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Interviewee: Herbert A. DeCosta, Jr.

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Begin DVD

KR: I am happy to be interviewing Herbert DeCosta this afternoon, who will carry the afternoon with his conversation. Herbert is a former trustee of Historic Charleston Foundation and has been so involved in many facets of the community. We did an earlier interview today with Peter McGee, and his name came up there and in fact it comes up in many conversations that have to do with the history of the Foundation. And Herbert, I will introduce you now to ask you to start with your comments that would describe your childhood in Charleston.

HAD: Thank you very much. I was born at 118 Smith Street, which is now called Radcliffeborough. Of course, in those days, it was just Smith Street. It did not have any borough designations. But anyway, the house that I was born in was built for my grandfather. In those days, it was customary a lot of times for husband and wife to move in with their parents. So my mother and father were living with my grandfather and grandmother Craft who were my mother's people. So interesting thing at that time-our neighbors were the mayor of Charleston, John Grace, who lived across the street, and this was between Calhoun and Vanderhorst Street where we lived. Next door to us lived the superintendent of the county schools. So, we had a sort of mixed neighborhood. It was-there were very few segregated neighborhoods at that time in Charleston. One of the interesting things about my childhood was that my father had constructed a basketball backboard in the backyard, a sliding board, and a playhouse. And of course we got chased out periodically by my sister when she'd come home. [Laughing.] But anyway, and one of the things that was interesting at that time-the backyards were just dirt and all, you know, so you could get fairly dirty playing in the back during the day. But in the afternoons, we would have to take a bath and change our clothes and get dressed for the afternoon. Now, in the afternoons, we could play on the front lawn because that was clean, you know. We had a little grass front yard. Or we could swing. We had a swing on the porch, and you could swing on the porch. But the point was you had to be fairly quiet and not do anything to get dirty [laughs] in the afternoon. Or I would go around a block away to visit my best friend Felder Hutchinson, who lived at 235 Calhoun Street, and I can see him right now sitting on his coping, and he would be dressed for the afternoon watching the cars go by. So that was our big

activity. There's more traffic on Calhoun Street than on Smith Street. It was a little more exciting going there.

Now, in later years, my father built a house on Sullivan's Island, so we would go there for the summers. And I remember that he had built a garage and a room on the back of the garage for a servant. See because in those days, you know, everybody had servants. Because I'm ashamed to say they were paid so little that they were \$1.75 cents or \$2.00 a week, so, you know, everybody had one or two servants. And these people used to take the bus and come to Sullivan's Island. Of course, if I can remember, no one lived in that room at first, and my father never parked in the garage because the house was so close to the water. And he would bring in everyday, you know, ice from the city because nobody had refrigerators. At least, we didn't have them on Sullivan's Island. And he would want to drive the car back, you know, to the street and he didn't park in the garage. So, the garage never got used. [Laughs.] And the servant's room never got used. But, finally, when we got older, or in fact, I think, after we came back here to live, he moved that those two rooms to the side of the house and made shower rooms and dressing rooms. So, my wife said she remembers that one of the ladies who helped her used to live in that room for a while, but we put her out and made that into a sort of a storage room for our boat equipment, you know, life jackets and things of that type because I had a boat on Sullivan's Island. So, as a child, a little older child, we grew up over there in the summers. Now, one of the most interesting things about that life is that around three o'clock in the afternoon after dinner my mother and sister-in-law, whose son had come over to stay with me played with me and young girl for my sister. The ladies want to rest and take naps, so we were required to go in our room, close the door, and we were supposed to be sleeping. Now, you know very well, that children would not be sleeping in the afternoon, and I can remember that we would jump off the closet and on the bed-bounce up and down on the bed.[Laughs.] And we were supposed to be sleeping. But we never did want to sleep. But at last we stayed in the rooms, and they knew that we were not getting in any trouble. So, after that, then he rented the house out for a while, but that was I guess most of the highlights of my early childhood.

I went to school-the first school I attended was the Roman Catholic school on the corner of Shepard and Coming Streets. I well remember that one of the ladies that worked for mother used to take me to one of the older student's home on Radcliffe Street, which was about four blocks away, and then I would walk with her to school. But the problem was attending the Catholic school was the nuns continued to try to get me to join the Catholic Church. And, of course, mother would not hear about that. So, finally, I left there and then enrolled at Avery in first grade. That's where I spent the rest of my years and graduated from Avery.

Another interesting thing about my childhood is this-I can well remember one day I left home to go to school and I didn't have a necktie on. My father saw me and told me to go back home and put a tie on and don't ever let him catch me without a necktie on out of the house. Now, you know, of course nobody-when I tell kids that today, they don't believe that. But, nobody would think of going out without a tie on. I never saw him without a tie or a bowtie on. Today, I know he'd turn over in his grave if he saw the way we dress today-well, a lot of places I go, fellas still wear sport shirts. Nobody bothers with it. But in those days, you had to wear ties. And he had a flat top straw hat that he wore in the summertime. Long-sleeve shirts-I don't think they made short-sleeve shirts then, and then he would have on these striped seersucker suits. And he'd take the coat off it was too hot. But never took the tie off! He might loosen the collar,

but he never took the tie off. So, I think those are the most interesting things about my childhood.

KR: Herbert, did you have much extended family in Charleston besides your parents at your house? Did you have other cousins?

HAD: Yes. I had one cousin who used to come over to Sullivan's Island. That was my father's sister's child. Her husband was a physician. And then, in later years, another one of my cousins came back here to live. So, but really, those were the only family members here. The rest of them had left Charleston and went to Brooklyn to live.

KR: I see. Well, now Herbert, I want to know this. When did Emily DeCosta come into your life?

HAD: Well, I met Emily after I finished school. I went to Iowa State and finished in 1944. And one of the my roommates was working on his doctorate in agricultural economics and went back to teach at Virginia State College in Petersburg, and Emily was teaching at Virginia State-the school, the high school. They had the teacher's training school for Virginia State. So, he invited me up one time, and I had her for dinner. And that's when I met her. But, of course, at first, I did not call her anymore because I was not interested in getting married then. And I knew she-so I used to date some of the students. See, I was just about twenty-one, twenty-two then. But I got tired with the restrictions that the students had. [Laughs.] So, they had to be in by dark, and you know, that type of thing. So, then I went back to seeing her. Then, we got married. It was 1946, July of 1946. And we lived in Hampton, where I was employed by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics as an architectural engineer, which is now NASA. And then, when the war was over-this was World War II-we moved back to Charleston in March of '47 to help my father. I think that was the same time that the Foundation was founded, I think.

KR: Exactly. 1947.

HAD: I think 'cause we both celebrated our fiftieth anniversary. It was your fiftieth anniversary and my fiftieth coming back to Charleston.

KR: And where did you live then, when you and Emily came back?

HAD: Well, I lived in an apartment that my father had. A Greek Revival house on Spring Street, which was two doors from his house. I remember, it was a large place. It had three, four bedrooms, two of them were in the attic, which I made one into a sort of office, one a guest room. But I can well remember that we had a big discussion about the rent. Now, my mother didn't want him to charge us any rent, but he felt that I should be responsible. So, he charged me the large sum \$5 a month for rent. [Laughs.] Now, that same apartment rents for \$1200 a month.

KR: Wow, I'm sure.

HAD: [Laughing.] Of course, it has heating and air conditioning now, but then, nobody even thought about heat and air conditioning back in those days.

KR: Well, what about the, Herbert, about the establishment of the DeCosta construction company and your family's association?

HAD: Well, well see my grandfather really established the company, as far as we know in 1899, and he had a partner whose name was Edmunds. And I have to talk to his daughter to get some more accurate information about, you know, the relationship between her grandfather and my grandfather. But anyway, as far as I know, he built a large house at 80 Rutledge Avenue and built a church, an Episcopal church on James Island, I think. What is the church there-St. Paul's or St. John's? The one across from Bishop Gadsden.

KR: St. James'.

HAD: St. James'. Well, they had several churches there. One was a carpenter Gothic church, and several of my older friends who are now gone but whose father was-lived on James Island in that area and was a contractor and was an older friend of my father told me that his father told him that my grandfather built this church. I talked with the people over there, but they had no written record of it. But that's the story that I've been told. And I found a picture of the church. And then another thing I heard that he did was the sunken gardens up in Hampton Park, you know, where they had the Fair here, the World's Fair-what was 1900? Well, I understand he built the sunken gardens. But those are the only things that I remember. But one lady-I know it was Ethel Thomas lived on Tradd Street-told me that he had done some work for her, but it must have been her mother, although she is much older than I am or was. But she told me that. That's all I know of what my grandfather done. But he died at an early age. So, my father really wanted to stop school, but his mother wouldn't let him. So, he finished high school, and then he went to work for a German contractor. And he became a [inaudible] builder, and they built those houses south of Colonial Lake. You know, the new houses in that area. That's where he worked. Then, war came about and he went in the Army-World War I. And he saved money in the Army by-he would lend the men money to gamble, but he wouldn't gamble. But he was the pay sergeant so he would lend them money, and he would charge them 50 percent interest. [Laughs.] So, so, he was sure to get his money because he had to pay them-"so much for you, so much for me." So, he made enough money doing that. And also he was the company barber, although he didn't know how to cut hair. He just put on a big butcher apron and just practiced cutting hair on these men. [Laughs.] They said he looked like a butcher because he would wipe the razor off on his apron. So, he made money like that. He saved his money. So, when he came back home, he reestablished the business.

KR: So, during that time, the business was just sort of on hold?

HAD: Right right. That's right. There was no-I guess that must have been about 1918, 1919 when he reestablished the business.

KR: And how did he learn his skills? Was it from his father earlier?

HAD: Well, his father-oh yes, he worked with his father. As a boy, his father paid him 5 cents a week, and next they said he got a raise to 10 cents a week. But in those days, there were no trade schools, and if a man wanted his boy to learn a trade, he would put him to work with a contractor. Now, he really didn't expect-they didn't pay the contractor anything, but the boys got a few cents. But the advantage of that was by paying them very little, the contractor could take the time to teach the boy. But, you see, nowadays, the boys want large sums of money, and the contractor can't afford to stop the work to teach them. Although the government had a

program-I can't think of it-where they would pay you to train fellows. That came up later on, so that helped. But then he learned from his father and also working with this German contractor.

KR: And Herbert, did you know when you were a boy that you too would be a contractor?

HAD: Well, that was the only thing that I ever thought. You know, I grew up playing on the lumber pile, and I went to work with my father's workmen when I was about 12 years old. My mother-see, in those days, the man worked on Saturdays. So, my mother had me doing housework on Saturdays. I would be polishing brass and waxing floors because the ladies that worked for us, they didn't seem to do that kind of work. So I did that. But the last straw was when she told me to pick weeds out of the grass. So I told her I'm going to work with the men. So I got my bicycle. I had a little sidewalk bicycle, and we were working at 12 Duncan Street, which was one of my mother's houses. So, I went and told the men "Well, I've come to work! So check me in!" I've been working ever since. And that's the last time I ever got any housework done. So, that's when I started working.

And then in the summers, you know, when I was in school, in high school, I had to work. Now, he said my sister didn't have to work. She could go to camp, but boys had to work. So, I had to work. I couldn't go to camp or anything. All my friends worked with me because, you know, there was no employment too much so they were glad to come and work with the contractor. So, we all worked the summers with him until I finished school.

KR: Well, you have worked on so many properties in Charleston, and you have become such a revered name. And as a matter of fact, of course, you're the recipient of the Frances Edmunds Award because of your lifetime achievements. I wish you'd talk about some of the properties that you've worked on. And in that I wish you would include some of your affiliations and associations with Frances Edmunds.

HAD: Yes, well, of course from the time the Foundation started-and she was quite a force in the Foundation. It's really sad to see her today, you know. I remember, she would come to some of the trustee meetings and would never say anything. And it's just hard to believe, you know, she was such a different person when I knew her. And she helped me a great deal because I did, you know, a lot of the Foundation's work. And she had a very good eye about things, although she might not have been the trained person that I would discuss things with her. And even on other jobs that were not Foundation work-I well remember we were restoring this grocery store on the corner of Coming and Wentworth Street for the College of Charleston. And that's one of the most interesting jobs we ever did. I don't know if you remember that or not. It used to be a grocery store on the first floor. They had a corner entrance and then stucco on the second floor. And then there was the building next door to it, and that was filled in and that was stucco. But end building was stuccoed. So, we took the stucco off the second floor, found original weatherboards, and copied the design on the first floor. You know-same style windows, doors, removed the, you know, the new store front and entrance doors, and I talked to her. But then we were discussing whether to maybe stucco the whole thing or take the stucco off. So we thought that the best thing was to take the stucco off. And it's just made all the difference in the world. Of course, people who don't remember that, they don't appreciate it. But every time I drive by and see that, I think of that.

KR: Well, that was a huge undertaking.

HAD: Yeah. And most of-and the buildings were in such bad shape that everybody else had told Ted [Stern] that they'd have to tear that building down. When I looked at it at first, I thought so too. But then I looked at it again, and we thought we could save it. And so, we saved it, and now it's one, like I said, one of the most interesting buildings that the College has. And we did a number of jobs for the College of Charleston as well as for the Foundation. Now, one of the questions that you asked me was some of the more interesting things that we did for the Foundation. Well, there's so many things, but I think one-how's my time?

Alright. So, one of the things we did-there was a house in the area of the Auditorium, and it was moved to the corner of Laurens street and Anson Street, on the northeast corner. You know, the brick house.

KR: Yes, yes where the Kelloggs, I think...

HAD: I don't know that, but there's a brick fence, a pierced brick fence around there. Well, that house first became[inaudible] going to fall down because it was in such bad shape, but we shored it up, and the moving contractor, Chitwood, moved it and set it up on these steel beams, no foundation underneath. So, we had to go over there and underpin the house that was built. We had to put a new foundation, new footings, and build the walls back up. We had to join the existing walls, the walls that were left, and that was really sort of a dangerous job because, see, some of that brickwork had fallen. But, anyway, we got it done, and then we built the porches that you see there now, new porches, and the steps, we put in. And also on the east side, you see a room with a garage with an elliptical door opening. We added that and then-see, one of the persons who helped the Foundation a great deal in those days was Mr. and Mrs. Charles Woodward. Now, Mr. Woodward loved pierced brick walls, so whether-see he'd give money to the Foundation, and then we'd do the work now. I don't know whether he told them that he wanted these pierced brick walls, but anyway I wouldn't be surprised if we added up the pierced brick fence around here. [Laughs.] And of course, that is new. So, that was an interesting job. Another one that was very fascinating was right down the street at, I think, 74 Anson where Sis...

KR: Sis [Inabinett?] She's now Sis Marshall...

HAD: Yeah, Marshall lives. Well, I've never seen a house like that before. The steps-this house was owned by a sea captain, and the rails are curved from the first floor to the landing are curved upward, but then at the landing to the second floor, they're downward like that. So, we had to restore those rails, and we put a porch on it. The porch was gone and the entrance-and a little step we put in that Philip Simmons did the little iron railing and a fence. But, that was an interesting job.

And another house that quite a challenge was a house on Laurens Street that's next to the corner of East Bay Street. I don't remember that place, but it was a three-story house, and it was really in bad shape. I have, fortunately, I have pictures of all of these places. So, we had to tear off all the new additions and restore the porches. And-we did the exterior restoration. A lot of the houses that we did for the Foundation, we did the exteriors and made the interiors sound. Then, you would sell them to someone else, and they would complete the restoration. So, that was the case.

KR: Is that Mr. Gibson's house now?

HAD: I don't know who bought that house. I don't know.

KR: I think that's Mr. Gibson's. Well, Herbert, and these are all houses in Ansonborough. So, did you and Frances make a lot of those decisions about which houses to do more restoration in and whether it was exterior or interior?

HAD: Now, see the Foundation's policy was to try and-they had this revolving fund.

KR: Yes.

HAD: And they didn't want to put any more money in the houses that was necessary so that they could have money to buy and save another house. So, that's why a lot of the houses, we did not. Some, we finished. I remember the house on Anson and Laurens. We did finish that house cause we had to put in all new wainscoting, doors, and everything in that house. Laurens Street at the corner-no, not the corner-the three-story house, we did not finish the interior of that. But, then the Foundation had a program-a lot of people don't know this-trying to help people from moving out of town. And especially in African-American neighborhoods they were-I never get. I think one of the first jobs I did was at 36 Mary Street, and we restored that house. The porches were in ruin, and we found evidence of what the original columns were by a pilaster column. So that gave us a clue as to the design of the original columns. So, we took off all the incorrect columns and put all new columns on and matched that pilaster, and the same thing with the front brickwork. And that was an interesting job.

So, yeah, we did so many, many places-Wentworth Street. Funny thing, we the-a lot of people don't know this, but that house on the corner of East Bay and George Street. I think it's George. You know, the one of the northwest corner...

KR: Yes.

HAD: Ok, a large house. Well, they had-that's a Georgian house-and someone had added this cast iron entrance on the front which wasn't correct. So we took the cast iron entrance down and put in the correct Georgian entrance. And on the back we-see, the steps were covered up. The porches were not there originally, so we took the porches off the back and the side, and we built, finished building the back steps. But we took those wrought iron, those cast iron panels and took them around to this house on Wentworth Street. And where the porches were taken off, we made panels. French doors-and then we used theses panels as part of the railings, you see. Of course, today, it's a funny thing, today we could have never taken those porches off because they had porches on the front before, so-back in those days, we took the porches down and nobody said anything. And, the point was, those panels you see now, those elongated panels came from that house on East Bay and George Street.

KR: Well, Herbert, several times you've said "We've done this and we've done that." Tell me about your company, the company, and the crews. Did you train a lot of people to help you?

HAD: See, in those days, young fellow-I had two young people working for me. One was Jimmy Cobbs, who really was trained in historic restoration. And the other was Billy Clement, who did my new construction. See, he was not interested too much in restoration, and we did a

lot of garden apartments all over the state, and new churches and schools. And he liked that type of work. He was a [licensed?] architect, so he did that work. Jimmy and I did the other work, so when I say "we"...

KR: So you've done work more than just in Charleston?

HAD: Yes. As far as new work is concerned, we built apartments in Newberry, Columbia, Anderson, and some places I can't even remember. We did a lot of apartments. Then, I was construction manager for the restoration of a large home in Atlanta that was owned by Herndon. He was probably, at that time, the wealthiest Afro-American in this country. He had a beautiful Classical Revival home. So, I knew some of his, well, descendants were friends of mine. So, they engaged me to do that. And then we did work in-I did work in Orangeburg at Claflin College and some work in Columbia at Benedict College so-but not too much. The majority of work was, you know, down right here in the Charleston area.

KR: Herbert, tell me a little bit about your involvement with St. Mark's Church.

HAD: Alright well one of the questions you had here was about the-well, I think I talked-did I talk to you about my great-great grandfather?

KR: I don't-no, not yet.

HAD: Well, my-see, the earliest record that I have of any of my ancestors is my mother's family. They were Kinlochs. And they were born on at Kensington Plantation in 1794. Now, his name was Richmond Kinloch, and we think his father was Francis Kinloch, who was the owner of the plantation. Now, we don't have any record that says that, but his little book that he kept of births and baptisms and burials of all of his children. And then-some of the things he did-it's just awful he didn't keep any more records. You know, you just wonder what he did all this time. So, anyway he was born in 1794. And as I was telling Jonathan [Poston?] when he was going out there, his wife was Sophia Jenrette Hopton, and it was him who said we know that the Russells-Mrs. Russell was a Hopton.

KR: That's right, Sarah.

HAD: So, I don't know, and Jenrette-see all these similar names.

KR: Yes.

HAD: So that's-we don't know really what went on at that time. It's just interesting that a lot of these people have the same names. But, he had a lot of children, and we-I said, too, in this little record he kept, he said that he would close the year at Pompion Hill Chapel, and he would read the Bible. He went to Middleburg and did the same thing. He went to this church, south of, near the Grove Plantation. What is that church? Anyway, I don't know how he got way down there. But anyway, but he had a note about that church. And-but I can't figure out, you know, what he did. But he said he would close up the year at these different churches. But in his little notes or little book that he had seems like he would read the Bible. He must have read the Bible a hundred times because there'd always be some reference to certain verses in the Bible he read. So I-see he was free, you see, so I figure what he might have done cause he might've held services for the slaves, you know on these different plantations. Because I know, a lot of

plantations, they had worship houses that the slaves used to worship in. You see, and they might not have had a regular minister, so maybe this is what he might have done. Although we can't be sure. But I know this for certain- that he was baptized in St. Paul's Church, you know, on Coming Street. He has, he has the date down here, but that may not be important. And he and his wife were married- they have the date. But anyway, and I think they were married in- I heard that they were married in not St. Pauls. What's that church on Church Street?

KR: On Church Street?

HAD: Yeah, you know, the big church.

KR: St. Phillip's?

HAD: St. Phillips, yeah. I heard they were married in St. Phillip's. But anyhow, they attended St. Paul's church, and I went there to try to find the records, but the people told me that all the records were sent to Columbia in the Civil War and all destroyed there, so there are no early records there.

Now my mother told me that he had two sons. One was Benjamin Kinloch, who was my great-grandfather, and a brother who lived, was also Richmond. But my grandfather, great-grandfather Benjamin worked at this rice mill over on the Ashley River as a millwright because I would take my mother to lunch at the variety store. She liked to go there because it was on the water, and she would always stop and say "you know my grandfather worked in the rice mill", you see. So, that's what I heard that he was a millwright, and I understand they, you know, would work on the machinery, plan [inaudible] on machinery.

KR: Well, and so Herbert, to get back to St. Mark's...

HAD: Well, St. Mark's Church was, let's see...

KR: Is that where you- did you grow up going to church at St. Mark's, and your family?

HAD: Yes, and my grandfather, my great-grandfather Benjamin Kinloch was one of the organizers of St. Mark's Church. So that was my family's first involvement at St. Mark's. And my father was a Methodist. He went to centenary, but when he married my mother, he joined St. Mark's, you see. And he was a vestryman, and I was a vestryman later on, and then my grandfather Craft, who was my mother's father, was a vestryman at Mark's. Of course, and the city- this church had, you know, a very interesting history, so I don't know if we have time to go into that, but I will say this. From an architectural standpoint, this church was designed by Louis Barbot, and it might very well be the last temple-form church to be built in America. The seven other churches of Charleston of this form were all built prior to the war, and they're mostly brick with stucco. Whereas, this church, it was frame. The stained glass windows that replaced the small, pane windows are all very beautiful and worth a great deal. We have two windows. My mother bought a window in memory of her mother and father, and my mother put in one in memory of my father. That's one of the things the church is famous for are the beautiful stained glass windows. Another thing that is interesting about this church is that at one time, St. Mark's Church was third in the Diocese in size and fifth in contributions in the Diocese. Can you imagine that?

KR: Wow.

HAD: But, see, the people that formed St. Mark's were all free people who had businesses, you know, before the Civil War. They were caterers, barbers, tailors. You see, in those days, there were no ready-made stores, so if you had to have a suit, you'd have to have it made. So, they made a lot of money, you know, having tailor shops.

KR: Yes.

HAD: And then, they owned lumber yards, and they were builders. So, they all, you know, did very well, and most of them were all members of the Brown Fellowship Society.

KR: And that's-I wanted to ask you about the Brown Fellowship Society.

HAD: Well, that was organized in 1794, and the-I'll tell you an interesting story about that. Remember when they had the Carolina Day march?

KR: Yes.

HAD: Well, you know, you stood in line according to the date your organization was started. I remember it being funny. So, we had our banner, you know, and I walked up past all these people lined up, see. I said, "yall just new organizations." I was kidding everybody. "Your group is just fifty years old, and ours is over two hundred years old." See, so we were about the fourth or fifth in the line.

KR: Is that right?

HAD: Isn't that something?

KR: And we have Carolina Day this coming Saturday.

HAD: [Laughing.] So, I remember. I'll never forget that. I thought that was really-I was laughing.

KR: And so who are members of the Brown Fellowship Society?

HAD: Well, there are members. Let's see what I have. I brought the-see, this is the book of the Brown Fellowship. See, the rules and regulations of the Brown Fellowship Society-organized November 1, 1790. Isn't that something? And I'll just read the preamble. It says, "Whereas, we free brown men, natives of the city of Charleston, state of South Carolina, take into consideration the unhappy situation of our fellow creatures and the distresses of our widows and orphans. For the want of a fund to relieve them in the hour of their distresses, sicknesses, and death and holding it an essential duty of mankind to contribute all they can to more, relieving the wants and miseries and promoting the welfare and happiness of one another." So, that was the purpose of the organization. And, these are the names of the original leaders, and my great-grandfather was not a member, but my-I mean, my great great-grandfather was not a member, although his children are all buried in the Brown Fellowship. My uncle, great uncle, and my great-grandfather Benjamin Kinloch were all members of the Society. And the thing that's amazing-they have dates that everybody was admitted, and another thing that's very interesting about this group. Now, who would think that in 1790 that there were free people who could write like this?

KR: Beautiful handwriting.

HAD: Wasn't that beautiful handwriting? Now, isn't that something?

KR: Yes.

HAD: So, you see, this is a little booklet we put together to commemorate our 200th anniversary back in 1794, and it contains the-we copied the rules and regulations and put that in here.

KR: Now, so the Brown Fellowship is active today.

HAD: No, it's really not active. It's just-we have commemorative meetings about every five years, and that's what we have. We don't have any because there's not enough interest. See, we lost the cemetery. The Roman Catholic Church bought that. Well, the people, my mother's generation, all these are old ladies, older ladies, and they, you know, didn't bother, and you know, they just let it go. So, that was the end of that. So, we bought another cemetery, you know, in North Charleston, but that is nothing much. But anyway, this is really-and then we included other things in this little booklet that are very interesting and significant in regards to our history, you see.

KR: Herbert, let me ask you before we run out of time about your affiliation with the Foundation as a Trustee. What-are there any particular accomplishments that stand out during your tenure with the Foundation in particular that mean something to you?

HAD: Well, the most significant this is we bought this building.

KR: [Laughing.] We're in the Missroon House today.

HAD: [Laughing.] Without any question. You know, I think that also we commenced work on the Russell House.

KR: And you've been intrinsically involved with that work.

HAD: Yeah, but you know, let me just mention this, too. When I was really active in the restoration of business here, people did not dream of doing the museum-type restoration that is done today. I remember one time I was talking with-what was his name? He used to be a Trustee. We were talking about the doors at the Russell House and how much it cost to restore those doors. He said "you know, Herbert," he said "the way we do these things, people think we're crazy to spend that money on one door." Well, people just didn't have the money. You know, when I first came back here to work in 1947, I used to tell people that you could buy a house downtown for \$25,000. Practically, any house including a big one like 14 Legare Street, and you could spend \$25,000 restoring it which would be a total of \$50,000. And, at that time, they were spending \$80,000 in Georgetown section of Washington. I said "80,000!" I said "We'll never see that in Charleston!" We just thought that that was just terrible that you'd spend \$80,000 on a house. Well, look where we are now. But people just, you know, we saw [inaudible]. And, you know, people didn't have the types of kitchens they now have because in those days the ladies of the house didn't work in the kitchen. They had help, and all they wanted was a clean, neat, serviceable kitchen. They didn't want all these elaborate things they have

now. Spend \$100,000, \$200,000 in the kitchen. I mean, we never even dreamed of that. You know-all the elaborate bathrooms people have now. We just didn't think of those things, you know. So, it's just sometimes I go around these places we worked on, you know. It's like Glenn Keyes always said, "I followed you around a lot of places." I'll go to some of the places he's been working on, you know, that we worked on. It's hard to believe. But I'm glad that people are prospering, you know, have the money to really do things exactly how it should be done, but you would not have thought of at the time that I was really working.

KR: Now, Herbert, we're going to have to end in just a minute, but I don't want to end before you tell me a little about a book that's going to be written about Herbert DeCosta.

HAD: Well, that's not-hate to say it-I don't know. I guess it will be done, but we are having a rough time getting things going. The author has just returned from Cuba. She went down there on some project, and you know I sent you the release.

KR: Yes, for the photographs.

HAD: And we've decided on the list of places that we're going to do because we're allowed so many places. We finally agreed on a list, and we have to talk with the people. I have not heard from her in regards to that, you know, that form. So, I told her she better hurry up because I'm getting older and older. I'm not going to be here if she waits too many more years. But anyway, but I guess we'll get it done one of these days.

KR: Well, Herbert, it's going to be a good book. The Foundation is very pleased to be involved with its publication. We look forward to that, and we're about at the end of our time. Do you have anything else you just want to say for the good of the cause, for the record?

HAD: For the record? Well, I think we've covered, believe it or not. We did-let me see-better than I thought. So, I think we've covered the highlights.

KR: Well, let me just tell you again thank you very much for your time today and the marvelous history that you have brought to us in a different way today. It's been a fabulous. It's June the 24th, 2003, and we're in the Missroon House, which you think is one of the fine accomplishments of the Foundation.

HAD: Oh yes, without a question.

KR: So, thank you very much for your time.

HAD: Thank you, too. Glad to do it.