ever talked to before, like offering help and like to stay in their house for however long because, um, it's, yeah. I just think like whenever there is the source, like the source of struggle and tragedy

JA (17:15):

Yeah.

AA (17:16):

Then it just brings together the community as a whole. But I think if I would've thought about prior to then the community was definitely a little bit separated, I would say. I don't know, like I just feel like there are two very different groups of people. And it's like, you're either like a part of the like sorority frat people. Or you're like with the hippies. And there's like this weird in between. And then that's kind of like how it falls. Which is very odd. But like people when they think of App, they just think of like, oh, they're tree huggers. At least like from my high school people were like, oh, you're going there like in the mountains with the hippies and the tree huggers. Oh, okay. Like, have fun. But I think it's very different when you're actually here.

JA (18:07):

Yeah.

AA (18:07):

But

JA (18:08):

I agree. Yeah. And what is the most important thing that people should know about this community years from now?

AA (18:15):

I think that there is like a sense of connectedness between everybody just because, not just because we all go to school here or whatever, just because like it genuinely is a community.

AA (18:31):

And um, like even the um, like professors and like different people like reaching out and like making sure that you're okay. Like I remember when we had, um, orientation there was, um, multiple professors were like, yeah, like we want to make sure that the students are genuinely okay here. And I think that like sets it apart from other bigger schools, like UNC or whatever. Because they're just kind of like they're going through the motions and like, they're not worried about like the mental health aspect or like how students are genuinely doing. So I think just knowing that like there's a sense of caring in the community here.

JA (19:15):

Yeah. I definitely agree. And what advice would you give to next year as incoming students?

AA (19:21):

Um, I would just say that what I've personally had to learn a lot this year is just being flexible and adapting to change. Because like obviously the hurricane and everything that's happening like in like a couple years, a couple years ago we had covid and just being able to adapt to change and knowing that like, there is a plan or there will be a plan and not like it's not gonna ruin you

JA (19:56):

Yeah.

AA (19:57):

Um, like there is a coming back and just being able to adapt and know that everything will be okay. <laugh>.

JA (20:05):

Yeah. Yeah. Are there any strategies you use to deal with the stress afflicted by these changes?

AA (20:10):

Um, I think just knowing that like there is a plan, like everything will be okay eventually. Um, like missing three weeks of school, like in the moment I was very stressed with like, my grades are gonna drop. Everything's going horribly wrong. But just the like everybody coming together and being like, okay, this is what we're gonna do. But also like if you need the support and the help that's also there.

JA (20:40):
Yeah.

AA (20:40):
Has been very comforting.

JA (20:42):
Yeah. Yeah. Awesome. Well thank you.

AA (20:45):
Yes, of course.