**Transcript of Interview with Deborah Hoile by Clinton Roberts**

**Interviewee:** Deborah Hoile

**Interviewer:** Clinton Roberts

**Date:** 07/25/2020

**Location (Interviewee):** Blanchard, Oklahoma

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**Transcriber:** Clinton Roberts

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

**CR:** This is Clinton Roberts of Arizona State University HST580 for the Journal of the Plague Year archive. Today is July 25 2020. And I'm conducting an interview with Deborah Hoile. Deborah will be talking about how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed her day to day activities. What is your name?

**DH:** Deborah Hoile.

**CR:** What do you do for a living Deborah?

**DH:** I'm retired now.

**CR:** Where do you live?

**DH:** I live in Blanchard, Oklahoma.

**CR:** What's it like living in Blanchard, Oklahoma?

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

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

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

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

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

**CR:** How has your daily routine change since COVID-19? And in what ways?

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

**CR:** Are your day to day activity-like what you mentioned, the online shopping things like that, has it made it more stressful than before?

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

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

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

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

**DH:** Not really new ways, but you know, now it's mostly Facebook and text messages. [laughs]

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

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

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

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

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

**DH:** You know, people are people so I don't think so. I just think because it's a smaller town, maybe you don't have, you know, the pockets of those who are totally against it or, you know, the fanatics that's too strong a word, but. [laughs]

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

**DH:** Well, accuracy [slightly laughing] is something that I question a lot. I don't think it's what we've seen necessarily here in this small town the-mainly because it seems like all the news broadcasts I've seen are focused on the really big cities and, you know, things are much different in a big city than they are in a small town. So no, I don't think it's quite the same as here.

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

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

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

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

**CR:** Does living in Blanchard seems safer or more dangerous during COVID-19 and how so?

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

**CR:** How have your local and state governments responded to that break? Do you think their response was enough? Not enough too much? How so?

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

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

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

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

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

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