Interview keywords/topics: Ireland and Appalachia, Community

Interviewer: KK
Interviewee: EM

KK:

Alright. The date is November 4th, 2024. We are here in Belk Library, uh, for the WRC 2202 class. My name is KK and I'm here interviewing

EM:

EM.

KK:

Alright. Um, could you please state your year and major?

EM:

I'm a freshman at App and I'm undecided.

KK:

Nice. All right. Getting started. Where do you consider yourself to be from and what's your hometown like?

EM:

I'm from outside of Raleigh, um, recently moved to Apex. Um, it's super small, like my friends and I would just like, sit in the school parking lot when we were, like, bored on the weekends, just 'cause I feel like there was nothing to do. But, um, we played Spikeball a lot. Um, we also would like, go to the beach because it was so like, an hour and a half away <laugh>. Um, but yeah, I would say that we're good friends with our neighbors.

KK:

And how do you think that that shaped you as a person?

EM:

I think that the community where I'm from is, um, super sweet and just like having all my friends live close and I love spending quality time with them. Um, and so I think like I just had molded into people around me in those ways a lot. And even though it was boring, um, it like made me be more creative, I think. Especially as a kid, like I would just draw cities of chalk, with chalk on my driveway growing up.

KK:

So, do you think you liked that place more or the mountains here?

EM:

I think I liked the mountains so much more <laugh> and I never thought that I would growing up just 'cause my mom was from mountains and I just hated going there. But as I got older in like high school, I worked at a lot of camps that were in the mountains and that was just like a really special place that I saw the Lord a lot, 'cause I'm a believer, um, in Christ. And so the mountains have just been a really sweet place. And App's been amazing getting to live here now. Yeah.

KK:

Awesome! What would you say is the proudest moment in your life so far?

EM:

Um, I think academically, I was a AP Capstone student and did an AP resource project on the correlation between personality and shoes that teenagers choose to wear.

KK:

Oh wow!

EM:

And I got a five <laugh>, so that definitely. Um, and I think just in my life, um, just like growing up in high, like through high school and like developing my relationship with the Lord. Um, and then I've also just like had grown a really good relationship with my sisters, um, which has been like super sweet and special. Um, and people all the time are like, how are you so close to them? I don't understand. And that's just really special.

KK:

Yeah. That's awesome. That's a really interesting research topic. <laugh>. So as you know, we're in 2024, um, there are still some impacts of COVID-19. How are you impacted by that pandemic?

EM:

Yeah, COVID started my, the end of my eighth grade year and I remember like texting my friend and I was like, two weeks off and then we'll just go back. I mean, it's fun, but, um, then we just didn't go back. And I went to charter middle school. Um, so going to high school, all my friends like went to the other high school and I went to a different public high school near me. Um, and so I wasn't gonna have friends going to high school, like whether Covid happened or not. And so I didn't get to make friends until sophomore year of high school, which was definitely super weird. But all of my freshman year was online, which was super beneficial for me 'cause I was just so bored outta my mind that I just worked so hard on schoolwork. I didn't even cheat because I was just so bored. I had nothing else to do. Um, which set me up for a good GPA I think. But, um, I honestly didn't mind online school. Um, I think it did change me a little bit, like before Covid I feel like I was super creative all the time and like super organized and I feel like I've just lost that. So that's something that I'm trying to, um, kind of like regrow in college is just like how creative I am, um, and get back into that. Yeah.

KK:

Is it still impacting you to this day?

EM:

I feel like now, I mean, I, I probably am still a little bit lazier from it honestly, still. Um, and just like with a creative thing, like wanting to get back into like artsy things that I used to like be super interested in.

KK:

Yeah. That's what I hear a lot from people. So it just kind of makes 'em feel more lazy. Um, what do you think are the broad social perceptions of your generation, Gen Z?

EM:

I think that we're just extremely addicted to social media and I didn't really have, like, I wasn't really allowed to have social media, um, until like high school and which was a good thing. And like now I recently like got TikTok and I still refuse to get Snapchat, but it is addicting to be honest.

KK:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

EM:

But I think that we still are like functioning like we're like, I feel like still super educated and, but it's definitely weird. But my sister is, my younger sister is Gen Alpha, so I feel like I stereotype her the way that people would stereotype us Yeah. In Gen Z. Um, just with screens.

KK:

Yeah. I have younger nieces that are the same. I feel like I feel bad 'cause I feel like I stereotype 'em, but <laugh>. Um, are there any stereotypes of our generation that you think are, are false or true?

EM:

Um, I don’t know, I mean I think that people just have a really negative perception of screens, which is totally valid. Um, but like there definitely are like things that are helpful from it and I think that we also are just really educated on how to use technology, which, um, is a blessing and curse, but yeah.

KK:

Very true. All right, onto App State questions. How and why did you decide to attend App State?

EM:

I never really had a dream college, um, growing up. And my dad went to Liberty and my mom went to, um, community college. So, um, I just like didn't like, we didn't like watch football or anything.

KK:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

EM:

So I just didn't really know anything about where I wanted to go. Um, and then in high school I applied to five colleges, which were just like the, I feel like the basic like public universities here in North Carolina. Um, and narrow, I got into everywhere but at Chapel Hill I got waitlisted. Um, so I narrowed down my decisions to State and App and it was super hard. I would cry about it and like my dad and I like were AI-ing in like comparing the two colleges and I was in the car freaking out about it one day and I called my mentor who was my Young Life leader and just like really good friend. And she was like, well, which college was the most exciting, NC State or App? And I put my deposit down for App that night.

KK:

Oh wow!

EM:

Um, but yeah, was definitely the right choice, <laugh> for sure.

KK:

Yeah! You said that you were an undecided major. Is there anything that you are leaning towards more?

EM:

Um, coming in I was thinking maybe social work, um, to pursue some sort of counseling, but now I'm just like, there's so many options.

KK:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

EM:

I literally can't pick <laugh>. They all seem just so amazing and I dunno. Yeah.

KK:

Tough to decide for sure. Um, has your college experience been what you expected so far or led to believe in high school?

EM:

I think it's been similar but super different because like my mentor, I was saying like, I just watched her go through college and like her friend group and like that cute house that she lived in.

Um, so I was like, that's what I want. And I think that it's been different from that. Um, especially just like wanting to like find a friend group this year. And I feel like I recently have been, um, developing a friend group, but, and that's been super sweet, but it's just been like slow, like it's just gonna be slow making friends and like it settling into App. Um, so that's different, but I mean, it's honestly easier than I expected to <laugh>, which is like probably because I don't have a major <laugh> and I don't, it definitely for sure is better than high school and like the classes, like every single one, I just like, I love them so much and just like I'm interested in something from every single class that I'm taking this semester.

KK:

Have you had a good dorm experience so far?

EM:

Yeah. <laugh>, I met my roommate at camp two years ago and I feel like roommate wise we're just like, it just worked out super well. And then our suitemates we met, um, on Instagram and they're so amazing. Like, I just can't imagine my life without, I don't know how I lived without one of them before.

KK:

That's awesome! Yeah, I feel like coming in as a freshman, that's like one of the pivotal moments of college experience.

EM:

Yeah.

KK:

Um, do you have a favorite place on campus?

EM:

Right now, I'm currently obsessed with Sanford. Like, especially when it's sunny, my mom's like, what'd you do? I'm like, I sat out in Sanford for six hours today, <laugh>. Um, I just love that place.

KK:

There's so much going on too.

EM:

<laugh>yes and I just get work and out there for some reason and like my friends like will just see each other out there. Um, yeah.

KK:

Nice. How about off campus?

EM:

Um, the Parkway probably. Yeah. Um, I'm like, kind of like what we were talking about with the generation question, like, and you know, my friends will joke about it. I'm like, the kids need their iPad time. Like, I need my parkway time on the weekends. <laugh>. Um, I also love Hatchet.

KK:

Oh yeah. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. That's a good one. <laugh>. Um, how would you describe your community at App State?

EM:

Um, I think it's super sweet and I just feel super cared for like, by all my friends all the time. Um, I love the Enneagram test, um, if you know what that is. And I'm a nine, which is a peacemaker, but a lot of my friends here are twos, which are the helper. And in high school I didn't have one friend that was a two. So like to have like, friends that are twos and like helpers and like, I don't know, everyone is just like so loving and kind, which is so refreshing coming out of high school. Um, especially after senior year, I just feel like my friends weren't great. Um, but now like here I'm just like, I just feel like, seen and known by all my friends, um, which is so special. Yeah.

KK:

Um, is there anything that you think people should know about this community perhaps years from now?

EM:

Um, I think that the community in like specifically Boone and like the mountains, um, of North Carolina is just, um, so sweet and different. Um, especially like church community. I feel like at home in Raleigh, it can be super competitive, like come to our church, but in Boone, like people who say they love the Lord actually love the Lord and like are like being examples of Jesus all the time. And that is just insane how genuine people are here, even if like they're not believers. Um, everyone is so kind and accepting and loving, um, of each person and like really makes you feel seen and known, um, and heard, which I think is super unique, especially for like a town that college is in.

KK:

Yeah. Yeah. I love that. All right. And my last question for you, um, is the most recent. Um, as you know, we had, uh, hurricane Helene come through about a month ago, a little over a month ago. Um, how are impacted by hurricane Helene?

EM:

Um, I was actually in Raleigh for a concert that Wednesday and then I was like, oh, I have to come back to the before it rains <laugh>. So I drove up Thursday morning, um, and then it started like getting bad here. The weather should getting bad. Um, but I think that we all were just like, meh, it's just gonna rain. Yeah. Um, and then school got canceled, so I went home, well that Sunday I actually went to church in

Boone with my friend and I didn't really want to go that morning, but I went anyway and it was, um, I'm so glad that I did 'cause it was just people praying over each other in the community and like sharing their needs like right after this had happened. So like we were just like in the mess of it all. Um, and I gotta see like some of my friends that I haven't gotta see in like my young life college leader was there in her house, um, has been condemned since.

KK:

Oh wow.

EM:

But getting to see her in, um, being in that community before I went back to Raleigh. Um, and then in Raleigh I like, got to visit some friends at a bunch of different colleges, um, but was also just super bored and like, I could do homework, but it's like I didn't know what was gonna be like left of my homework I had to do or not. And it was good to see friends from high school, but I just like am so obsessed with my friends in college <laugh>. I was like, I need to be back around here. Um, and it was really good to spend time with my sisters too because, um, they're both younger than me and like, um, miss me and I miss them. So, um, that was good. But I did like, um, maybe a week into just being home, um, had like a vertigo episode and started getting really dizzy and nauseous just like throughout the day randomly. And I went to the doctor and she thought it was anxiety because like our like world had been like turned upside down from like this, um, storm and having to go back. Um, so that has been like tricky and interesting to figure out. Um, and like since then it like hasn't really gone away, but um, now we're thinking it might not be anxiety or I don't know. So we're, I'm still figuring that out, but I just thought that was like so interesting that like, oh, that is something that came from this, um, hurricane.

KK:

Are you still kind of experiencing that or has it gone away?

EM:

Yeah, we thought that when I, she like, my doctor was thinking like once we got the email that we're going back and I like came to Bo to like, get some more clothes and like, was here. It kind of started subsiding, especially like getting back. Um, but last week it kind of started again, so we're still figuring that out. Um, but yeah.

KK:

Yeah. The devastation that this hurricane caused was absolutely insane. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Um, I'm really glad that you were able to, um, get with the church community and see that everybody came together. Um, has it changed your view on the Boone community?

EM:

Yeah. And like even outside of Boone, just like the people who care so much about the people here and about each other. Um, and just like seeing my like friends here come together and, um, when I went to church that time, one of the guys that was praying with us is a leader at, in Avery County and just like

hearing him pray for his like boys that he leads, um, and people like in Raleigh being like everyone texting me and be like, what can I do? Like, are you going up? Like what can I give you to bring back up? Um, it was so sweet. And people just like praying over, um, our area. Um, and even on social media, like it at first just like, oh my gosh, like I feel people were just posting funny things of like the, um, porter potty just like slowing down the street. Um, and that was like at first like just I was like, I wanna see what's happening in then, but definitely got worse. Like should not have been watching all of those funny tiktoks. Yeah. Um, but also like social media, like portraying like the good things that people were doing, um, together here. Um, and like still that there's just like, like they had to stop taking donations, um, because people were so generous and I feel like volunteer stuff just fills up so quick here. Yeah. Um, and again, it's just so special.

KK:

Yeah. That's awesome. Well, that's all the questions that I have for you today. Thank you so much.

EM:

Yes, thank you.