



Interviewee: Daisy Prince Walsh

Place of interview: the home of Mrs. Walsh

Date of interview: December 5, 2018

Interviewer: Katherine Pemberton (HCF)

Videographer: Leigh Moring (HCF)

Transcriber: Homerow, Inc.

Length of interview: 59:51

BEGIN INTERVIEW

Katherine Pemberton: It's December 5, 2018, and we are here with Daisy Prince Walsh, right?

Daisy Prince Walsh: Right.

KP: I already said your name, but could you say it and spell your first and last name for us?

DPW: Daisy Prince Walsh. D-A-I-S-Y P-R-I-N-C-E W-A-L-S-H.

KP: Great. And could you tell us when and where you were born? I know that's a rude question.

DPW: I was born in Charleston in April 14, 1930.

KP: Great. And what were your parents' names, and did you have any siblings?

DPW: My father's name was Percy Prince. My mother's name was Sarah Cameron Prince. And you want all my siblings?

KP: How many do you have?

DPW: Nine. There were nine of us. I have eight siblings. You want them?

KP: Sure.

DPW: Okay. Caroline, Percy, Dorothy, William, Pat. Well, we called her Pat, but she was Sarah. And then I fell there and then Betty, Bubba, whose name was Markley, and Barbara.

KP: Now, I heard a story that Percy and Bill would swim between the Cooper River and the Ashley River Bridges.

DPW: They did. Back when I was young and they were teenagers, there was a race from the Ashley River Bridge around the Battery. And then, that happened when they were teenagers, but Percy was eight years older than me, and Bill was about six, something like that.

KP: So, this would have been in the '30s?

DPW: Yeah. That would've been in the '30s, before the war.

KP: Wow.

DPW: Yeah.

KP: So, was this a race that was just between brothers?

DPW: No. It was a public race for the kids in Charleston that were swimmers and did that.

KP: That's a lot of swimming.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah.

KP: That's amazing. So, tell me where you lived downtown and how long you lived downtown.

DPW: I'd lived different places. I lived down on Pinckney Street, on Coming, on St. Philip the longest because I lived there when I started school. And we moved off of St. Philip when I was 11, and we moved up to Garden Hill, which is the extension of Rutledge Avenue. And that was built in 1940 and '41, because we moved up there in '41, right before the war started. Well, we moved in February, and the war was December of '41.

KP: So, I think your daughter was telling me too that – was it your mother who... Was there ever any interaction between you all and prisoners at the jail?

DPW: Oh, no. Yeah. Oh, when we lived downtown?

KP: Uh-huh.

DPW: Yeah, because from our porch, we could see everybody that was brought to the jail. And they would usually yell up for my mother to make sure she brought them over lunch or something like that. [laughs] And we'd see, you know. And they'd want lunch or make sure that she told their family they were there. The police station used to be on the corner of St. Philip and – let's see. I think that's Radcliffe.

KP: Uh-huh. Right.

DPW: Yeah, right beyond it, right on that corner. And we lived right – well, there was an alley. Back in those days, there were alleys. And there were black people in the back, in the alley. And then, the houses were on the street. But that was funny.

KP: Would she ever let their parents know if they didn't know already? I'm sure that was a little awkward.

[laughter]

DPW: Yeah. That was funny. But Charleston was so small then. You knew everybody.

KP: Right. Right. So, when did you move to West Ashley? What prompted -

DPW: I didn't move to West Ashley until 1957, when my husband graduated from The Citadel and he went to work for Bell Telephone.

KP: Okay. And what neighborhood did you move into?

DPW: Byrnes Down.

KP: Okay. And that was in the '50s. Was Byrnes Down still kind of getting started at that time?

DPW: Oh, no, no, no. Byrnes Down started maybe in '39, '40, somewhere along in there, because people were moving in to work at the Navy Yard during the war. And that's what prompted that a lot. But then, a lot of Charlestonians moved over in there because they could leave the city and get a new house, just like we left the city and moved to Rutledge extension. So, we moved into a new house.

KP: Right. So, when you moved to Byrnes Down, was it a new house at that time?

DPW: No, no, no. It had been... Oh, I would say that that neighborhood had to be at least ten or 12, 15 years old by then, you know, the houses.

KP: Did you know people in the neighborhood already from just life experiences before?

DPW: Yeah. Like next door to us was a couple more our age, you know? So, I'm sure that somebody had lived there before them. And on the other side of us was an older couple, but they weren't originals, I don't think. We actually lived in two houses in Byrnes Down.

KP: Okay. What were the addresses?

DPW: 10 and 12.

Daughter: What street?

KP: What street was that?

DPW: Yeamans.

KP: Okay. Okay.

DPW: Actually, it's Yeamans now, but it... It was Yeamans then. They changed the name.

KP: They changed the name?

DPW: Yeah.

KP: And those houses are pretty – some of them are pretty small by today's standards.

DPW: Oh, they're tiny. They would hardly be half this house.

KP: Right.

DPW: You know?

KP: Yeah. How many bedrooms?

DPW: Well, that's what was so funny. The first one we moved into was two bedrooms, but we already had two kids, and the third one was on the way. And the fourth one came the next year. And the fifth one came [laughter] the next year. So, we moved from... There was a house in between 10 and 12.

KP: Right. Right. So, you have how many children altogether?

DPW: Eight.

KP: Eight.

DPW: Yeah.

KP: Wow, which is really extraordinary. Congratulations. [laughs] So, let's go back a little bit in time to downtown Charleston, I guess. Did your family have long-term roots in Charleston? Were they there for a long time?

DPW: Oh. My mother and father were born in Charleston. Yeah. My mother had a lot of history. Camerons had a lot of history in Charleston. They owned Cameron & Barkley and a metal place. And they actually have a cannon in the Confederate Museum that the Camerons had built – their factory had built, actually. And then, they have a torpedo that they built. And they lived in that big house on East Bay Street, kind of at the extension of East Bay Street.

KP: The big white one?

DPW: Yeah. It's a huge house, and they had lived in there, in that house, because they had, like, 13 children.

KP: Wow.

DPW: Yeah.

KP: That's fantastic. So, you mentioned that you lived a couple of different places downtown. On St. Philip Street, what was the address, or do you remember?

DPW: No. I don't remember the address, but I remember living there longer than I did on... Coming Street, I was a baby. And on Pinckney Street, I was a baby. But on St. Philip Street, I started school, and I went to Bennett.

KP: Where was that?

DPW: Bennett. Do you know where the College of Charleston is on George?

KP: Right.

DPW: Well, you just cross the street. I think their cafeteria's there now. That was where Bennett Street was.

KP: Okay.

DPW: And we used to pass the college all the time. But when I grew up there, the college was, like, 135 people, 140 people at the most. And I just learned this. I thought it was a private college. But it was a public college. But nobody really went to college, you know?

[laughter]

KP: Yeah.

DPW: A lot of the doctors that we had in Charleston then graduated from the college and then went to medical university, yeah.

KP: Now, where did you go to high school?

DPW: I went to high school, Chicora.

KP: Where is – oh, North Charleston?

DPW: Right in the –

KP: Great.

DPW: Yeah. Well, because when we moved, Mt. Pleasant Street was a city limit. And I lived a block below Heriot Street. So, that sent me to Rosemont. You've probably never heard of Rosemont.

KP: I have, actually.

DPW: Okay, Rosemont. And then, when I graduated from Rosemont, I had to go on to Chicora.

KP: And how did you get there? Did you have to take a bus?

DPW: Bus. School bus. That ride was, like, three miles every day, but we had to – yeah. We had a school bus.

KP: Now, who was Pompey and the Red Rooster?

DPW: [laughs] Pompey Ride the Rooster? Well, that was funny. They had a truant officer.

KP: Uh-huh. Was this at Chicora?

DPW: Pardon me?

KP: Was it at Chicora?

DPW: No. This was in the City.

KP: Oh, right.

DPW: Yeah, in the City. Pompey did a lot of things. He was a truant officer, and he rode this big old bicycle. We used to call him Pompey Ride the Rooster, just like he used to. But Pompey could go around. If you weren't in school, he could take you. But when we got skates, we were assigned a skating area. So, if Pompey caught you out of the area skating, he'd take your skates, take them to the police station, and we'd have to pay 25 cents to get them back.

[laughter]

KP: So, Red Rooster –

DPW: And if you –

KP: - was his red bicycle?

DPW: Pardon me?

KP: The Red Rooster was his -

DPW: Yeah. Yeah, and it was big wheels. I thought that was kind of strange, you know, to pick up our poor skates. And back in the '30s, a quarter was a lot of money.

KP: Right. Sure.

DPW: So, that was funny. But anyway, he was in... If you read... What is that book?

Daughter: Cigar Factory.

KP: Oh, The Cigar Factory?

DPW: Oh, The Cigar Factory. He's mentioned in there. I started laughing because, when I read it, I called Shannon up to tell her.

KP: [laughs] That was a good book. So, let's see. You know, when you lived on St. Philip, particularly because you said that was where you all were the longest, were there places in Charleston that you remember going, particularly to go to King Street to shop or -

DPW: Oh, yeah. King Street was divided into uptown and downtown. And that started at Calhoun Street. Beyond Calhoun Street going towards North Charleston was uptown, and the other direction towards Broad was downtown. Most of the time when I grew up here – and this is not really nice to say – the white people shopped downtown, and most of the blacks uptown. But there was three movies in one block: the Garden, the Majestic, and the Gloria. And then on up the street, the Riviera didn't come 'til a lot later. But we had Silver's and Kress and Woolworth's. And we had Belk, and we had Efird's, and we had Kerrison's. And I always thought the funny thing about Kerrison's, their doorknob was way down here, And all we could think of is maybe women didn't get tall when they built – I don't know. But I couldn't figure out why that handle was there. So, we always said, "Well, that's because the women were so short in those days."

KP: Was there an Edward's?

DPW: The Edward's was uptown.

KP: Okay.

DPW: And Edward's –

KP: Was it a five-and-dime?

DPW: There was Edward's, but actually Ward's came before Edward's because Mr. Kronsberg owned Ward's. He worked for Bluestein's. And I think Bluestein's might still be on the corner there. And then, Ward's was right next door, and there was an ice cream parlor,

Coastal Ice Cream Parlor, right next door. And then, he started – from Ward's, started building stores. He owned as many as 23 at one time that I know of because I used to work for him.

KP: You worked at Edward's?

DPW: I worked at the warehouse for his brother after I graduated from high school.

KP: So, you worked at a couple of places downtown?

DPW: Oh, yeah, but I was working for Mr. Kronsberg when I got married.

KP: And, you know, you mentioned the uptown portion of King Street, it was a lot of African Americans predominantly. Did you ever notice a lot of Jewish-owned stores?

DPW: Oh, yeah. Yeah. There were a lot of Jewish stores, but they were mostly uptown.

KP: Right.

DPW: Yeah. They were mostly uptown, and there were mostly chain stores downtown. However, they had a grocery store. There was a grocery store right on King Street. And then, above Calhoun Street, there was a grocery store right next to the Francis Marion Hotel. It was just a conglomeration of stuff. There was drugstores and theaters and dress shops. And there was even a place where men went in and got their shoes shined, you know, a shoe shine shop. And there were – oh. There were just places like that. But mostly the Jewish stores were, like, the men's stores uptown. And there was Fox Music House.

KP: Where was that?

DPW: Fox was uptown, and that was past Morris Street. But when we were kids, when the new records came out, that's where we went to buy our records.

KP: When you were a kid kid, would going north of Calhoun Street have gotten you in trouble?

DPW: Oh, no.

KP: No. It was just -

DPW: No. You switched, but most of the shopping, you switched. There was never any trouble here between the races that I can remember. But you just stayed in one direction. And Condon's was uptown too. So, I mean we went uptown but not like we did downtown.

KP: Right. Now, grocery stores have been interesting to me because I guess supermarkets – like, we think of them now like here like Harris Teeter and all that. But they really didn't exist until much later.

DPW: Much later, yeah. Yeah. But the grocery stores - like the one I remember the most was the one next to Francis Marion. I think they were run by a Greek family.

KP: Oh, right.

DPW: Yeah. And then, the other one was above Calhoun Street about a block on the corner.

KP: Okay.

DPW: Yeah.

KP: So, really interesting. Now, talking about uptown, did you ever get up to Hampton Park Terrace much or Hampton Park?

DPW: Hampton Park? Oh, yeah. We did. We had, like, a track and field there for kids. And the kids would come from all over downtown. Of course, there were playgrounds everywhere, and the kids would come from all over. And then we'd have meets, you know, like races and centipede with a fishing line. You'd get about five or six people on that and have a race with that. And we had bit-bat. Who would bit-bat the longest? And who was the best jack stone player? And, you know, things like that. Yeah.

KP: Great. Any other landmarks you can think about that were really a part of your growing up years?

DPW: Well, I was telling somebody the other day that – oh. It was on Thanksgiving for the Knights of Columbus Race. That actually started as a cross-county race, and it started up on Heriot Street and finished at Moultrie, you know, at Moultrie Park. And there was a park on Francis Marion. You know, that's where we used to go, because from St. Philip right on to Francis Marion, we used to go there and play. We'd have a kickball team and a baseball team. And that's where you just sat and did your jack stones and your bit-bat, and all your friends met at a park. And then, like I said, we'd go to different parks to play baseball or kickball or something like that. I wasn't very good, so I just... [laughs] I went along with my sister.

KP: One lady we interviewed talked a lot about tennis at Hazel Parker Playground.

DPW: Yeah. Now, Hazel Parker came along later, and it wasn't very... That was mostly for the kids, you know, in the upper –

KP: Right in that area.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah, upper area. And I didn't know anybody over there. Like, we did Moultrie, and we did Marion Square, and we did Elizabeth Tiedeman, and we did Hampton Park and those parks. But we never did Hazel Park.

KP: With Moultrie Playground right there, that's right near Colonial Lake?

DPW: Yeah.

KP: And somebody told me that somebody in your family... Would you all swim in that ever?

DPW: [laughs] No. On Colonial Lake? Yeah, some of the kids would get in there, and they'd swim in Colonial Lake, but it was nasty, [laughs] you know.

KP: Yeah.

DPW: And you fished off of the Colonial Lake.

KP: Did you ever catch -

DPW: Yeah. Everybody. You'd see people sitting around there all the time fishing.

KP: It's very fancy now. I don't think they'll let you do that.

DPW: No. They don't let you do that. I can remember taking... I did a handicap program for adults, and I can remember taking them down there with fishing poles and letting them fish. And that was back in the '70s.

KP: Somebody was telling me that people used to do little – I don't know if they were rowboats, but little boats on Colonial Lake.

DPW: They used to have maybe a few flat-bottom ones, yeah, but not a lot. And the water wasn't really all that clean.

KP: It wouldn't flush, probably.

DPW: Yeah.

KP: [laughs] Yeah. There's a tidal, huh?

DPW: Yeah.

KP: So, did your family when you were growing up have a car? Or how did you get around town?

DPW: Bus.

KP: Bus?

DPW: No, never in my family did we have a car until my brother got older and he bought a car. But my father never owned a car.

KP: Right. So, you talked a little bit about the time period up until World War II. Was there a big change in Charleston with the war years?

DPW: Yeah, because most of the people... You know, between 1930 and 1941, there were more have-nots than there were haves. And so, when the Navy Yard started opening up, that gave jobs to people. And my father had worked at the shipyard down at the foot of Calhoun Street. I can't think of the name of it now, but there was one. And then, so when the Navy Yard opened up, he went to the Navy Yard to work. And most people that went to the Navy Yard weren't used to steady income. And people didn't buy houses. You rented and that type of thing. And then schools were different. Private schools weren't a big thing. Most people went to the public schools. And I don't know whether they were good then or not, you know, [laughter] whether they were better than –

KP: It's what you had, right?

DPW: Yeah. And I can remember when the polio epidemic started.

KP: When was that?

DPW: That was in '39. And kids either went or they didn't go. But I can remember going, and you might have a few kids one day and a little bit more the next. But it really was a scare.

KP: Right. Where would they take polio kids? Just to the hospital? Or would they put them in a sanitarium?

DPW: Oh, no. I didn't know anybody that came down with polio, so I don't know exactly what happened. But we had Roper Hospital then downtown, and we had St. Francis. But Roper was funny because people can't realize that it just ran along right there on Doughty Street. And it wasn't very big, and the floors were wooden. And I used to be in there a lot because I was –

KP: Well, I was going to ask. When you or your brothers and sisters would break a finger or have some kind of illness –

DPW: You went to Roper.

KP: You went to Roper? Did you ever have doctors come to the house for house calls?

DPW: Oh, yeah. Doctors came to the house when you got sick, but most of the time, you went to the doctor's office. And the doctor did visit you. The doctors were making house calls when Barbara was a baby, because I remember we lived in Dorchester Terrace at the time, and I needed a doctor for in the middle of the night. And he said, "Well, I'll meet you at your mother's." And she lived on Courtland Avenue. So, he met me there. And I went from Dorchester down to Courtland Avenue with her. But, yeah, doctors made visits then.

KP: So different today. [laughs]

DPW: Yeah. I don't know what you'd do now if one knocked on your door.

KP: Yeah. [laughs] They'd be lost, I think. That's for sure. So, what about church life? Where'd you go to church?

DPW: I went to St. Patrick's.

KP: Okay, on Radcliffe?

DPW: St. Patrick's was about a block from me.

KP: No. That's St. Philip's. Is that St. Philip's?

DPW: On St. Philip Street, but it was St. Patrick's Church.

KP: Right. Okay.

DPW: And we lived right down the street. And some of my siblings - because I'm Catholic, some of them did go to St. Patrick's. But I went to public school all my life.

KP: Okay. So, St. Patrick's has a school. Was it Immaculate Conception?

DPW: No, no. Immaculate Conception was your black school.

KP: Oh.

DPW: Yeah. That's an interesting thing too. What I've always heard, and I don't know how true it is, that the OLM nuns started it, but there was a law in South Carolina that whites couldn't teach blacks. So, they brought in black nuns to teach. And it was from, as far as I knew, from first grade to high school. And you have some blacks in Charleston that graduated from there. But then, when my older children went to Bishop England, they had black students there then. But, no, St. Patrick's was... Like, the church sits on one corner diagonally across. I think the building is still there. I think the school is still there.

KP: Okay. So, when you moved to West Ashley, what year was that, did you say?

DPW: '57.

KP: Did you change churches, or did you -

DPW: Yeah, went to Blessed. Well, I changed churches when we moved from downtown to Courtland Avenue. I went to Sacred Heart.

KP: Okay. Where is that?

DPW: Sacred Heart's on the corner of Huger and King.

KP: Okay. That's right. It's still there.

DPW: It's still there, yeah. It's very active. The Charleston Catholic School is right next to it.

KP: Right.

Daughter: That's where she got married.

KP: That's where you got married?

DPW: It was.

KP: Excellent. Excellent. Now, did you move to West Ashley before you were married or as a new bride?

DPW: Oh, not until after because I left Charleston for about a year and a half. My husband was from Buffalo, New York, and we went up there, thinking we were going to stay there and he was going to go to college there. But it didn't work out, so we came back and he went to The Citadel. In that time, I lived in Dorchester Terrace, and then I lived on Rutledge Avenue. And we stayed on Rutledge Avenue on the corner of Sheppard and Rutledge until he graduated from The Citadel. And then we moved to West Ashley.

KP: How did you meet a boy from Buffalo?

DPW: You don't want to know. [laughter] Oh. Well, if you want to know, I'll tell you. My next-door neighbor was going up to what they call the E-M Club, which was the enlisted men's club. And it was on the corner of Meeting and Wentworth, right along in there. And she asked me if I'd go with her, so I told her, yeah.

KP: Is that across the street from the fire department?

DPW: Fire department. You're right. Right. And I went with her, and that's how I met him.

KP: And so, he was in the -

DPW: He was in the Navy.

KP: He was in the Navy. Oh, a Navy man.

DPW: Yeah. He was in the Navy. And then, we knew when he... We went together for about a year. And when we got married, I knew he wanted to go to school. And he thought he wanted to go back to Buffalo to go to Canisius, which is a Jesuit school up there. But, like I said, it was too expensive. We moved back, and he finished at The Citadel.

KP: Did he like The Citadel?

DPW: He loved it.

KP: That's great.

DPW: Absolutely loved it. He was a vet student. And that's when they allowed vet students to come. And then, when they were going to go co-ed, they thought - well, they quit the vet students from coming because they didn't want to have to take the women in the military. But they ended up taking that, you know, going co-ed anyhow. And they went for a long time before they allowed vet students to come back. I think just recently they may have allowed vet students to come back and stay. See, my husband was a day student.

KP: Right, because they kind of wanted everybody to be residential for a long time.

DPW: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, if you went as a cadet, you were residential. But vet students lived at home.

KP: Now, when you guys were married and then he was at The Citadel as a day student, you didn't have to live necessarily close-by to The Citadel?

DPW: Pardon me?

KP: So, you didn't have to live close-by to The Citadel while he was in school?

DPW: Well, we did because we didn't have a car. [laughs] And he walked to the school, and I worked. And I walked to work.

KP: Where did you work at the time?

DPW: That's when I worked on Huger Street in the Edward's warehouse. I was secretary there.

KP: Did you also work at a theater?

DPW: Oh. That's when I was younger, yeah. Everybody worked in a theater when they were in their teens. You know, you just thought that was something to do. And, yeah, you wore your navy blue skirt and white blouse and carried your flashlight. [laughs]

KP: What were you looking for with the flashlight?

DPW: Oh. Well, you had to have a flashlight to show people how to walk down the aisle to get to their seat. That was fun.

KP: Right. It was always dark.

DPW: Yeah. That was fun. I did that.

KP: So, do you remember any particular... Were there big movies that came to Charleston?

DPW: Yeah. I'm trying to think of one. There was one they made about Charleston, and I actually remember when Gone with the Wind came.

KP: Do you, really?

DPW: Yeah.

KP: Now, where did that open?

DPW: That was in '39, and they had that at the Gloria.

KP: That's cool, which is now, I guess... Is that the front of where the Sottile is?

DPW: Yeah, the Sottile Theater, you know, the front of that, yeah. And that was the first... The Gloria Theater was our fancy theater at that time, and that's when they had the lights in ceiling and everything. And I was in there not too long ago, and those lights are still in the ceiling.

KP: And did you notice the murals that they uncovered?

DPW: No, I didn't.

KP: Oh. It's really interesting. At least on one side, they uncovered some of the original murals that were painted on the walls. So, they've got some of those back.

DPW: And the Garden Theater is down there where... It's where the kids like to shop, Urban Zen or something like that.

Daughter: Urban Outfitters.

KP: Urban Outfitters.

DPW: Yeah, Urban, yeah. That's where the Garden was. And the Majestic was in the middle of that block, and it must have been one of the first theater, because it was really just wooden floors and everything, not very comfortable seats. But that's where kids went on Saturday and practically spent the whole day there seeing the cowboy movies and the serials that they had.

KP: Right. So, you could get in. Could you just stay?

DPW: Oh, yeah. And it was just a dime.

KP: That's great.

DPW: Yeah, just a –

KP: Talking about sort of black Charlestonians and white Charlestonians, do you remember the movie theaters would have separate entrances for black customers?

DPW: No, no, no. Blacks didn't go.

KP: Never went.

DPW: No.

KP: Because I know that there was a black theater.

DPW: Lincoln Theater was just above Spring Street, maybe two or three doors above –

KP: Yeah, right at a corner, actually.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that's where the Lincoln Theater was. And then, there was the Palace Theater up that way too on this side of Spring and King Street. Well, you know where Read Brothers is now?

KP: Yeah.

DPW: It was across the street.

KP: Okay.

DPW: And at the time, the Kerrs owned that. We didn't go up to the Palace very much.

KP: Right, or probably the Lincoln either. I think it was all black at the Lincoln Theater.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah, the Lincoln. But the Lincoln was just black, and I don't even remember when that closed.

KP: Mm-hmm. I think it was still physically there in Hugo, but it had been closed down since the '70s.

DPW: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I think so, whenever the integration started.

KP: There's a big hotel there right now.

DPW: Yeah.

KP: What about dance clubs? You know, I was thinking about West Ashley. Was The Cavallaro -

DPW: Cavallaro, yeah. We used to go to The Cavallaro because they had a band. They had live music, yeah. And that was... In fact, I was talking with somebody about that the other day, and I don't think they changed the front of that too much.

KP: Yeah. They had to keep it -

DPW: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

KP: - because it was an important building.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah.

KP: But it's Hendrick something.

DPW: Yeah.

KP: [laughs] You can get a car there now. So, what about the beach? Where would you go in the summer?

DPW: Oh. We went to the beach every Wednesday -

KP: Which one?

DPW: Folly, every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday. And I don't know if anybody ever mentioned this to you, but Wednesday afternoon Charleston, all the stores closed.

KP: Really?

DPW: Oh, yeah. Yeah. And I don't know when that stopped, but I can remember, when we were younger, yeah, you just worked half a day on Wednesday.

KP: Oh. That's great. They should do that again.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah. You just worked half a day.

KP: So, how would you get out to Folly?

DPW: Thumbed. [laughs]

KP: Did your mother know? [laughs]

DPW: I don't know if they knew, but I was with two of my sisters older than me. But you didn't think anything of it, you know. I mean what goes on now didn't go on then. You could

walk all over Charleston. If you can imagine where Courtland Avenue is and where the Gloria Theater is, we'd get out of the Gloria the last show. We'd walk home. And it'd just be maybe two, three girls and boys or maybe just girls. But you never worried about anybody bothering you.

KP: Not much out-of-town folks.

DPW: It didn't happen, you know? It didn't happen.

KP: Was Charleston a big tourist destination?

DPW: No. We were very quiet.

KP: When did you start noticing tourists coming in, do you think?

DPW: Really, when we moved away from Charleston, we moved away in August of '60 and moved to Atlanta. No, moved to Columbia. And then we moved to Atlanta, and we came back in '65, because we've been in this house since '65. And that's when I noticed that things were growing, because when my husband told me we were going to move here and he found this house, I said, "You're taking me in the country." I actually thought we were going way out. When we moved here, Wallenberg was a dirt road. Ashley Hall Road was a dirt road.

KP: Wow. So, remind us where we are right now. What's the address here?

DPW: Here? 1818 Saint Julian.

KP: And what neighborhood is this?

DPW: This is Plantation Estates.

KP: Plantation Estates. And so, when did you all move here?

DPW: '65, and we're the first people to live in this house. But it started developing from '61 on this way. And so, when we moved here, there were probably one or two more houses at the end of the street that were built. And then, the front road there, Ashley Hall Road, that wasn't built.

KP: Right. Before we started recording, we were talking about the Ashley Hall Plantation is right near here. And so, were they farming at all out there? Was it still -

DPW: No. It was a horse -

KP: Oh, right.

DPW: It was horses. But they did have a few cows, because - I can't think of the name of the street at the end of Saint Julian, but the kids used to cross a cow pasture to get to the stables.

KP: Right. Well, there's a bunch of houses getting ready to get built over there.

DPW: But the houses in back of that, right, and in front of that, they weren't there. That was a cow pasture.

KP: So, it really was out in the country.

DPW: Yeah. This was what the Kennertys owned. Kennertys owned this place. You know, they owned the stables, and I think they owned this land.

KP: So, originally, this land would have been part of Ashley Hall Plantation.

DPW: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

KP: For sure.

DPW: Yeah.

KP: So, all that stuff. So, I guess other stuff to talk about... I know we're bouncing around time periods and places and everything, but one of the things that Shannon, your daughter, mentioned was, during World War II, there were blackouts in Charleston.

DPW: Oh, yeah. Yeah. It was. Whenever the horn sounded for the blackout, then you had to make sure all your lights were out. You had to pull your blinds if you had any. And you had to –

KP: What was the reason for that?

DPW: Well, we didn't know. You know, there were submarines spotted three miles off the coast here. And you just didn't know what to expect. We were hoping not, but we were getting prepared for it. I can remember my dad was a warden, and he had a hat that he wore and a lamp that he carried. And they'd check and make sure everybody turned off their radios and all their lights. But we did that. And we had –

KP: Sallie said that nobody could see you from a flyover too, right?

DPW: Oh, yeah. I mean airplanes could've come over. I mean in those days, you know, technology was building up. And I can honestly remember being afraid. Well, what would I do? I was 15 when the war ended, but being a teenager through the war and all that, you know?

KP: Now, your dad was a warden. Did anybody in your family go overseas?

DPW: Oh, Lord, yeah. My two brothers were in the Navy, and my brother-in-law. I had a brother-in-law that was in, and they went. My oldest brother, Percy, was in the landing in Normandy when he was in the Navy, and that's gruesome to think of if you think about it. If

you've seen films, there just was dead bodies all over everywhere. And then, my brother, Bill, went in the Pacific, and so did my brother-in-law, Brock. They were in the Pacific when –

KP: That must have been nerve-wracking.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah. So, I mean, yeah, it was... There wasn't hardly too many families that didn't have somebody in, because the boys were very patriotic. My one brother, Percy, worked in the Navy Yard. So, he didn't have to go right away. But my brother, Bill, joined when he was 17 years old. And there were a lot of them that went when they were 17 years old.

KP: Or even lied to say they were 17 when they might not even be that old?

DPW: Mm-hmm. And they spent most of their teenage years – a lot of their teenage years in the service. And I don't know if –

KP: There was a lot of rationing and -

DPW: Oh. That's what I was going to tell you. I don't know if Shannon... Everybody had a book, everybody. I had a book, all the children, my mom and dad. So, we had a stack of books. But something like butter was rationed, and sugar was rationed, and coffee was rationed, and shoes were rationed. And you had to make sure that, when you went shopping, you had your book with you so that you could give your stamps to the store. My mom, I remember, on Saturday, she'd have groceries delivered because she'd go downtown. And I'd be there, and I'd have to make sure that I got the stamps out and I didn't get cheated. [laughter] But it was common practice to sell your shoe stamp. Gas was rationed.

KP: Wow, and even hosiery, right?

DPW: Oh, hosiery. That's a funny one. You have to hear this one because you bought some kind of colored stuff that you rubbed on your legs to make it look like hosiery. And then, when it rained, it just ran all down your leg. [laughs]

KP: The secret was out.

DPW: Yeah. I can remember. Yeah. You thought you smoothed it on, you know, and then it just ran down your leg when it rained. [laughs]

KP: Well, I know World War II and kind of the buildup of the Navy base and everything was one of the reasons that some of the neighborhoods in West Ashley really started getting going, right?

DPW: Right. Yeah.

KP: When you moved to West Ashley in the '50s, what was the area like? Because we know some of it seemed like farmland.

DPW: Well, yeah, some of it was, because when I was... I grew up downtown, and when we'd come over this way, it was all farmland. My mother had a friend that lived on a farm. But in '57, there were things like St. Andrews Shopping Center was being built and had just gotten finished, maybe. And the Coburg Cow was there. And as you went on up the highway, maybe Harrison Acres was being built, because that used to be a farm too. And I can remember, in '57, when my husband worked for the telephone company, he had to go out and get the right of way to put posts and stuff like that on because he was a cost accountant. And how much stuff they needed to build something, he would go to Ravenel. Lenevar was Ravenel Plantation, because that's Ravenel spelled backwards. And he'd go there to get a right of way. And then, when we lived in Byrnes Down, something like Northbridge Terrace and Charlestown 1 or 2, you know, they were just building up, because I can remember families moving out of Byrnes Down and moving into Northbridge or one of those places. So, all of this just developed really after – well, you know, in the '60s - late '50s and early '60s. I mean you figure Drayton came after, and Shadowmoss came after.

KP: And that was the, like, '70s or '80s?

DPW: Well, more like late '60s or early '70s. Yeah, early '70s probably. But I can remember going to look at houses in Drayton and thinking we were going to move. But I didn't want to move up 61. So, that was more traffic, you know. Actually, I live in a great place.

KP: Yeah, you do. Well, obviously, the amount of development has changed a lot. What else has maybe changed in this area?

DPW: Traffic.

KP: Traffic? [chuckles]

DPW: Oh, my Lord. Like I said, that was a dirt road. And the Jewish Community Center was over there, and they had a swimming pool. And we joined so the kids could swim. And they had a game room for them and everything. And they could cross that. I didn't want them crossing that street. And even after it first paved, it wasn't that much traffic. But you wouldn't do that now. I mean it's just... You know, progress came to us. [laughs] I'll be glad when progress stops.

KP: [laughs] I'm with you on that, for sure.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah.

KP: Do you think that more tourists make their way out here as well for the plantations?

DPW: Pardon me?

KP: Do you think more tourists come this way too for the plantations?

DPW: Wallenberg is a cut-through for everything now. I mean if anything happens on 526, then they're routed through Wallenberg if they don't want to go all the way down and turn around to get to 26 or go to town or something. And anything happens on 26, comes... I mean

you can look out there and say, "Oh. What happened on 526?" or, "What happened....," depending on which way the traffic is going. "What happened on 26?" You know something happened because it's very used now. You have to be careful. And sometimes I get mad because I can't get out my own street. [laughs]

KP: I'm sure. It's irritating.

DPW: Yeah. You know, they don't let you out.

KP: So, tell me a little bit, because you worked when you were kind of in your childhood and as a young bride. Were you a stay-at-home mom when you started having the young 'uns?

DPW: Pardon me?

KP: Were you a stay-at-home mom after you started having your kids?

DPW: I was. I stayed at home from '57. And then I went back to work, oh, probably 13 years later, something like that, 13 years later. I was home 'til my oldest went to college.

KP: Wow. Tell me about your children. Tell me about your kids.

DPW: All of my children? Let's see.

KP: Well, there's two here, so you have to talk nice about them.

[laughter]

DPW: Well, I'll tell you this about my children. I was telling one of my children that my granddaughter asked me what did my husband and I do - and I have to give him a lot of credit – to have eight children and have them all graduate from college.

KP: Well, what did you do?

DPW: And I don't know. [laughs] I prayed a lot, prayed a lot. And I thought, never thought of it that way. But I can remember thinking the oldest one had a... She just knew. They just knew that's what they were going to do, you know? It wasn't any if, ands, or buts about it. And we were fortunate enough to send them to Catholic schools and Bishop England. And I think that had a lot to do with their route that they went too. And I mean there were good times and bad times, but I always say it's the end results, the end product.

KP: You have to take the long view.

DPW: Yeah. I have six in education, one's a nurse, and one was with the State Department. So, can't complain about that.

KP: No. Those are wonderful.

DPW: They're all productive citizens. All my grandchildren –

KP: Now, how many grandchildren do you have?

DPW: I have 16 grandchildren, and they're all following suit and going to college and falling in line with finding something to do and being productive. I have ten great-grandchildren.

KP: Wow. That's fantastic.

DPW: And so, it was up to... I'll call my daughter the leader. The oldest one was the leader, and everybody followed suit. And all the grandchildren are doing the same thing. So, that's really...

KP: Are they mostly around here?

DPW: No.

KP: Or are they kind of scattered all over the place?

DPW: I have five around here. And then, I have one in Phoenix, Arizona; one in Naples, Italy; and my son that's in D.C. He was the one that was with the State Department. He just came back from Bogota, Colombia. And he lived all over the world too. So, you know, they... The one in Phoenix, she married a Marine, and they traveled a lot. And he's retired now, and that's where they live. The one in Italy, she teaches there with the State Department.

KP: Well, it sounds like you have a very -

DPW: I'm very proud of my children -

KP: You should be.

DPW: - you know?

KP: You should be. That's wonderful. And it sounds like -

DPW: But my husband worked hard. He finished school himself. I feel like all I did was educate. [laughs]

KP: You did. You were a stay-at-home mom. You were a teacher, absolutely.

DPW: Yeah, starting with my husband and ending with the children.

KP: Right. [laughs] Yeah. You've got to train those men. That's great, though.

DPW: Oh, and I... But, yeah, it is. I have a very nice family.

KP: And it sounds like you're still a very active person, and you do -

DPW: I am.

KP: You go a lot of places, do a lot of stuff.

DPW: For a while, I was going... I went to Europe four years in a row, and I travel a lot when I go see my children. But I also do a lot in the community. I'm active in my church, and I help my son with his swim class we have at Orange Grove. We do that. And I used to go over -

KP: Well, that'd make your brothers proud, wouldn't it, with the swimming. That's kind of where we started, with the -

DPW: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's right. We end up with it too. [laughter] It took me a while to learn, but, yeah, we... And so, we just – you know. Always been busy, always been active. The children swam every summer for years. And there are the six that are teachers, you know. And that's a big family, to have six teachers.

KP: It is. That's wonderful, because that even amplifies the impact.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah. And some of them are retired teachers.

KP: That's great.

DPW: Yeah, Shannon and Barbara. [laughs] Yeah. And some of them are still at it.

KP: Great. Well, is there anything that you want to talk about that we haven't covered or any stories or just memories? Because we're talking about sort of all areas of Charleston and kind of then and now. Anything that we've skipped or left out?

DPW: No. I wonder if people are aware of how long the Turkey Day Race has gone on. That was in my childhood, where they –

KP: Was it really?

DPW: Yeah. Yeah. My brothers, they did races. They used to do cross-country. Actually start up at Heriot Street and end at the lake, is what they did. And just growing up here was... When I grew up, it was nice and calm.

KP: Just a small town.

DPW: And the traffic wasn't like it is now. And it was just different. We didn't have... Mostly everybody who lived here then were Charlestonians. Now the Charlestonians move away so other people can come. [laughs] There's not too many of us that stay. The kids don't hang around too long. I feel very fortunate that five of mine are still there and that they were teachers,

you know? Six of them actually were in education, so that was good. So, I feel like we've given back to the community.

KP: Definitely.

DPW: I love living here.

KP: I'm glad. Well, it's a wonderful place, and that's one of the reasons that we're doing these oral histories to kind of talk about different areas of Charleston and everything. So, this has been such a pleasure to talk to you.

DPW: It was nice growing up downtown. Like I said, you could go anywhere. You didn't have to be afraid.

KP: I hear that a lot, you know, just the small-town quality, and there were so many children downtown.

DPW: But the races got along too. I mean the blacks and the whites got along.

KP: Right. You know, one of the things that people say now is Charleston was residentially a lot more integrated.

DPW: Yeah. It was a lot more integrated, and it was tolerance of each other. I mean nobody – you know. You just didn't think about it. And you kind of watched out. We always had somebody working for us. You know, we had somebody, a black woman, that worked for us at the time, Annabelle. But we cared for Annabelle. It was just different. You know, people don't care for each other like they used to. The respect isn't there like it used to be.

KP: Right. So, it's very different.

DPW: Yeah, it's different.

KP: It's a very different place.

DPW: It was so much cozier when it was smaller. I can remember coming over the Ashley River Bridge. There was nothing but farms there.

KP: Isn't that wild? It's so different.

DPW: Yeah, it was different. North Charleston was not very –

KP: Wasn't really even in existence for a long time, what is?

DPW: No. Well, when I went to Chicora, it was built in '43. I don't know what they call it now, but it was a high school then.

KP: Well, the building's still there, but I think they've moved the school out. And I'm not sure

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DPW: Yeah. It was built in '43 to take some of the Navy Yard traffic that came in, the people to work at the Navy Yard. And then, the ships that came in and people that... And that's when we started growing after the war. People discovered Charleston, and they came back to live. I think that's when we really started growing.

KP: Mm-hmm. The Navy Yard just grew so much too, and housing needs shot up.

DPW: But it was a great place to grow up. You could walk downtown any time of the night, any time.

KP: No problems.

DPW: If we wanted to walk to the lake from where we lived on St. Philip Street, we just walked and walked home. There was just nothing to worry about.

Daughter: The Cooper River Bridge being built.

DPW: Yeah.

KP: Oh, yeah. Do you remember the Cooper River Bridge being built?

DPW: I remember going over the Old Bridge, yeah, like this. [laughter] Well, when they first built it, it was two-ways.

KP: So, one lane going one way, one lane coming back.

DPW: Yeah, one going to Mount Pleasant, one coming back. And you were like that [gestures], you know. And then, I can remember – Ashley and Barbara will remember this – driving on the old Cooper River Bridge. Remember when I used to take the basketball team over from Bishop England over when they had a meet over there, a game over there? But it was only one-way then. But I can remember when it was two-ways, yeah. I can remember someone, like my daughter, Susan, used to cover her head every time she went over. [laughs] She was just like

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KP: I can't imagine being a young person and learning how to drive and having to go over that bridge. That would've put me off driving.

DPW: I wasn't the best driver in the world either. Now I'd go over sometimes with 14 kids. I'd have about seven of my own, and the rest would be basketball players – you know, the girls' basketball team.

KP: Wow.

DPW: Yeah. Yeah. It was funny. But, yeah, I can remember that.

KP: That was a wild bridge. And nobody seems to really miss that bridge [laughs] much at all. I know people miss buildings that are no longer there, like the Charleston Hotel.

DPW: I can remember my mother talking about it. They used to go over on a boat.

KP: To Mount Pleasant?

DPW: Yeah, go to the islands. Well, they went to Sullivan's Island and Isle of Palms. A lot of the local people lived on Sullivan's Island, and they used to go over on a boat. But that was – you know.

KP: Whole new world when the bridge came.

DPW: A long time ago. And they didn't build the Cooper River Bridge... They didn't build it large enough as it is.

KP: Right.

DPW: You know, they need it much larger than that. But, you know, it was fun. And we used to have... Just growing up here was nice and quiet, you know? Not nice and quiet anymore. [laughs]

KP: Well, I guess we've probably already exceeded our hour. So, I'll end it there.

DPW: Okay.

KP: But thank you so much -

DPW: You're welcome.

KP: - for talking to us and doing this.

END OF RECORDING