

DeKalb History Center

Lithonia Community Engagement

Annie Anderson Doherty

Speaker 1 ([00:01](#)):

And so we're rolling now.

Speaker 2 ([00:03](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 1 ([00:04](#)):

Just introduce yourself, your name and how old you are, and where you were born. And where you were born.

Speaker 2 ([00:17](#)):

Okay. My name is Anna Cora Anderson Doherty. I am 79 years old. I was born right here in Lithonia. A few skips and hop across the street over there.

Speaker 1 ([00:34](#)):

Tell me, how was it growing up in Lithonia you?

Speaker 2 ([00:39](#)):

Well, with me not being that old, I would say not really a few bad things, but not really. I didn't run into a whole lot of odd things because at my being young and what have you. So there weren't really anything big that I would know of talk about.

Speaker 1 ([01:06](#)):

So

Speaker 2 ([01:07](#)):

That's my phone.

Speaker 1 ([01:10](#)):

Where is it? Could we stop that? You want to put those? Mine might go off too. I try to keep it off.

Speaker 2 ([01:23](#)):

I didn't think all's in that little pink bag in that little,

Speaker 1 ([01:26](#)):

Then I miss all my calls. I put mine on vibrate.

Speaker 2 ([01:30](#)):

Yeah. I got a baby at home.

Speaker 1 ([01:34](#)):

Part of the process.

Speaker 2 ([01:35](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 1 ([01:37](#)):

All right.

Speaker 2 ([01:42](#)):

Okay. Lemme get rid of him.

Speaker 1 ([01:47](#)):

You ready? Yeah.

Speaker 2 ([01:52](#)):

That's my son, so I'll talk with him later.

Speaker 1 ([01:56](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 2 ([01:56](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 1 ([01:57](#)):

Alright. So you were born in

Speaker 2 ([02:04](#)):

Nineteen, nineteen forty four. February 28th, 1944.

Speaker 1 ([02:09](#)):

And as a young child, you went to, you attended Bruce Street School?

Speaker 2 ([02:14](#)):

I attended Bruce Street School. I started out in the Barrett, which was beyond the Old Rock building. That's where I first started. And I moved from there over into the rock building. And then first grade. Tell

Speaker 1 ([02:29](#)):

Me a little bit more about Bruce Street School.

Speaker 2 ([02:33](#)):

Goodness gracious. It was exciting, really. And the space we was in, it was kind of crowded, but it was wonderful. No bad experience there. I enjoyed my little recess time and going back. We had the little library that set apart. We had our period of time ago to and from with the class and what have you. And there's so much I outgrown now that I couldn't tell you about. But other than that I really enjoyed. And my biggest thing were, I guess I stayed a long way from school. We stayed pretty good piece from school. And there was days I had to walk when we missed the school bus, but once we got there, it was somebody to make sure that we was taken care of. And especially during the lunch hour time, which was in the old building, they're standing now in which my grandmother was the cook there and her name (inaudible) and she made sure that nobody went hungry.

([03:49](#)):

So there was a lot of days we left home. We didn't have a chance to eat because of the schedule of the bus schedule. And so if we missed the bus, then we didn't get to, we were trying to get food to eat, but if we got the bus, we missed breakfast or what have you. But once we entered school and at lunchtime, it was a period of time when we were able to get there and we was not hungry. We didn't leave school hungry. You got fed once you got there. And that was due to my grandmother (name inaudible)

Speaker 1 ([04:24](#)):

So it had a big playground.

Speaker 2 ([04:28](#)):

Was

Speaker 1 ([04:28](#)):

There room for that?

Speaker 2 ([04:29](#)):

Not really. The playground weren't that big, but we had a thing to do our maypole platting and the little sack running and whatever. It was big enough for that. It wasn't a huge place, but it was big enough for us to enjoy ourselves.

Speaker 1 ([04:46](#)):

So you said you had a maypole,

Speaker 2 ([04:49](#)):

Pardon me?

Speaker 1 ([04:50](#)):

Maypole.

Speaker 2 ([04:51](#)):

A maypole. We call it maypole plating. We in and out with the different color ribbons, and that's what we call the maypole route.

Speaker 1 ([05:00](#)):

So girls like to do that, right?

Speaker 2 ([05:03](#)):

Yeah. The boy didn't have time for that.

Speaker 1 ([05:05](#)):

Little

Speaker 2 ([05:05](#)):

Boy didn't have time for that. They had other things. Didn't mind. Yeah. But it was wonderful. Enjoy.

Speaker 1 ([05:14](#)):

Well, I had the pleasure of interviewing your husband, Mr. Johnny. I was thoroughly impressed with him.

Speaker 2 ([05:22](#)):

What a talk.

Speaker 1 ([05:23](#)):

Did you enjoy watching his interview?

Speaker 2 ([05:25](#)):

I did. And Johnny was such a big talker sometime I felt like he talked too much, but he loved to talk. And anywhere he thought he could get in, he would get in and on and on and on. But really he enjoyed what he was doing and he put his nose in a little bit of everything, anything. If you want to know something, you ask Johnny and he just about to tell you where it was or when it happened, so. Okay, wonderful.

Speaker 1 ([06:04](#)):

I was wondering about how it was socially as a teenager, you had to be in your twenties around the sixties. 1964. You were 20 years old.

Speaker 2 ([06:21](#)):

Yes. Because 64. Yes, 20, 64. These numbers. Were you

Speaker 1 ([06:31](#)):

Married by then?

Speaker 2 ([06:31](#)):

Pardon me? Were you

Speaker 1 ([06:32](#)):

Married by

Speaker 2 ([06:33](#)):

Then? No, I got married and I was in my late, early thirties when I got married. No, I had,

Speaker 1 ([06:43](#)):

So during the sixties you were in your twenties and they had a big thing happened. Martin Luther King was assassinated in 68, and you probably were 24 at that time. Do you remember that time when Dr. King was murdered?

Speaker 2 ([07:07](#)):

Yes. Some of it, I remember a lot of, if it's gone, but there are periods of time. I mean stuff that I do recall him, the rallies and things, walks and what have they did and the death of him. Some of that I do recall, but I don't recall a lot of it because it's been years and I am getting older and things are getting away from me trying

Speaker 1 ([07:36](#)):

To recover yourself.

Speaker 2 ([07:38](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([07:41](#)):

Tell me, when you met Mr. Johnny, you guys got married and he, you went to Germany, didn't you?

Speaker 2 ([07:51](#)):

No. Well, he was married before and he was out of service when he and I got together. The

Speaker 1 ([07:59](#)):

Second

Speaker 2 ([07:59](#)):

Guy. Yeah, I'm a second marriage.

Speaker 1 ([08:03](#)):

Tell me about, I keep hearing people talk about the train here, and the train was really important because it hauled a lot of stone out. But also, did you ever take the train downtown to Atlanta?

Speaker 2 ([08:15](#)):

Never. No. I never had never had the opportunity to go on the train.

Speaker 1 ([08:23](#)):

And why was that?

Speaker 2 ([08:25](#)):

I don't know. I really don't know why. Because my parents had, well, my mom had a car, so any transportation or what have you, I would get the Greyhound bus to go wherever it were, but I never rode the train. It was always on the Greyhound bus that when we did, I was traveling from here to the Cato or to Atlanta.

Speaker 1 ([08:46](#)):

But you could hear that train.

Speaker 2 ([08:48](#)):

Oh yeah, I, I can hear the train now. I still hear the train. I'm just across the track there and I still hear the train and stuff. So it causes some issues with getting from one side of the track to the other because like the people on my side, when we are trying to come over into town, the train just blocked us there and that a headache. But since we have the underpass, we can't go down there and then go over and come into town. But it's like you passing through town and you go to the underpass. You got to go to the underpass and come back and then go back and go down through town when you can really cross the track and come directly through town. But other than that, that's pretty much. Okay.

Speaker 1 ([09:39](#)):

What church did you attend here?

Speaker 2 ([09:41](#)):

I have attended the Union Missionary Baptist Church, and I was baptized under leadership of Reverend FL Thomas. And that was out in the front yard in a little hole where I was baptized. And from that day, to this day, I am still at Union Missionary Baptist Church where Reverend Randall is my pastor.

Speaker 1 ([10:06](#)):

They dug out of baptism pit.

Speaker 2 ([10:09](#)):

Yeah, there was a little pit in the front yard, which is covered now. You wouldn't know it was there now, but there was a little pit and you dipped in that little hole and then they carry you on inside to get your dresser and what have you. That's him.

Speaker 1 ([10:32](#)):

It's modern technology. They'll cut that out. But anyway, so I heard that on a Friday or Saturday night, folks used to get in their car from downtown Atlanta and come on out and Sunday afternoons come on out to the country in Lithonia to the lake. Are you familiar with that?

Speaker 2 ([11:00](#)):

That's the lake in the

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Speaker 1 ([11:01](#)):

Racetrack

Speaker 2 ([11:03](#)):

At the country club. That's a racetrack up that way? No, I guess I weren't old enough to attend that kind of thing. So that wasn't me there. I wasn't able to go there. I didn't go there.

Speaker 1 ([11:24](#)):

So you didn't sneak

Speaker 2 ([11:25](#)):

In? I'm not a really, really outgoing person. I'm not really home bound, but I'm just not an out person.

Speaker 1 ([11:40](#)):

So tell me, you guys are like nine miles from Stone Mountain.

Speaker 2 ([11:52](#)):

Oh my baby. What's going on?

Speaker 1 ([11:58](#)):

Do you need to take that call?

Speaker 2 ([12:00](#)):

I do. Okay. I'm going to stop just a second.

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Okay, so yeah, we are at the big house.

Speaker 2 ([00:05](#)):

Yeah, I am at the big house. This is what it was called, the big house, which we weren't

Speaker 1 ([00:13](#)):

Because you guys used to walk past here.

Speaker 2 ([00:15](#)):

Walked past here. But that's all. We couldn't come in here. We going past here. But you didn't get in here until it hadn't been that long that it was opened up to us to come in here.

Speaker 1 ([00:32](#)):

Well that had to be uncomfortable. You didn't know where to step or you knew where to stand.

Speaker 2 ([00:38](#)):

No, you didn't. I think it was so out of the way. You had to be on your place and the other people was in their place and it kind of awkward a lot of things that you kind of wondering what's going on there, but you can't get there to find out anything about it. So I guess we just bypass it, you know? Couldn't come. So you just keep going and find something else to do. Life is just,

Speaker 1 ([01:15](#)):

Yeah. And I keep mentioning that we are so close to, do you remember when the school was burned?

Speaker 2 ([01:25](#)):

No, I don't. I don't

Speaker 1 ([01:27](#)):

A lot of folks, so, but like I said, we were, yeah, we're only nine miles from Stone Mountain. Just when I was a kid growing up in Harris Stone Mountain, it'd be like, so I could imagine how it was living that

Speaker 2 ([01:48](#)):

Close. Yeah, well, I guess me being the age I were and we didn't stay close into the city, I stayed kind of out. So we weren't involved in a lot of things that went on that we didn't heard about but heard

Speaker 1 ([02:10](#)):

About.

Speaker 2 ([02:11](#)):

Heard stuff we've heard about. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([02:15](#)):

Tell me about growing up and going to the movies here when you guys finally got a movie here.

Speaker 2 ([02:23](#)):

Well, we got a movie, which was on the back there, but we had to go upstairs if I'm not mistaken. We had to go upstairs for the thing. And like I say, my parents didn't, we didn't get into a lot of things. So every blue moon, we might've gotten a chance to go to the movie, but it was never that often. But we did have, when we went, you had to go upstairs and what have you.

Speaker 1 ([03:01](#)):

But you guys could go shopping on Main Street.

Speaker 2 ([03:04](#)):

Yeah, the little grocery store. Grocery store, the dry goods and what have you. But mostly all in one spot. We had that one store that you buy grocery, which is right there. Right there. The red building right there. You had the grocery store and your meat counter in the back. The meat counter's in the very back of the store. But you buy your clothing and what have you in the other part of the store. Yeah,

Speaker 1 ([03:33](#)):

It's kind of like everything store.

Speaker 2 ([03:36](#)):

And then we did have another little store across the street on this side, a little meat market it was called.

Speaker 1 ([03:45](#)):

So they finally got a new post office down there

Speaker 2 ([03:52](#)):

That

Speaker 1 ([03:52](#)):

I heard that was a big thing.

Speaker 2 ([03:55](#)):

Pretty good. Pretty good big news to us because the, well, the post office, it weren't that bad, but it is not the size of the one we have now, which is right down the street right there too. Because everything was pretty much right here together. Police station, the post office, the grocery store, the drug store, everything right in this one little area. So we didn't have before to go out.

Speaker 1 ([04:31](#)):

Now I'm going to ask you, you are a black woman, you're a mother, you probably have brothers and sisters for black women. What kind of work was available?

Speaker 2 ([04:48](#)):

Private home. Mostly private home because my mom worked private home and I think they had a laundry at one point that might've gotten a chance. Other than that, I don't know. Anything else other? No other working place for women's. Other than that, mostly private home work was done.

Speaker 1 ([05:13](#)):

So as a mom, a wife, sister, the women have to bear the brunt of whatever the men go through. Did you worry about your husband or your brothers or children that they would get caught up into something?

Speaker 2 ([05:38](#)):

Not really. My brothers, I think the only thing I worried about with them was about going to school because they was going to the white school. And that bothered me because it looked like everything that happened, it was always be a black child. But other than that, I didn't get to be a worrier until I got older. Things just didn't stay with me. And as I got older, I seemed to worry about more things than that. But other than that, I really didn't.

Speaker 1 ([06:17](#)):

Everyday life.

Speaker 2 ([06:18](#)):

Everyday life. I just went through everyday life living.

Speaker 1 ([06:21](#)):

So when did they finally integrate the schools?

Speaker 2 ([06:25](#)):

Oh my God, that question you going to have to ask. Maybe Ms. Harper has the answer to that. I honestly don't remember.

Speaker 1 ([06:38](#)):

So when it comes to working in this area, what other jobs did they have available for men? What did most of the men do?

Speaker 2 ([06:54](#)):

Well, my husband was a brick mason. Other than that, I don't know anything they had going on because that's all I've known him to do. He was a brick mason. And if there was any other work, I don't know of it. I don't. He was a brick mason.

Speaker 1 ([07:11](#)):

That's pretty good. Is there anything you'd like to share about growing up in Lithonia?

Speaker 2 ([07:22](#)):

Well, I've had a good life here. I was born and raised here and I've had a good life here. And I love my hometown. I wouldn't trade it for anything. Once I married, I did move to Atlanta for a few years, but then the first herd of a house come available, we hurry up, we bought and we come back home and I

raised my boys. I had three boys, which I raised three boys. I lost my oldest son, but the other two guys are here. And when I moved here, when we first moved here, the baby I came with, I think he was two. And when we drove up to the house, he said, daddy, get my bicycle off this truck. And from that day to this one, they are home. And I love my place. I do. I love here being here and especially my little community that I am so far it's been really was quiet there for me. They got a little shaky there for a few minutes. But most of it, I'm comfortable, not afraid the way I am and sang and I love it.

Speaker 1 ([08:43](#)):

Well, amen. We going to wrap that? That was very good and I appreciate it.

Speaker 2 ([08:48](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([08:48](#)):

It wasn't that bad, was it?

Speaker 2 ([08:49](#)):

Not bad, thank you.

Speaker 1 ([08:51](#)):

Is there anything you want?

Speaker 2 ([08:52](#)):

I surely want to look in there because

Speaker 1 ([08:56](#)):

Have a

Speaker 2 ([08:56](#)):

Seat for me. Okay.

Speaker 1 ([08:57](#)):

I'm going to keep rolling.

Speaker 2 ([08:59](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 1 ([09:00](#)):

And I want you to open this up and if you see something you want to talk about or teachers or students or something.

Speaker 2 ([09:12](#)):

Oh, okay. Mr. CE Flagg, our principal, he was okay. I did pretty good with him. But now Mr. CC Howard is what, my history teacher, third grade. I loved Mr. Howard dearly and he was okay. No, no problem with him on here. See I say Miss, we gray gracious. Let see here. And Mr. Hood was my sixth grade teacher and old B Jackson, that was my first grade teacher. And I went from her with, we kind of, it was like two classes of us. So Ms. Rowland had a class, Ms. Rowland had a class in OBJ. And out of those two classes we kind of end up in one big class. So that's how we got to come to the thing. These pictures here is something to see. Like here, we have Marcia Woods, one of my classmates, which became the mayor, she was one our mayor. And oh my God, just

Speaker 1 ([10:51](#)):

You haven't seen some of those photos

Speaker 2 ([10:54](#)):

Forever in a day. And we lost a lot of lost. I've lost a lot of classmates and they getting smaller and smaller. I don't know. But if I could, because it's been just a few months, I lost a classmate, which was really, really dear to me, what he would call his wife, his ex-wife. Did he call me step wife? He called me his step wife, which I love dearly.

Speaker 1 ([11:36](#)):

Okay, well that's

Speaker 2 ([11:37](#)):

A good.

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Ms. Daugherty was interviewed in March 2024