

Transcript of Deborah Hoile Oral History 2020/07/25

Interviewee: Deborah Hoile

Interviewer: Clinton Roberts

Date: 07/25/2020

Location (Interviewee): Blanchard, Oklahoma

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Transcriber: Clinton Roberts

Abstract: Deborah Hoile is a resident of Blanchard, Oklahoma having moved there in the 1990s from the suburbs of Oklahoma City. She is married and has three children and five grandchildren. Deborah is now retired and spends much of her time watching her granddaughter. She speaks about how things in the small community of Blanchard are quieter than in the bigger cities. Deborah recounts the activities that she noticed changing in Blanchard as COVID-19 altered her and other people's day to day lives. She also provides specific adaptations that Blanchard made to provide services and activities in other ways. Deborah further adds insights into what it was like to have a medical incident occur and have to use an online doctor for the first time. In her thoughts of the future, Deborah hopes this pandemic may encourage her community, Blanchard, to be more helpful to one another after experiencing the need to assist those that are homebound or with compromised immunity.

Clinton Roberts 00:01

This is Clinton Roberts of Arizona State University HST 580 for the Journal of the Plague Year archive. Today is July 25, 2020, and I'm conducting an interview with Deborah Hoile. Deborah will be talking about how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed her day-to-day activities. What is your name?

Deborah Hoile 00:19

Deborah Hoile.

Clinton Roberts 00:20

What do you do for a living? Deborah?

Deborah Hoile 00:22

I'm retired now.

Clinton Roberts 00:25

Where do you live?

Deborah Hoile 00:27

I live in Blanchard, Oklahoma.

Clinton Roberts 00:29

What's it like living in Blanchard, Oklahoma?

Deborah Hoile 00:33

It's a small town. It's much nicer much, I don't know, more peaceful, friendlier here than living in a larger suburb, which is where we came from.

Clinton Roberts 00:45

When did you first hear about COVID-19? And what were your thoughts about it when you first heard about it?

Deborah Hoile 00:53

Um, gosh, thinking back, I guess it was maybe March when I first heard about it. It was, it was a little scary sounding. And even now I go back and forth- Is it worse than the flu? Is it just the flu? What are all these precautions because the precautions themselves were very scary. And then the thoughts that they started closing things down, you couldn't go do things. In fact, you couldn't even open certain types of businesses. It was...it was scary. It was a lot to take in.

Clinton Roberts 01:31

Since first hearing about COVID-19, have your thoughts changed across that time?

Deborah Hoile 01:35

I think and I'm probably not alone in this, but I wonder what's the truth? What are we hearing? We hear so many different things and so many conflicting bits of information. What's true? And I think that's one of the scariest things is that we don't, we as in the little people, don't know what the truth is, if anyone does.

Clinton Roberts 02:07

How is your daily routine changed since COVID-19 and in what ways?

Deborah Hoile 02:14

I'm probably one of the luckier ones because my day-to-day routine hasn't changed as much. Obviously, I don't go out and do things like I used to do. But I've been fortunate in that I still take care of my granddaughter. I still see two of my four grandsons on a day-to-day basis. So, things like that have not changed so much for me. Things that have changed as I...for a long time didn't go to the grocery store at all. I do more online shopping now than I did in the past. And I'm much more careful when I do go out.

Clinton Roberts 02:58

Are your day-to-day activities, like what you mentioned the online shopping things like that, is it made it more stressful than before?

Deborah Hoile 03:11

It has, because there are things when you know you're looking in the refrigerator and you think, "Oh man, I'm out of this, I need to run go get it. Oh, well wait, no, I can't run, go get that." Or you know, "I'd like to run out and get this," and "Oh, I can't," or "I'm out of disinfecting cleaners and I can't even find those anywhere at all." So...

Clinton Roberts 03:38

Has the COVID-19 outbreak affected how you interact and communicate with friends and family, and in what ways?

Deborah Hoile 03:44

I...you know, I don't see my eldest daughter and her family as often and to know, that's sad. I don't see my grandson and his fiancée as often because of her issues, you know, being really frightened with getting something like COVID-19 and, and her underlying conditions, and... You know I have a cousin that I would go shopping with or go out to lunch with and I haven't seen her you know, since this started. So yeah, there are things like that-that I that...I really miss doing and seeing.

Clinton Roberts 04:26

Have you tried to adapt new ways to communicate and interact with these people?

Deborah Hoile 04:33

Not really new ways, but you know, now it's mostly Facebook and text messages.

Clinton Roberts 04:43

How has the COVID-19 outbreak affected Blanchard in particular? Have you noticed any changes?

Deborah Hoile 04:51

Well, not getting out of the house a lot so I haven't really noticed. But I mean the shops downtown were closed for a while and, you know, going to the grocery store, you know, they would have special hours for seniors, which I would take advantage of, you know. And they were, you could see people, you know, disinfecting shopping carts and you know, storekeepers wearing mask and that sort of thing. So yeah, it has affected the town in ways that pretty much anybody can see.

Clinton Roberts 05:28

So, do you know of other ways that maybe they've adapted to COVID-19? Or has Blanchard done anything in particular that's different than what you've seen on the news and other places?

Deborah Hoile 05:48

Well, I mean, they're taking the...the prescribe precautions. You know, maybe when you think about things like the high school graduation, or the high school prom, you know, those are things that were done differently in different areas. And, you know, Blanchard had their own way of doing it.

Clinton Roberts 06:10

Do you think Blanchard people responded differently than they would have in bigger cities in particular?

Deborah Hoile 06:20

You know, people are people so I don't think so. I just think because it's a smaller town, maybe you don't have, you know, the pockets of those who are totally against it, or, you know, the fanatics. That's too strong a word. But...

Clinton Roberts 06:40

Do you think the news media depicts COVID-19 the way you've experienced the pandemic and Blanchard? And in what ways would you say it's lacking or accurate?

Deborah Hoile 06:52

Well, accuracy is something that I questioned a lot. You...I don't think it's what we've seen necessarily here in this small town, the mainly because it seems like all the news broadcasts I've seen are focused on the really big cities and, you know, things are much different in a big city than they are in a small town. So now, I don't think it's quite the same as here.

Clinton Roberts 07:22

How have you and your family responded to national and local request to use safety measures such as social distancing, wearing masks?

Deborah Hoile 07:30

We are trying to follow that. I'm not one who thinks it's against my civil liberties to be asked to wear a mask. I think it's just common courtesy. To...you know, if I feel like if-if doctors ask transplant patients to wear a mask, then the mask must do something. So, I think it's a good idea to wear and I think it's a good idea to follow those precautions.

Clinton Roberts 08:02

Have you or anybody you know, gotten sick during the COVID-19...19 outbreak and that be COVID or non-COVID? And what has been your experience of responding to illnesses?

Deborah Hoile 08:14

We've been pretty fortunate. I did have a ruptured eardrum early on. So, I did have to use an online doctor's visit for the first time. You know, fortunately, it wasn't anything serious it-it got better on its own. But I did have two separate online visits for that. And that's not something I would have really considered in the past.

Clinton Roberts 08:43

Does living in Blanchard seem safer or more dangerous than COVID-19 and how so?

Deborah Hoile 08:50

I think safer just because there aren't as many people. So even when you're going into the shops or you know going to pick up food at a drive thru restaurant, you know, you're not in contact with as many people. So, I do think it's safer.

Clinton Roberts 09:10

How have your local and state governments responded to the outbreak? Do you think their response was enough? Not enough? Too much? How so?

Deborah Hoile 09:21

I think they're having some of the same issues I am you know, what's the truth on this? What's the best way to handle it? Because you look at the state and you know, they decide maybe to make recommendations instead of making...I don't know mandatory to do certain things and leaving it up to the smaller...so I- and you see smaller areas, doing different things. So, I think everybody's having the same problem. No one knows what the truth is and what's the best way to deal with things. Everybody's kind of flying by the seat of their pants and those who are in power are making some decisions that may or may not be the right ones. And I don't know that any of us would do any better.

Clinton Roberts 10:12

And just speaking about the future, do you think COVID-19 will have a lasting effect in Blanchard beyond this year and why so?

Deborah Hoile 10:27

In some ways, because you hear more about people who are helping others who are going out of their way to do things for the elderly or the homebound. And I think some of that will stay.

Clinton Roberts 10:42

And what would you want future generations to know about what it was like to live in Blanchard during COVID-19?

Deborah Hoile 10:48

You know, because my day-to-day didn't change as much, I don't think what I have to tell will be maybe as impactful as what some others do. Because I was, you know, I was fortunate in to not have to worry about money coming in, you know, my home, my cars are paid for. You know, we were able to get all the food and all the products really that we needed. And I was seeing a lot of the people that I interact with a lot. I was still seeing them on a pretty regular basis. So, I don't think my life was impacted nearly as much as others have been.

Clinton Roberts 11:35

Well, thank you so much for your time, Deborah. And that's conducts the end of the interview, thank you.