

Interviewee: Yvonne Evans

Place of interview: House on Bull Street

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Interviewer: Katherine Pemberton (Historic Charleston Foundation)

Videographer: Leigh Moring (Historic Charleston Foundation)

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BEGIN INTERVIEW

Interviewer: All right, so we're here today with Yvonne Evans, and it's Monday, October -

Yvonne Evans: 22nd.

KP: - and we're on Bull Street in this lovely historic house in Harlston Village. So, Yvonne, would you please say and spell your full name?

YE: My name is Yvonne Evans, and it's Y-V-O-N-N-E E-V-A-N-S.

KP: And can you tell us your birthday and year, and where you were born?

YE: I was born August 3rd, 1936, actually in New York City. My father, whose family lived in Charleston from the 1790s on, but he had moved to New York City and met my mother, a first-generation Irish American, and Daddy, who is a very French Charlestonian and my mother, an Irish American - so we had wonderful genes to take us through life.

KP: Definitely. Now, what were your parents' names?

YE: My mother was Gertrude McIntyre. Daddy was Leo DuFort.

KP: It's a great Irish name.

YE: Yes, and a very French name.

KP: Yes, absolutely. So, when did you move to Charleston?

YE: As a very little child. And we lived on Queen Street for years, and as many people did, everyone that I knew at that time and went to school with, there were always more than one family in a Charleston single [house], and that's why you have so many people in those older Census tracts - the higher number of people living in Charleston than now, because all the houses have been returned to one family. So, we grew up on Queen Street, we went to Cathedral Grammar School, which is on Queen Street, and then on to Bishop England, and to the College [of Charleston]. So, everything was within Harlston Village.

KP: Right. So, other than Queen Street, where else did you live? Did you live on Queen Street the whole time?

YE: We lived on Queen, and then we did live on Logan Street.

KP: Also in Harleston Village.

YE: Oh yeah.

KP: So, the house that you lived in was a Charleston single, and you said probably cut up into kind of apartments, or was that the whole floor?

YE: Right. It was a whole floor, right.

KP: And do you remember how many bedrooms, or -

YE: There were, I think, like two bedrooms, and they were large rooms. A typical large single family [house], Charleston single [house], that had very large rooms, beautiful, beautiful moldings. That sort of thing.

KP: Nothing like this -

YE: No, it didn't quite look like this.

KP: Not quite. Did you have brothers and sisters growing up?

YE: I have two sisters.

KP: So, and they went to school and in the same places?

YE: Yes, same schools, right.

KP: So, you noted that your father was French Huguenot, probably?

YE: French Catholic.

KP: French Catholic?

YE: And his grandfather, his grandparents lived on Archdale in that brick single that's now part of the school there, Charleston Day. And after the [1886] earthquake when so many buildings were damaged, their building was, so he built 125 King, which was Tellis for years, Tellis Pharmacy. And Daddy was born upstairs. His family, and his aunt and uncle lived, it was a large second story, and they lived in the other side. And my great grandfather has a gasfitting business, and the former mayor's, Joe Riley's great uncle, worked for him. Andrew Riley.

KP: And then you ended up sort of working with Joe Riley.

YE: I did, I did.

KP: Soon we'll get there. So, I guess just a little bit about Harlston Village in general, because I think we can fairly say you're a long-term resident of Harlston Village. When you were a youngster, what did you sort of perceive the boundaries of your childhood? Like where were you allowed to in the neighborhood, and where were you not allowed to go?

YE: I think that we could walk and ride our bikes all over the lower part of the city. There weren't any places that you really couldn't go. The lake was a place we would go, Colonial Lake, and we didn't go through the Robert Mills Manor that was there. It was different than it is now. I remember certain parts of it had senior ladies living it, senior White ladies living in it. It was much more diverse, more mixed than it is in today's world. But we could pretty much go -

KP: Did you ever north of Calhoun?

YE: No. We did not go north of Calhoun. Calhoun was very much a boundary.

KP: What about the [City] Market? I know it was probably pretty different.

YE: The Market was very different. No, we did not go to the Market. I mean, that was - So one of my sons, they all had paper routes. One of them, his first paper route when he was very young, was down in the Market, and that was in the days before it had been re-done. And there were often people sleeping out there, and it was just not a nice place, not a fun place, the way it is now.

KP: Right, right. So, what would you think if you were to describe Harlston Village as a neighborhood to someone who'd never been here. What would you say?

YE: I think Harlston Village - do you mean just now, as opposed to when I was a child?

KP: Either one.

YE: Well, Harlston Village is, I think, a neighborhood, and it's a neighborhood that people from various points in their lives can live and feel that they're a part of it. It isn't just a neighborhood of the typical family with three children. There's something for everyone. There is the Canterbury, which has older people, seniors living there, and it's wonderful for them, because they can walk all over. There are a number of churches, a number of schools, elementary schools. So, it's a true neighborhood, a big one, but a good neighborhood.

KP: Right - and it's the largest.

YE: It is the largest. It is, it is.

KP: So, tell me about, to jump back to the Harlston Village when you were growing up, what were the sort of landmarks in Harlston Village that you can think of, the landmarks in your life?

YE: There were the schools and the churches. We were very active as children in the church. And the corner grocery stores. There were several of them, and some of them had turned into

residential, but they still had the look, the front of a grocery store. So, you always ran to the grocery store, and your parents had a charge account, and you could go in and get a Coke. And school. So, you really sort of bounced around. Then there was the Colonial Lake and the playground. And so it was a wonderful, free kind of happy life.

KP: I think we hear that from a lot of the folks that we interview about childhood being very free before Charleston got so busy and touristy and everything. That kids rode their bikes everywhere.

YE: We did that. We rode our bikes. We would go down and find little alleys, and ride through the alleys and down around The Battery. I mean, you didn't have to worry about the traffic, which is dangerous in today's world, it really is. I wouldn't want my little child riding a bicycle down some of the streets.

KP: Right. Even streets in Harlston Village that probably used to be much slower, like Wentworth Street.

YE: Wentworth and Beaufain, Rutledge and Ashley. Yeah, main thoroughfares.

KP: Exactly. So, you went to the Cathedral School, and then to Bishop England. So, how did you usually get to school?

YE: Walked.

KP: You walked everywhere?

YE: Walked. We walked a lot. We walked to Bishop England, and -

KP: Tell me a little bit about Bishop England, because today it's not in the same location.

YE: It's not there anymore. It is a Catholic high school, and it actually started at the 7th grade at one point, and then it moved to the 9th. And they had nuns and priests that would teach us there, and it was a good school, because I've since talked to some of the people at the College of Charleston who said there were students from Bishop England, that they would feel could come right on in to the college and not have to take any pre-entry tests, and so it's - They had excellent teachers.

KP: Today, of course, the lot of land is the Addlestone Library, and of course, when they were doing, or I guess preconstruction, they determined that there was an African American cemetery in the back. Did you ever -

YE: No. You didn't know that, no. And I think they'd done that as they renovated Gaillard [Auditorium], they found more graveyard sites. So, I think that was something that, in the old days when it wasn't built-out on the peninsula, and it was that land they used it for, we certainly did not, had no idea that was the case. It's just wonderful that back greenspace in back of the library is an open greenspace, It's beautiful, and I know the students can go out there and rest or

read or study or whatever. And I walk my dog up there, through there. So, it's been a good transition.

KP: Definitely. I think I saw people sunbathing out there.

YE: Yes, you did.

KP: So, you went to the College of Charleston. What years did you go to the school?

YE: Well, I went to the college for my freshman year, and I left and got married and had my children. And then I went back and finished up. And it was wonderful to go back, because my children were still very young. And I took like 10 years to finish up, but it was such fun, how I could ride my bicycle to the college and back, because I was in Harlston Village. And I saw major changes in the college.

KP: What year did you graduate?

YE: I finished in '76.

KP: '76. So you did get to see some changes. What were the - tell us a little bit about those changes.

YE: It was - the college was around 400 students for a good part of its life, and then in the - I think it was in the '60s, I'm not absolutely positive - but it ran into some major financial issues. And they went to the state and asked the state to take over the college because it was suffering. It just could not continue on. It's a small municipal college by that time. And so the state took it over and then it began to grow, and it really, it was up to like, I think, 5,000 by the time I had finished. And it offered so much more. Nothing like what they offer today, but much more than when - such a classic institution in its early years. I mean, it was Greek and Latin, and wonderful things like that that every young person's so anxious to take courses in.

KP: [Laughs] Things like Rhetoric.

YE: [Laughs] Yes.

KP: So, obviously the student body grew, and could you tell a difference in sort of the geographic growth of the college as well over time? Like just how big -

YE: You know, I think the issue that the neighborhood has had with the college rests with the students living in the neighborhoods, but the actual buildings and the boundaries of the college, I think have grown beautifully. So, they have a few historic properties within Harlston Village, and they've grown more in that central commercial area. But I think the physical growth has been something that everybody's happy with. It was the students living in the neighborhood, and when I first went onto Council, that's when the college had just grown so much. This is the very beginning of 1990, and college had exploded. So, these children from suburban areas were living next to people who had lived here for 50 years, and suddenly these long-time residents found

noisy children next door, and with the cars all over the street, the garbage cans left out. And so, that was the first big issue I encountered when I went on Council.

KP: Right. And you were in the thick of it too, right?

YE: Yes, very much.

KP: You were representing Harlston Village on the City Council.

YE: And at that time, the college had a very hands-off approach to students living in the neighborhoods, and it was more like that was - they're concerned about the students in the classroom and the ones that lived in the dorms, but not the ones who were living in the neighborhood, so we had to work on that. And that's where the Town and Gown Ordinance came from, which has been very successful, because what it did was bring everybody to the table.

KP: Was that an actual city ordinance?

YE: It's a city ordinance.

KP: Is that something that you worked on drafting?

YE: Yeah, right. And you knew you had to have all the players there, so the city, the college and the neighborhoods are all represented on the committee, but we all had to come together and talk about what was bothering us. And the Livability Court that the city has, which was the first in the nation, was an outgrowth of the issues with Town and Gown. So, it's been - but the very good thing is that people wanted to come together and talk about it, and find ways to solve it. Now, what's happened over the years is that, the properties in Harlston Village have been bought by people who want to live here, and there are fewer students living in the neighborhood. What they have done is they've moved up the peninsula, and I see them walking in places that, as a child, you didn't walk in.

KP: Well, even since the '90s when I arrived, you would never find anybody walking through Elliotborough into the Crosstown. I mean, those were just areas for students that students would never think of living in but now it's very commonplace.

YE: Yeah, they do. They're like pioneers. And so they come in, and they lived all throughout the neighborhood. But because the property values have risen so dramatically, which certainly has its bad sides, you don't want to lose your sense of neighborhood, your diverse part of the city, which can happen if property values continue to go up the way they have. But because they went up, people saw the value, and they could - others wanted to live there, so they're willing to pay more and get a piece of property.

KP: Do you find that the Charlestonians or folks who had lived in Harlston Village for 50 years were living next to students, are they still there, or have they left?

YE: A lot of them have moved. It's - you know, there's a general evolution. I mean, neighborhoods turn over. I mean, that's what you have, but it's wonderful to have the old person and the young person, because they learn from one another. And some of the older ones would invite the students over and talk to them and tell them what they're doing that isn't good, or have them in for dinner. So, there was a good side, an energizing side to having those students there.

KP: Well, I'm sure there's still a lot of advantage of having the college here, because the art gallery and lectures -

YE: Well, you know, I am chairing the Dean's Council in the School of the Arts this year, and that is - the School of the Arts is so wonderful. I mean, they had a department when I was here, but the school might be 20, might be 25 years old. And the offerings for the community are wonderful. The plays, the music that they offer, and it's so reasonable.

KP: I guess I skipped some - I kind of jumped around a little bit.

YE: I'm flexible.

KP: So, we talked a little bit about Harlston Village. Do you think back when you were growing up, or even in the early days when you were at the College of Charleston, was there a mix of Black and White residents in the neighborhood?

YE: There were, there were. And there were, like Short Street was all African American. But there were also properties throughout Harlston Village that had long been a part of someone's family. And there aren't in today's world, and that's - Liz Alston lives on Queen Street and Short Street has now been gussied up. And the property on the corner of Smith and Bull, the southeast corner, large building - that was an African American family. There was one further down on Bull Street, but you - there aren't, and it's, that's a part of diversity that we've lost in the evolution that's not so good.

KP: Right, definitely. Well, when you were a youngster and living at home still, did you hit King Street a good bit for shopping?

YE: Oh, yes!

KP: Tell me a little bit what you remember about King Street.

YE: Well, you know, it had the movie theaters right there.

KP: Which one did you go to?

YE: The Riviera and Gloria, and occasionally the Garden. The Garden was further. It was below Calhoun, but further up.

KP: Just barely.

YE: Just barely. But the Riviera and Gloria were wonderful. And the prices change when you were 12, so you stayed 12 for a few extra years. And then there were the department stores. You had Belk's and -

KP: Where was Belk's?

YE: Belk's was - it ran between King and Meeting, the entire length of that block above Market Street, and it was Belk's and Penney's. And they were both there, they both ran all the way through to Meeting Street. And there were stationery stores - Huguley's, it was Legerton's and then Huguley's. And there were shoe stores. And I remember our mother taking us up to - there were hat stores. There's a hat store on King Street, and she would take us there to get our Easter hats. And then there was Kerrison's, and you'd get your gloves from Kerrison's, and shoes. And it was - I mean, but we went up, walked up King Street a lot. And there's a shoe store on King, across from the entrance to SCE&G on King. So, then there was a candy store called The Candy Kitchen on King.

KP: Where was that?

YE: That was a couple doors above Queen on the west side, and it might be where the men's store is right there. That might be -

KP: Oh, right - on the east of King?

YE: No, the west side. The Preservation - and then the -

KP: Oh, oh -

YE: What's his name's there?

KP: Bob the -

YE: Yes, what's their name? But it only sold, of course, was candy, and our parents were not real happy that we'd go in. And they had a punch board, and you could bet on it. We were little children, and you punched the thing. If you got something good, you got candy, whatever it was. They were not wild for us to - But, I mean, of course, you went in there. And they were like the first place that got bubble gum.

KP: This kind of reminds me, talking about candy, and we're here in October. What about Halloween? How did Halloween go down when you were young?

YE: You know, Halloween wasn't a big holiday.

KP: Really?

YE: No.

KP: Nobody really did the trick or treating?

YE: No, they didn't. They didn't do trick or treating.

KP: Interesting.

YE: And I hadn't thought about that until you brought that up. My children did.

KP: So, it changed in the -

YE: And some point it must have.

KP: I'll have to research that.

YE: I know. Let me know what you find.

KP: I know.

YE: Maybe they just didn't tell us.

KP: Maybe. So, what about going off the peninsula? Did you go to the beach?

YE: Oh yeah, I went to the beach, and you could drive along the beach then. Sometimes our mother would fix a summer supper with fried chicken and things, and we'd go over there to the beach, and -

KP: Which beach did you go to?

YE: To the Isle of Palms. Isle of Palms, sometimes Sullivan's Island. We went to Sullivan's Island for house parties when we were in high school and college, which was lots of fun.

KP: They're taking the old bridge in a car.

YE: Right.

KP: Scary?

YE: Very scary. And what our father liked to do was to start back on like Meeting Street. And if you got right in front of the bridge several blocks back, it looked as if it went straight up. I mean, it was really - So he would like to scare visitors and show them that. But we would go to the beach, and it was - There just weren't many people out there on the beach. You'd just drive your car out there, and -

KP: Just drive it right out -

YE: Right out on the beach.

KP: Nice. What else did you do for fun? We talked about movie theaters -

YE: Right.

KP: - and the beach -

YE: Right.

KP: Did you ever go to the zoo up from Hampton Park?

YE: Yes, we did.

KP: What did you think of that?

YE: Well, it was sort of fun when you were children that you saw those exotic animals. Later on, as you grew up, you knew that was a terrible thing to have those animals. The poor buffalo looked as if he, you know, was a couple of hundred years old. His fur was coming off. But that was up there, and you'd walk around in the gardens and all, and it was pretty. But it, even then, it was a little bit sad when you saw the animals, yeah.

KP: Right. So, I guess you finished up - Did you meet your husband in Charleston?

YE: At the college.

KP: At the college, great. Okay, then you got married -

YE: Right.

KP: - and you stayed in Charleston.

YE: Yes.

KP: Ever lived anywhere but Charleston?

YE: No.

KP: Not when you left home?

YE: No.

KP: Isn't that great. Why? You know, why would you leave?

YE: Why would you leave? That's what I said to everyone. When you live in the most wonderful city in our country, which many visitors have now told us is in fact the truth, why would you want to live anyplace else?

KP: Right.

YE: You know, traveling - I mean, you could travel, and you can get a lot of the sense of what it is in the other countries.

KP: The sense of what makes this place so special -

YE: Special. Correct.

KP: So, when you - so you've done your year at the college, and you had a family. And tell me how many kids.

YE: I had four, and I've lost two as adults. So - and the others live here.

KP: And they live nearby. And grandchildren?

YE: Yes, yes.

KP: That's great.

YE: Well, one grandchild is now in Manhattan working in the PR business, and he's having a wonderful time. And he went to Elon. I couldn't get him to go to the College [of Charleston]. And another one is living and working in Savannah and writing music and playing it and working in the food and beverage. Just totally different.

KP: Different directions.

YE: Different directions, different lifestyles.

KP: So, does your son who lives in Manhattan - Are there still relatives still on your mom's side?

YE: There are some. They don't live in Manhattan. They live in Long Island. Yeah, she even has a sister that still lives up there.

KP: Interesting. So, your kids are little, and you decide to go back to school when they reached school age, or -

YE: They were - oh, they were, yeah, they were in school, and that's when - I mean, I always knew I would go back. I was just looking for the right opportunity, and it wasn't hard on your budget back then.

KP: Right - not like now.

YE: Not like now. I hope they figure this out. And so you could go and take a couple of courses at a time, and so that was -

KP: Do you think that later, and sort of gradual going back to college, that influenced you to - or what, I guess what did influence you to run for City Council?

YE: You know, I was always interested in the civic life and actual politics, but I'd never thought about running. And actually what happened was, Henry Berlin had the seat, and he called me up and said that his wife didn't want him to run anymore, and he would like me to run. [I asked] "but somebody had already announced"? He said "no," because in fact, this person was going to run against him. That sort of made him unhappy. [He asked] "So, would you run"? So, I talked to a few people, and they said, "yeah, you really should." And actually, the person I ran against was a second grade teacher, had been a second grade teacher for all my children, or for three of them, I think. So, - and I'd also been very active in the League of Women Voters and on the Democratic Women, both of them, and headed up both of them. So, I really had this interest in what was going on out there, and how we should work with bettering it.

KP: Right. So, when was your race to get on - when was your first term?

YE: It was - We ran the year of [Hurricane] Hugo [1989], and -

KP: Wow.

YE: Yes!

KP: So, right after Hurricane Hugo?

YE: Correct. And you're walking around, knocking on doors, and people are in desperate straits, and they want you to come in and see how it is. And people were just really upset about it. So, it was Hugo was the first one -

KP: And that was a little unforeseen, probably when you were putting in your bid, right?

YE: Oh no, that wasn't. You know, and we'd never had here a real hurricane. They called them hurricanes, so when they said a hurricane was coming, it's "oh, another hurricane." So, so many people didn't leave, and I remember the mayor, I remember other people pleading with us, please to leave - please. Linda Lombard was head of the County Council, had gone to the college. I mean, just these people you knew. Mayor Riley, they're all saying, "please go." What, you know, it's a hurricane.

KP: Just another storm. Did you leave, or did you -

YE: No.

KP: No? I mean, hardly anybody did.

YE: Really, a lot of people didn't, so as a result, when Floyd was coming here in 1999, the world left, and the world converged on I-26 and sat there. And we had a couple of council meetings by phone on [I-]26, and I had a cat in the car and a dog. I also have a cat in the car who

really didn't want to be in the car, and howled the entire time. And I was trying to be very sophisticated on this phone call when the cat is screaming in the background.

KP: I think I was in the car next to you with another angry cat. That was terrible. So, you're running for City Council for Harlston Village, and -

YE: At that time, half of it was Harlston Village, and the other half was West Ashley.

KP: Right.

YE: Those first suburbs.

KP: All those lines were very different.

YE: Yeah, very different. And that was excellent because you really got a much better idea of your city by having other parts, and you had Moreland, Windermere, South Windermere, the Crescent, Byrnes Downs, Wappoo Heights went over to, you know, the end of those first subdivisions, those first neighborhoods.

KP: So, were you one of the first women on Council?

YE: No. There was a woman who went on the City Council, I think, when her husband died way back, and her portrait is somewhere in City Hall. But there were two African American women, which really Council would benefit from having another one. Hilda Jefferson and Brenda Scott were on there. And then Mary Ader was on there. So, they were on there, and they were on there with me. I ended up being the only woman when the other two, when the African American women, chose not to run, and Mary Ader, bless her heart, had a serious stroke. So, I was there. And I must say, if I may, the tenor of the group changes when you have one woman on there. It just - the benefits from having a real, a diverse council from all aspects is just - you can't overestimate it.

KP: Right, right. And so, I know you worked a lot with Mayor Riley over the years because he was on there so long. What are some of the initiatives that really kind of call out to you as sort of major things that you were able to accomplish?

YE: Oh, so many. I was on there 20 years, so you see a lot. You see a lot of changes on there, and the makeup of the Council changes. Because the first group that went on with Mayor Riley, for the most part they saw themselves as a team, and would kind of work towards thing. But then you would have people come on and decide that they wanted to go down a different road. So, you had to work a little harder to get what you were aiming to get. But we had a couple of battles. One of them was West Ashley. They wanted to - SCE&G wanted to put transmission lines, which as you know, are major things, right through the middle of those neighborhoods, and it was a tremendous battle because - You know, they told stories that these people are going to be here without power if we get a bad storm. But these are old, closely - the neighborhoods where the houses are close to one another, and you've got these transmission lines - huge - right through the middle. So, we had to work on that one very hard. First we had to convince Mayor

Riley and then work on the others. So, we did. We got them so that they didn't go with distribution lines, which every neighborhood has, and they go through there and they bring you your power. That's different, they're smaller. So, we did get that. Then the other serious one that was sort of emotional was, on Wesley Drive, they wanted to move the substance abuse building, take it out of the hospital area, and put it there and build in the back of it some housing for mothers and infants, mothers and children. And that backed right up to one of the streets. It was on one side of the street that went through Moreland. And it didn't seem as if it were well thought out, so we had to battle that, and we picketed. That was the first time I had actually picketed. We picketed on Wesley, and what we were doing was raising awareness that there were better places for this. There is now. There's one in the hospital district, right where it should be.

KP: The hospital district has just exploded.

YE: Oh, it has, right. Hasn't crossed Calhoun, and it won't.

KP: Right. Well, I think there's enough available land -

YE: There is. There is, and they can build up too in that area.

KP: Right, right. So, did the tourism ordinance come through when you were on the Council?

YE: Yes, it did, and the - the tourism did, and the parking. You know we have the districts now. That came through. And the making the one-way streets two-way was a big one downtown, because with a one-way street, you know this, the traffic flies. You get that sense you're on some kind of freeway. But with the two-way, which we really had to fight for that, too. And even some of the residents who lived along Beaufain, Wentworth, Rutledge, Ashley felt it was going to make it difficult for them to back out of their driveway. On the contrary, what's happened is traffic is moving slower, so it's easier for them to get out. We do have more stop signs and more traffic lights, so that helped to sort of knit this neighborhood together, which it only benefited from.

KP: Right. So, I know probably, even though a lot of the college students don't live in Harlston Village anymore, parking is still an ever-present sort of community, or town and gown issue, I'm sure. And then, like you said, with the one-way streets, I guess when people get used to them, they don't mind them. But boy, I remember Wentworth - the battle over Wentworth Street going in two different directions was huge.

YE: And then Beaufain, which is even narrower. And we had to get the emergency vehicles out to make sure they could move safely through if it were two-way. And you know, and it's remarkable. Of course it can be two-way. It was before. It was before lots of traffic, but I also remember, it was not when I was on councils before, when they began talking about The Connector, The James Island Connector, and it was going to be at the foot of Broad Street, and, well, maybe not.

KP: I don't think it was.

YE: Oh, it was, it was. Then it was going to be at the foot of Beaufain and Wentworth, being the one-way pairs. And the neighborhood came together and really fought that. That was, as I say, before my time, but it took a while to get that going.

KP: What are the big issues that you see as far as change, I guess, in the city, from when you were a little child to now? Do you think they are good changes or bad, or -

YE: Oh, I think it's mixed. There are some wonderful changes. The properties are much better maintained because people can afford to do it now. They're beautifully done. I think the shopping choices along King Street especially, are wonderful, and that's the result of lots of visitors, but to a large degree, the College of Charleston. And having all those students, and some of them have a lot of disposable income. So, there are a lot of good things about it. And it's wonderful to be at the top of the lists, the best, most wonderful cities. And that's good, but then the other side is - I think the one I worry about the most is the cost of living on the peninsula, and that's a very hard one to work with. Other parts of the city, we have a little bit - The other parts of the city below Broad and to the east have that issue of having owners who have several houses, so they're not in their house. And that's not good for a neighborhood. That doesn't give it that healthy, vital feel of people moving around, and dogs and children, and that kind of thing, which we still have, which is really great. And you know, we still have the Robert Mills Manor right in the center of Harlston Village. And people talk off and on [that] it would make a lot more sense to close it down and move those people into new places way up. No it wouldn't. I mean, you need every part of the income level living in your city to make it healthy, and it helps with our property values a little bit. Not a whole lot, but a little bit. And so that part of the change - because that will eventually change who will live here, and it's so good to have families with children, little children, and older people being able to stay in their house and all. All that is good. So that's the bad part. And of course, you've got the traffic, but that's just part of - We can figure that one out.

KP: Part of the success, maybe.

YE: Part of the success. Well, what is?

KP: So, is there anything that we didn't touch on that you think would be -

YE: I'm sure there are lots of things. I don't know what they are. You know, we have a lot of trees in the city. We have a lot of trees in Harlston Village, you know? And after Hugo - with Hugo, we lost so many of them that it sort of changed your sense of place some. But I'm now chairing the - there's a Trees Committee, which has been around plus-25 years. And we're under the Parks Conservancy now, and all we do is raise money and plant trees. We don't do anything else but plant trees. But we've been planting them only on the peninsula. We're gradually moving out. We're probably going to plant some on The Greenway, things like that. But that's another part of a community that makes you feel good about it. And there are still some vacant lots, and you worry a little bit. I mean, I don't lose sleep over it, but you worry a little bit about building on everything. And Historic Charleston [Foundation] has a property on Smith Street and they have that easement on that big lot next to it, which I'm ecstatic about because that means that greenspace will stay there.

KP: Harlston Village, I think - One of the things that always struck me about Harlston Village is, unlike that sort of South of Broad to the east where everything's kind of tight from the Walled City, and kind of constricted and dense, Harlston Village seemed to like people who were developing here early on, [created?] out elbow room, spread out a little bit. You know, the lots are generally bigger.

YE: There's a little bigger, right. They are. They're certainly bigger than that first old Walled City. They are bigger. But I'm very happy the city has been strict with its ordinance so you can't run around filling up everything.

KP: Right. And hopefully, more room for trees.

YE: More room for trees. We've been planting in public spaces. What we're looking at is moving into some private, where the people in the public space get the benefit, and also out from over the overhead wires and that sort of thing. So, we're kind of looking at a little bit of that.

KP: Well, initiatives like that, you're basically planting, or you're doing something really not as much for yourself as for future generations.

YE: Very much. And Danny Burbage is one our board. Danny keeps reminding us, you know, that trees have lives, because people really - if somebody cuts down a tree, it's like stabbed in their heart. So, he has to talk to us and tell us, that really trees have a beginning to their lives and an ending, and it's all right. And he would come out - he's retired now - when they were pruning the trees because of the wires because you could actually see sparks because of the wires. That didn't make a lot of different to the people who - I mean, those trees were like their children, you know?

KP: Well, I'm glad you're doing that -

YE: Oh, I'm loving that. So, we'll have an oyster roast, which we have every year. Probably in January, so I'll let you know.

KP: Well, Yvonne, thank you so much for taking time out to let us film you and ask you a bunch of crazy questions.

YE: None of them are really crazy, but I love the city so much. I mean, I really do. I walk outside sometimes, because I walk a fair amount, and I'll be walking the dog. And you just look around and you say, "wow, you know, how wonderful to be able to live here"!

KP: Absolutely.

[Brief break in audio; videographer reminds interviewer of another interview topic.]

KP: So, we were just remembering as we were ending up, that you had told me a story about some piano lessons and some dance lessons from your childhood, and there were some interesting connections with family.

YE: Right. So, our [current] mayor's grandmother, Pauline Tecklenburg, taught piano on Rutledge Avenue across from Colonial Lake, and we of course could walk there. And we had to take piano lessons. I enjoyed it, and it was much fun. And now I've known [Mayor] John [Tecklenburg] for a number of years and worked with him, and he inherited his grandmother's gene. So I'm co-producer of a weekly show that we put on in downtown Charleston called "The Sound of Charleston." And it's the history of Charleston through its music, from gospel to Gershwin. And John plays with us periodically. We have a sort of shifting group of musicians, and so John and Lonnie Hamilton play with us periodically.

KP: Nice.

YE: So, it's really interesting. It's still a small town to that degree. Then we took dancing lessons from Mimi Forbes, and her studios were down on Queen, just across Meeting Street from Harlston Village. And she was the grand dame of dancing, Daddy's cousin. So, we had to go take dancing lessons, and be in the recitals which were at Memminger. And she was a maiden lady. She was a force to be reckoned with. So, she's laid to rest up in St. Lawrence Cemetery with no dates of when she was born because a Charleston lady didn't tell you how old she was.

KP: Right. And that was a rude question that we have to ask.

YE: It was. But that's all right if you bleep it out.

KP: Right -

YE: So, much of our lives were right there in that neighborhood. Then, one other thing. On Colonial Lake they would have this little annual thing, little event down there, where you'd go down there. Seems as though it might have been around Christmas. And you would have shoe boxes with candles in them. Isn't that a safe thing?

KP: And you'd just push them onto the lake?

YE: And so, and they would have - if you had parents who were good at this kind of thing, you had wheels on them. So, you had these little trains, and you took them down to Colonial Lake, pulled the little lit cars along down there with their candles blooming.

KP: Now did you boat on Colonial Lake?

YE: No.

KP: Some people had told me that they used to like paddle along -

YE: Yeah, but I think they had stopped doing it. Daddy and his brother referred to Colonial Lake, especially since his brother was older, as The Pond. It was The Pond then.

KP: Right, it was an old mill pond, for sure.

YE: Yeah. But I mean, it was The Pond, it wasn't a lake. To us, always was the lake. So, those are some more stories.

KP: That's awesome. Well, thank you. This is perfect. Those are the stories that I love.

END OF INTERVIEW