

**Chapel Hill Public Archive
Pandemic Stories Project
recording with David L. Lyles**

Narrator: David L. Lyles

Date: April 22, 2022

Location: David's home

Interviewer: Klaus Mayr

Klaus Mayr (00:01): We are sitting here today with David Lyles for the Chapel Hill Public Libraries Pandemic Stories Project. It is April 22, 2022. Right now it is... what time is it? It's about 11:00, and we're sitting here in David's home. David, I'm going to start out by asking you just before I have a list of questions here, but before I start asking you those, I want to see if there's anything, when you're thinking about the pandemic, is there anything that you want to start talking about, anything that you want to take this time to do some reflecting on

David L. Lyles (00:55): Well, the pandemic was very dreadful because when we had to be locked down and couldn't be around people that we actually being with, and it made everybody set and think because they had to stop rushing because it stopped people from rushing doing anything because they had to do it slow or stay in their home. And I find out that by it having you locked down, everybody start noticing their neighbors and they start noticing little things around their house that they never had time to check in on, because you know people can build houses and stuff and never find out about all the cricks and crannies. And the COVID (made everybody sit back and take notice. And some folks and then when people start dying out that you knew that was the hurtin' part, and that was the time that was really rough, but it made everybody take notice of what's going on.

Klaus (02:26): Yeah. So when you're thinking about the pandemic, how would you describe the different stages of the last two years as you experienced it?

David (02:38): Depression. Loneliness. And I thank God for the talent of quilting because it helped me work on myself, because I was growed up... when I growed up, we was growed up to believe that Christian people don't get depressed. But now when I come with the age I am and the situations we have been through with the pandemic, it made me know that you can be depressed and you can be hurt or whatever, feel throwed away and stuff like that. So it really put a damper on the parade.

Klaus (03:34): Yeah. Do you feel like there were... so in experiencing the depression and the longing, did those different emotions happen... [*phone rings*] You're welcome to answer that if you need to...

So when you're thinking about those emotions, do you remember them happening in certain different time periods? Is it like when the pandemic started and then are there other major events and major emotions, memories that help you sort of... you know two years is a long time, right? So in your mind, how do you sort of divide that time up?

David (04:35): 'Cause, see, before the pandemic, I was in this play, and we were just beginning to start branching out to do it in other places and stuff like that. And then when the pandemic comes, it kept me from doing that. It cut me off from the people that I really adored when I was in the play. And then the stages of that being going and then stopping and slowing down and everything. It was just like... it was just like riding down the road and you puttin'... and you see where you got to stop, and you start slowing down, you start mashing on the brakes on the car to slow down. And that was the friction and then everything that it done to you and stuff because you're going on doing everything you want to do, then all of a sudden you had to put on masks, and then now all of a sudden, they tell you had to just be, don't go out unless you had to, 'cause I even found myself running to the grocery store early in the morning at seven so I wouldn't be around nobody. And all that stuff was just, like I said, mashing on the brakes because you see where you got to stop. And then when you stop there, it's nothing. It's nothing to do. You're wandering around the house and like I said, quilting is what caused me to be sane, because I was going through depression to being away from the people that I like and stuff like that.

Klaus (06:37) : Can you talk more about the quilting?

David (06:39): Oh, man. My quilting is... When I was... let's start a long time ago. I was a child that was allergic to all mosquito bites and all that stuff. 'Cause I had sores. So Mama had me stay in the house, and Mama made clothes. And I used to get Mama clothes, the straps from the clothes and sew 'em together. And I didn't know I was quilting then. And then I kept on, and I found out it was a art to it. Because you know, back in the day, people used quilts for warmth. And now quilts is made for bedspread and beautifying the walls and all those things like that. And then now with the pandemic and everything, I was so glad that I had that talent to fall back on when I can't be with anybody. And then by you being able to sew and stuff, I have seen it at times that I could hear the fabric talking, telling me to put certain colors together. And I went and grabbed that... got out the bed and went and put those colors together and made such beautiful stuff. Just because I was able to relax on my mind, listen to my mind. See, that's what the

pandemic made us do. Take notice what's going on and how it's going on and stuff like that. And like I said, that's what to me it's like, mashing on the brakes on the car when you got to stop. And then sometime, you know, you had to stop fast, sometimes slow. I mean, you know, that's what the pandemic was doing: Slow, high, fast, fast, slow, slow, slow, I can't do this, go, that way, that way. And all around, because the politicians was not wanting to do what the medicals say. So they was fighting against each other. And it caused a friction with the people because they didn't know what to do because it was like bouncing back and forth and stuff like that. And that's what we were doing. We were going back and forth, hopin' and prayin' that we didn't catch the virus and we didn't have it and didn't know and stuff like that. So we went through some things you know with that bouncing around like a ball because they told us that you can't do that and you couldn't go to the restaurant. And if they brought you some food, they come asking you, do you want it left outside or do you want that person to talk to you in-person, you know person-to-person when they delivered the food? And, man, that was kind of rough. That was really rough.

Klaus (10:26): Yeah. Do you need to talk to that guy?

David (10:28): No. That's my neighbor.

Klaus (10:30): Okay great. So, it sounds like quilting was a major thing that you did for fun, but is there anything else that you found to do for fun during the pandemic, or was it mostly just that?

David (10:42): No, just quilting. And I did and I messed around and got over 200 tops. Quilting tops.

Klaus (10:54): What are tops?

David (10:58): The tops is when you put all your cloths together to make a beautiful thing. And then once you do that, you have to have your batting, that's the second layer, and then the lining, and all together, you put it together and then you take your hands and put a design with a needle. And all the time that you're putting all three layers together and stuff like that. So that caused me to do that, and that's what kept me alive.

Klaus (11:38): Yeah. Can you describe the first moments when you became aware of the pandemic?

David (11:43): Oooooowweeee. How I really knew that it was truthful and real is when people I knew got sick and died. And that was a blow to your heart to know that they was in the hospital and on all those breathing machines and stuff because their body was shutting down and stuff like that. That hurt. And that just like, you, we used to death, but when the death is unnecessary, I feel like unnecessary death, it hurts you worser. Because... and then also when you start getting older, when you start losing people, it's just like losing some life and stuff like that. So that's what the shock that it gave. It gave such a shock to you and stuff to know that people that you knew that was in the hospital dying and you couldn't go and see 'em and you couldn't be around them because we believe in being with somebody and comfort that person when they passin'. And you couldn't do it. You couldn't do it. You couldn't get near 'em and stuff like that. And if you did go to the hospital, if they did let you in, it was a big glass door between you and them. It was nothing personal. And that was a big shock and a big hurt. When the first of the pandemic really started.

Klaus (13:33): Is there anyone that you went to visit in the hospital?

David (13:36): Well, during that time, my brother got sick and they brought him here to Chapel Hill, and seein', 'cause one half of the intensive care, one half of that floor was for the virus. And it was so sad time that they had a line on the floor and time they got ready to go across that line, they had to put on all this stuff before they go in the rooms and stuff. And it just like, and it was just like, it was hard. It was hard to see that. That hurt. And it was nothing to be in there and watch a box go... they roll a box away, which was a body in it. You know. They used to could... the people were dying so that they couldn't even hide it no more when they was takin' bodies out and you're sitting there and you're seein' all this stuff goin' on, there's nothing you can do about it.

Klaus (15:04): How does it make you feel to look back at things like pictures or... I don't know if you do any journaling or anything like that, anything that... any items from earlier in the pandemic, how does it make you feel to look at stuff like that?

David (15:25): Well, I try not to, number one, because when during that time it was such a shock to my system and me, I try not to look back. 'Cause looking back, it's not good because had to put you right back at that moment that she was depressed. And what will cause it that time? And no, I don't look back like that. I go forward now and kind of put it back in the back of my mind and stuff like that because like I said, when you start getting older, people that die and losing them, it just feels like something you took away. Yeah. And stuff like that. So it can be really bad. Yeah. Well, with that said, if there are any questions, any of the other questions moving forward

that you don't want to answer because you just don't want to think about it, then feel free to just say pass. The next question is what will you remember most vividly from the past two years? The what what will you remember most vividly from the past two years? Well, the feel that life and death because it also made that plain too. It's really something else. Because like I said, when you get older, you start noticing things about death, how it takes away from things, take your loved ones away. No, you're not. This is what's on your mind. So it's bad. How have you stayed in touch with loved ones over the course of the oh. Man, I love what's up app. You can look at the person you're talking to. And that was just like drinking a good cup of coffee. I love drinking coffee. And Lord and mercy. When my brother helped me get on WhatsApp app? Oh, man, I could look at people and talk to people and stuff. It was better because anyway, I'm a loner. Anyway, I'm a loner. But then, man, what's up at was all right with the old boy. Did your interpersonal relationships change at all during the pandemic? And if they did, how. Well, really, I'm a loner. And then the quilting circle used to give me something to do to get me out of the house and share the creation of quilting with others. And when it took that away, it was just like it didn't have nowhere to go. It's just like somebody would take candy for my child. And the child was so hurt because it's no longer having that tasty item anymore. And that really put a damp on me because I fell in love with the people that's in my class. I love the gossip and the talking of the quilting. And when I couldn't go to the quilting class, that was really another thing. And then my play folks that I was in the play with, I couldn't see them. And we tried to do it virtual. They'll do little skits of the play that way. And it just wasn't right. It didn't feel right. It was just like good, because on virtual, we was doing the exercises and stuff that we usually do when we're doing for the play. And when they took that from me, that was sad. And then I was made godfather to this child. And child is growing up and did grow without me being close to one. And that didn't feel good either. It just took too much from me and it didn't feel good because we're selfish people. Humans are very selfish. We don't want to give up nothing. If anything, we want a gang. We want to do and go and get it done and stuff. And when you can't do that, wow. I can imagine what a person go through when they lose legs and arms where they used to be able to go and do things that they used to do and walking in, because all those things that the pandemic took from us, it was major because we're not used to this. We're not used to setting steel. I'm not used trying to find something to feel that time and stuff like that and feel the time that you have with people and stuff. Funny. It wasn't fun at all. Yeah. Have you been able to see the child that you're godfathered to since? Yeah. Distance. Okay. Because now I went and took the full shot. I'd be more protective and stuff like that. And now this child that I adore now, he almost three years old. You can call names. It's up to you. Hudson and Maggie little boy. I didn't know you were I miss godfather because I never forget during that time Maggie was about to decide on what she was going to do. And I never forget that. I went in my mind, my mind told me to take a PC and give it to her and tell her the planet and watch her life change. And when

they did that, she went on. And then I was able to coach about some personal things about if she did it, how life was going to be better for because she was able to because non profit things would take all of life at you. If you be faithful to it, it'll take all life at you. So I gave her the PN and told her to plan it by faith and watch it grow. And now her and the husband is well and the child is well. They got regular struggles like people, but yet still they find it more time for each other. And then with the pandemic, we couldn't be around them. We couldn't be around these people that we fell in love with. Because if you live by yourself and then you would think living by yourself is rough, but when they say not you can't do anymore, it's just words. It make you feel like taking a gun to shoot your brains out because I can't give up no more. That's what we are. I can't do this. And humans, we take a lot of stuff for granted. A lot of stuff being around people because people get on your nerves sometimes and you want to get away from them. But when you got to stay away from them, it's like it's another ball game. It's another ball game. Oh, man. Because the very ones that really kind of get on your nerves after you be with them a long time, you couldn't be with them. Oh, boy. You enjoy being around them now because it doesn't thin out a little bit. And you can be around people, boy. So it caused you to really take notice. And that's what we did. We take notice. When the pandemic came and the students and the community, they found out that each other was alive because they got a chance to take notice of the things that they were doing. When they had more freedom, they found out that those things was kind of harsh to the neighbors and they got a chance to think about that. It was a reality check. It was a reality check because they found out that they couldn't be as free as it was and stuff, and they learned from it. Yeah. So students went through something, too. Yeah. Has your physical health benefits affected by this pandemic? Wow. I don't know if it bothered that part. The only thing that was kind of rough was the depression that went through and stuff like that. But other than that. Yeah. I'm doing this with nothing. Yeah. Do you share more about the emotional and mental stuff that you went through? We do. What now? Do you want to share more about the emotional stuff that you went through? Well, like I said, I'm a loner. But then when I had that, it didn't feel good at all because I'm a people person. I'm a type of person that I'd rather see you happy and me sad. When it comes down to it, I can't stand to see somebody activated or to depress or something, because I think that I should go in my mind and find a way to tell them something, to lift them up and stuff like that. So that was rough. Not being able to comfort a lot of people that I usually comfort with, I give them a little word advice to make them feel better. I couldn't give them no antidotes. Yeah. And that was hard for me because I love people. I love people more than life and stuff like that. I do. I love people more than life because I want everybody to live and live and find more ways of living, because a lot of people walking around dead, they walk around dead. They just almost gave up, throw in the towel because they can't take anything and see that's what we, as humans, supposed to do. We supposed to be the martyr between the bricks to make the bricks more stronger, to make the house stand more

stronger and taller. That's what we are supposed to do for each other. And then when we couldn't do it, it was just like a child learning how to walk. Now we're scared. We're scared, actually, to go too far because we don't know any second. They might tell us that you got to do something else. You got to turn it around. You can't do that no more. So I could imagine what a child feels like that made us feel again. When you get ready to react, you can't do that and stuff like that. Yeah. That causes that kind of depression and stuff. How do you think living in Chapel Hill shaped your experience of the pandemic? Oh, man. Chapel Hill. I always wanted to live in Chapel Hill. And then when I got sick in here and had to come to the hospital here, oh, man, I'm glad I was here through the whole thing, because when you live in a smaller town, it would have been worse than this. It would have been bad. Boy can add on to your life. It's got faults now. It's got some faults. We fighting for some stuff the home for homeless and the 30% AMI. We're fighting to change that so everybody can work here and live here at the same time and stuff like that. Yeah. That's the best way I can describe that. Yeah. That's what I like. How is the pandemic affected relationship with your faith and spirituality made it stronger because I had to rely on that to make it through today. Like I said, living by yourself is really interesting. And if you don't know how to pray, if you don't know how to meditate, you can't make it. And you wouldn't have made it through it because it's some people that did some harsh stuff and did the President didn't help it during that time because he said you could swallow bleach. And we all know you swallow some bleach, you're going to be six foot under. Yeah, absolutely. Is there anything that you wish you had done differently earlier in the pandemic? No, I did just what I was told to do. And I find being obedience is better than sacrificing because I would have sacrificed my life if I wouldn't have locked down, close the doors and stuff like that. And then a whole lot of times, boy, I don't know how many cans of lights all I went through spraying down because you didn't know what you might come in contact when you went to the grocery store or anything. And thank God my medicines and stuff belived at the door because I didn't have to go out for that. Oh, man. What do you wish other people or is there anything that you wish other people had done differently earlier in the pandemic? Oh, man. I try not to point fingers, but I believe if everybody would have touched the vaccine, everybody would amass and do what they were supposed to do. I think we would have been so far beyond this pandemic show, make a soft tail. Soft tail was the line of the coffin because they was Hoy heading and they were going to not give up and they not going to do this and not going to do that. And they six foot over now. They hurt the people that love them. Yeah. What do you hope that future generations will remember about Kobet? Wow. It is real. 100% real. And stop listening to everything and everybody and go straight to the source to know your answer, because we live and breathe medical and when somebody calls us to be depressed and stuff like that also. But I just wish and I wish they would take a couple of pages out of this pandemic and apply it to life and find out that they ain't number one. They're not number one. And they start considering that it's other

people around, because a lot of those people that wouldn't wear masks and stuff didn't know that he was making that thing stronger, because there's my knowledge of medical that each time that you get around some kind of bug and you're not hammering that bug. That bug gets stronger and stronger and you can have it have things and don't know it and giving it to everybody. They can't be baked and served and everybody get it if you ain't careful, because that's where us humans is. We go right in and stuff like that. And I hope and pray that the generations after this, after us would know you got to take notice of your surroundings, because, you know, a whole lot of times we always going straight and we not look into the size. And that's why a lot of times we get in trouble in accidents, because we're not looking everywhere. We're not taking notice of everything around us. We just go head on in it and see. Sometimes we can be in a rush that time. And I'm hoping future generations will slow down and smell the coffee, smell the flowers, smell everything. Yeah. That's what I hope they do. Yeah. What do you hope that we keep from the pandemic. The love that we found about each other? I hope we keep that and stuff. Let's just learn how to love and lift up higher everything and everybody, because that's what we pose. We are our brother sister keeper. Yeah. We are our brother sister keeper. Yes, sir. And how you treat yourself and how you don't care. You're affecting somebody in the crowd, because that's just like catching a cold. If you don't take time to stay home and kill that cold, you're going to give it to everybody else. And that's what I hope we take notice of things and know that this stuff is happening. And if we do what we can do and quit pointing the fingers at somebody else, because Mama always said, you point a finger at somebody else, you got three pointed back at you. And I hope and pray that people start thinking about that, because we got to think about other folks, too. Yeah. Because it's better for me and everybody to grab your neighbor's hands and help them March and check and speak to them and see how they're doing, because sometimes clouds a smile is worth a million Bucks to a person that suffered in their spirit feeling like an underdog and stuff like that. But see, we as humans is bad about beating that person down to make us bigger. And I hope the new generation would know that that's not going to work. And what I like about the new generation already know that it's no such as white, black, any, and nobody, everybody's hand in hand. You watch these students drive down, frankly, and watch these students with the mixed couples of holding hands and stuff like that. And it's going to be no place for a person to think prejudice after a while, because we're all the same. And I love to see the new generation going to be better than what we are and stuff like that. Well, I got one more question for you before we wrap up. Is there any entertainment of any kind of books or TV or movies, music, anything like that that was really important to you during the last two years? Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, I mean, all them things, I didn't know that they could bring me pleasure until I had to take notice of them because, man, I can watch YouTube and they're doing a quilt. They showing me an idea to take the idea because when I was taught to sew, I was taught to bus seams, iron it and bus seams open. And I'm finding out if

you leave them seams together and iron them down together, it makes the quilt stronger and stuff like that. And that taught me also to tell people that if we do that together, we can be stronger and better. So you do and all those things, seeing things and everything gave me ideas of doing stuff different than I used to do. And I learned something. I really learned there's no reason for nobody to go without knowing things. And then, you know, another thing that the family did, it taught people how to Cook because it couldn't go out. Something had to stay here to Cook. So a lot of people cooked. A lot of babies were married, too. But like I said, YouTube and all that stuff was just, oh, man, it was a help. And thank God it was here because it taught us that we can watch the Church service that we thought we had to set up in the Church, man, the pandemic taught us that we can watch it virtual and get the same thing. The same thing when you're being programmed, you was programmed to go and setting up yours and listen to the preacher. And then when you couldn't get there, a lot of us couldn't take that. But we learned that we can watch it on YouTube, too. You was able to download those apps and stuff and watch your Church service and Facebook. A lot of people talk against Facebook, but Facebook was all right with me, too, because it's got messing up. You can see the person you're talking to there, too. And see, it made me take notice of all those things. And I always find me not being able to read as well as others. I always listen to novels, books. I always listen to them because you can even get them on tape. There's no reason for nobody to miss out on nothing. I know. I love listening to audio books. And I like them because you can listen to them while you're sewing or doing any little craft that you want to do and stuff. That's my favorite date. Yeah. Did you listen to any are there any audio books that you. Well, I got a chance to listen to Obama's book. What's that life. Whatever. I can't remember the name of it. But anyway, I was able to listen to that. That's a big book. Yeah, I listened to that. He narrates it, right? Yes, sir. And it makes it more interesting. Yeah. And stuff like that, because I always did listen to them. But it made me do more and stuff because, like I said, I don't read that well. And that was the way that I learned a lot of things, because without knowledge, you're dead. And the more knowledge you get and learn. Sit still and listen and learn. You can make it in this world. You can be rich and don't have a lot of money because life itself is rich. It's a thing because you can wake up in the morning, man, and say, oh, nobody had to turn me over this morning. Nobody had to dress me. Nobody had to feed me. I was able to do it myself. So that's what made it great life, because you can go out here and look at the trees, budness. The pollinate flying to glove and see mass help with that. I didn't even think about that. Yeah. And they were saying that on YouTube when I was watching it and stuff when I watch it, they said the flu was so far down doing the pandemic because you had a mass on and people sneezed or something, you had the mask on and they helped it taught us that way, too. If you have allergies during the pollen season, you put that mask on and where it may be glycine, you don't have nowhere to worry about, because even my brothers and stuff, they don't suffer much with those maths. And we still wear maths out

about stuff like that. It's cool, man. That is cool. They're not all bad. Swear to life, my friend. Well, is there anything else that you want to share or any questions you wish I had asked you before we wrap up? No, I talk too much anyway, because I tell people because I live by myself. And when I get some company, I just go overboard. Well, that's what this was for. I was for you to talk, so I appreciate that bathroom. I appreciate you being willing to share. No, that was a wonderful day. Like I said, I love people. I love people. Yeah, well, I'm going to turn off the recorder now. Unless there's anything else that was remaining for you. Only thing I want and believe in, live and let live. Find a reason to live even more and not die. It's no reason for us to die. Even when we draw our last breath. It's after this, so there's no reason to die. Live and take your brother's sister by the hand and carry them on with you. Don't leave nobody behind, because I tell people now where you used to walk behind somebody. If you walk beside them, you get a chance to notice things much better. Because when you're walking down the street and you're walking together and you're going straight nobody going to miss out of a car or something coming down the road both of you going to see at the same time and that's why we need to grab our brothers and sisters by the hand and I'm not talking about your born brother sister. I'm talking about the people in the world get their hand and pull them on up there anything they weekend grab their hands and pull them up there. Don't point fingers no more and talk about them. That's a waste of time to point fingers and talk about them pull them up there have them to come up to that level that you are and so they can see things much better. Don't walk behind walk beside because I don't believe in walking in front of nobody and I don't believe in walking behind nobody. I want to walk beside you and just enjoy everything the way it is because you might be walking aside each other. There's a Bloom over there and that person going to see that pretty Bloom that's blooming over there. Everything because I was walking with a friend one day and the Irish is blooming the purple Irish they've been blooming and we were walking side by side we got chance to see it at the same time. That beautiful flower that's special because there was no reason for nobody to say I missed that. You were right beside them and you saw at the same time. That's why I want people to do live let live and pull your brother up to spectators to you instead of talking about him and things will be better in this world. Well, thank you, David. Thank you so much for that.

Klaus Mayr

00:07): We are sitting here today with David Lyles for the Chapel Hill Public Libraries Pandemic Stories Project. It is April 22, 2022. Right now it is... what time is it? It's about 11:00, and we're sitting here in David's home. David, I'm going to start out by asking you just before I have a list of questions here, but before I start asking you those, I want to see if there's anything, when you're thinking about the pandemic, is there anything that you want to start talking about, anything that you want to take this time to do some reflecting on

David L. Lyles 00:57): Well, the pandemic was very dreadful because when we had to be locked down and couldn't be around people that we actually being with, and it made everybody set and think because they had to stop rushing because it stopped people from rushing doing anything because they had to do it slow or stay in their home. And I find out that by it having you locked down, everybody start noticing their neighbors and they start noticing little things around their house that they never had time to check in on, because you know people can build houses and stuff and never find out about all the cricks anda crannies. And the COVID (made everybody sit back and take notice. And some folks and then when people start dying out that you knew that was the hurtin' part, and that was the time that was really rough, but it made everybody take notice of what's going on.

Klaus (02:26): Yeah. So when you're thinking about the pandemic, how would you describe the different stages of the last two years as you experienced it?

David (02:38): Depression. Loneliness. And I thank God for the talent of quilting because it helped me work on myself, because I was growed up... when I growed up, we was growed up to believe that Christian people don't get depressed. But now when I come with the age I am and the situations we have been through with the pandemic, it made me know that you can be depressed and you can be hurt or whatever, feel throwed away and stuff like that. So it really put a damper on the parade.

Klaus (03:34): Yeah. Do you feel like there were... so in experiencing the depression and the longing, did those different emotions happen... [*phone rings*] You're welcome to answer that if you need to...

So when you're thinking about those emotions, do you remember them happening in certain different time periods? Is it like when the pandemic started and then are there other major events and major emotions, memories that help you sort of... you know two years is a long time, right? So in your mind, how do you sort of divide that time up?

David (04:35): 'Cause, see, before the pandemic, I was in this play, and we were just beginning to start branching out to do it in other places and stuff like that. And then when the pandemic comes, it kept me from doing that. It cut me off from the people that I really adored when I was in the play. And then the stages of that being going and then stopping and slowing down and everything. It was just like... it was just like riding down the road and you puttin'... and you see where you got to stop, and you start slowing down, you start mashing on the brakes on the car

to slow down. And that was the friction and then everything that it done to you and stuff because you're going on doing everything you want to do, then all of a sudden you had to put on masks, and then now all of a sudden, they tell you had to just be, don't go out unless you had to, 'cause I even found myself running to the grocery store early in the morning at seven so I wouldn't be around nobody. And all that stuff was just, like I said, mashing on the brakes because you see where you got to stop. And then when you stop there, it's nothing. It's nothing to do. You're wandering around the house and like I said, quilting is what caused me to be sane, because I was going through depression to being away from the people that I like and stuff like that.

Klaus (06:37) : Can you talk more about the quilting?

David (06:39): Oh, man. My quilting is... When I was... let's start a long time ago. I was a child that was allergic to all mosquito bites and all that stuff. 'Cause I had sores. So Mama had me stay in the house, and Mama made clothes. And I used to get Mama clothes, the straps from the clothes and sew 'em together. And I didn't know I was quilting then. And then I kept on, and I found out it was a art to it. Because you know, back in the day, people used quilts for warmth. And now quilts is made for bedspread and beautifying the walls and all those things like that. And then now with the pandemic and everything, I was so glad that I had that talent to fall back on when I can't be with anybody. And then by you being able to sew and stuff, I have seen it at times that I could hear the fabric talking, telling me to put certain colors together. And I went and grabbed that... got out the bed and went and put those colors together and made such beautiful stuff. Just because I was able to relax on my mind, listen to my mind. See, that's what the pandemic made us do. Take notice what's going on and how it's going on and stuff like that. And like I said, that's what to me it's like, mashing on the brakes on the car when you got to stop. And then sometime, you know, you had to stop fast, sometimes slow. I mean, you know, that's what the pandemic was doing: Slow, high, fast, fast, slow, slow, slow, I can't do this, go, that way, that way. And all around, because the politicianers was not wanting to do what the medicals say. So they was fighting against each other. And it caused a friction with the people because they didn't know what to do because it was like bouncing back and forth and stuff like that. And that's what we were doing. We were going back and forth, hopin' and prayin' that we didn't catch the virus and we didn't have it and didn't know and stuff like that. So we went through some things you know with that bouncing around like a ball because they told us that you can't do that and you couldn't go to the restaurant. And if they brought you some food, they come asking you, do you want it left outside or do you want that person to talk to you in-person, you know person-to-person when they delivered the food? And, man, that was kind of rough. That was really rough.

Klaus (10:26): Yeah. Do you need to talk to that guy?

David (10:28): No. That's my neighbor.

Klaus (10:30): Okay great. So, it sounds like quilting was a major thing that you did for fun, but is there anything else that you found to do for fun during the pandemic, or was it mostly just that?

David (10:42): No, just quilting. And I did and I messed around and got over 200 tops. Quilting tops.

Klaus (10:54): What are tops?

David (10:58): The tops is when you put all your cloths together to make a beautiful thing. And then once you do that, you have to have your batting, that's the second layer, and then the lining, and all together, you put it together and then you take your hands and put a design with a needle. And all the time that you're putting all three layers together and stuff like that. So that caused me to do that, and that's what kept me alive.

Klaus (11:38): Yeah. Can you describe the first moments when you became aware of the pandemic?

David (11:43): Oooooowweeee. How I really knew that it was truthful and real is when people I knew got sick and died. And that was a blow to your heart to know that they was in the hospital and on all those breathing machines and stuff because their body was shutting down and stuff like that. That hurt. And that just like, you, we used to death, but when the death is unnecessary, I feel like unnecessary death, it hurts you worser. Because... and then also when you start getting older, when you start losing people, it's just like losing some life and stuff like that. So that's what the shock that it gave. It gave such a shock to you and stuff to know that people that you knew that was in the hospital dying and you couldn't go and see 'em and you couldn't be around them because we believe in being with somebody and comfort that person when they passin'. And you couldn't do it. You couldn't do it. You couldn't get near 'em and stuff like that. And if you did go to the hospital, if they did let you in, it was a big glass door between you and them. It was nothing personal. And that was a big shock and a big hurt. When the first of the pandemic really started.

Klaus (13:33): Is there anyone that you went to visit in the hospital?

David (13:36): Well, during that time, my brother got sick and they brought him here to Chapel Hill, and seein', 'cause one half of the intensive care, one half of that floor was for the virus. And it was so sad time that they had a line on the floor and time they got ready to go across that line, they had to put on all this stuff before they go in the rooms and stuff. And it just like, and it was just like, it was hard. It was hard to see that. That hurt. And it was nothing to be in there and watch a box go... they roll a box away, which was a body in it. You know. They used to could... the people were dying so that they couldn't even hide it no more when they was takin' bodies out and you're sitting there and you're seein' all this stuff goin' on, there's nothing you can do about it.

Klaus (15:04): How does it make you feel to look back at things like pictures or... I don't know if you do any journaling or anything like that, anything that... any items from earlier in the pandemic, how does it make you feel to look at stuff like that?

David (15:25): Well, I try not to, number one, because when during that time it was such a shock to my system and me, I try not to look back. 'Cause looking back, it's not good because it'll put you right back at that moment that you was depressed, and what will cause it that time and... no, no. I don't look back like that now. I go forward now and kind of put it at back in the back of my mind and stuff like that, because like I said, when you start getting older, people that die and losing them, it just feels like some part of you took away. And stuff like that. So it can be really bad.

Klaus (16:25): Well, with that said, if there are any questions, any of the other questions moving forward that you don't want to answer because you just don't want to think about it, then feel free to just say pass.

David (16:35): Let's talk! Let's talk.

Klaus (16:37): The next question is what will you remember most vividly from the past two years?

David (16:40): The what?

Klaus (16:41): What will you remember most vividly from the past two years?

David (16:43): Well, the feel that life and death is real. 'Cause it also made that plain too. 'Cause... God knows... it's really something else. 'Cause like I said, when you get older, you start noticing things about death, how it takes away from things, take your loved ones away. I'm... I'm talkin' in circles.

Klaus (17:23): No you're not. This is what's on your mind.

David (17:27): So it was... it's bad.

Klaus (17:36): How have you stayed in touch with loved ones over the course of the pandemic?

David (17:37): Oh, man, I love... What's Up App. 'Cause What's Up App, you can look at the person you're talking to. And that was just like drinking a good cup of coffee. I love drinking coffee. And Lord have mercy, when my brother helped me get on Whats Up App? Oh, man, I could look at people and talk to people and stuff. It was better. It was better. 'Cause anyway, I'm a loner. Anyway, I'm a loner. But then, man, What's Up App was all right with the old boy. I love What's Up App.

Klaus (18:26): Did your interpersonal relationships change at all during the pandemic? And if they did, how?

D18:39): Well, really, I'm a loner. And then the quilting circle used to give me something to do to get me out of the house and share the creation of quilting with others. And when it took that away, it was just like it didn't have nowhere to go. It's just like, like somebody would take candy from a child. And the child was so hurt because it's no longer having that tasty item anymore. And that's why, and that really put a damper on me because I fell in love with the people that's in my class. I love the gossip and the talking of the quilting. And when I couldn't go to the quilting class, that... that was really another thing. And then my... then my play folks that I was in the play with, I couldn't see them. And we tried to do it virtual. They'll do little skits of the play that way. And it just was not right. It didn't feel right. It was just like goo... might as well not do this. 'Cause we was... on virtual, we was doing the exercises and stuff that we usually do when we, when we in the play, doin' for the play. And when it took that from me, that was sad. That was sad. And then I was made godfather to this child. And child is growing up and did grow without me being close to 'em. And that didn't feel good either. It just took too much from me and it didn't feel good. 'Cause we selfish people. Humans are very selfish. We don't want to give up nothin'. If anything, we want a gain. We want to do and go and get it done and stuff. And when you can't do that... wow. I can imagine what a person go through when they lose legs and arms where

they used to be able to go and do things that they used to do and walkin' in. Walkin'... you know, 'cause all those things that the pandemic took from us, it was major 'cause we not used to this. We not used to setting still. I'm not used tryin' to find something to fill that time and stuff like that, and fill the time that you have with people and stuff. It wasn't funny. It wasn't fun at all.

Klaus (22:13): Yeah. Have you been able to see the child that you're a godfather to since?

David (22:17): Yeah, at distance.

Klaus (22:18): Okay.

David (22:19): 'Cause now, I done went and took the full shot. I got the full shot. So I'd be more protective and stuff like that. And now, and now this child that I, that I adore, now, he almost three years old. You can call names?

Klaus (22:46): It's up to you.

David (22:51): Hudson and Maggie, they little boy.

Klaus (22:55): I didn't know you were his godfather.

David (22:58): I'm his because... I never forget during that time Maggie was about to decide on what she was gonna do. And I never forget that I went in, my mind told me, my mind told me to take a pea seed and give it to her and tell her to plant it and watch her life change. And when they did that, she went on, and then I was able to coach her 'bout some personal things about if she did it, how life was going to be better for her because she was able to, 'cause you know, non-profit things would take all of life out you. If you be faithful to it, it'll take all life out you. So I gave her the pea and told her to, to plant it by faith and watch it grow. And now her and her husband is well and the child is well and they got regular struggles like people, but yet still they, they findin' more time for each other. And then with the pandemic, we couldn't be around 'em. We couldn't be around these people that we fell in love with. 'Cause if you live by yourself and then you would think living by yourself is rough, but when they say not you can't do anymore... woah! You make you feel like... now this just words... It make you feel like taking a gun to shoot your brains out because I can't give up no more! You know? I, I, I, I, I, I. That's what we are. We I, I, I, I. I can't do this. And I, I, I, I don't no, no, no, no, no. Shew. Humans is, we take a lot of stuff for granted. A lot of stuff. Bein' around people, because people get on your nerves sometimes and you want to get away from 'em. But when you got to stay away from them, it's

like, it's another ball game. It's another ball game. Oh, man. 'Cause the very ones that really kind of get on your nerves after you be with them a long time, you couldn't be with 'em. Oh, boy. You enjoy bein' around 'em now because it done thin out a little bit and you can be around people more. So it caused you to really take notice. And that's what we did. We took notice when the pandemic came. And the students and the community, they found out that each other was alive, and the things, 'cause they got a chance to take notice of the things that they were doing. When they had more freedom, they found out that those things was kind of harsh to the neighbors and they got a chance to think about that. It was a reality check. It was a reality check because they found out that they couldn't be as free as they was and stuff, and they learned from it. So students went through something, too.

Klaus (27:10): In what ways has your physical health been affected by the pandemic?

David (27:16): Wow. I don't know if it bothered that part. Only thing that was kind of rough was the depression that went through and stuff like that. But other than that. It didn't mess with nothin'.

Klaus (27:44): Do you care to share more about the emotional and mental stuff that you went through?

David (27:50): Do what now?

Klaus (27:52): Do you want to share more about the emotional stuff that you went through?

David (27:59): Well, like I said, I'm a loner. But then when I had to be extra lonely, it didn't feel good, it didn't feel good at all because I'm a people person. I'm a type of person that I'd rather see you happy and me sad. When it come down to it, I can't stand to see somebody aggravated or to depress or something, 'cause I think that I should go in my mind and find a way to tell them something, to, to lift them up and stuff like that. So. So that was rough. Not being able to comfort a lot of people that I usually comfort with, I give them a little word advice to make 'em feel better. I couldn't give 'em no antidotes. And that was hard for me because I love my, I love people. I love people. I love people more than life and stuff like that. I do. I love people more than life 'cause I want everybody to live and live and find more ways of living, because a lot of people walkin' around dead, they walk around dead. They just done, almost done gave up, throw in the towel because they can't take anything. And see, that's what we, we as humans supposed to do. We supposed to be the mortar between the bricks to make the bricks more stronger, to make the house stand more stronger and taller. That's what we are supposed to do for each

other. And then when we couldn't do it, it was just like a child learning how to walk. Now we're a lil scared. We're scared, actually, to go too far because we don't know, any second, they might tell us that you got to do somethin' else. You got to turn it around. You can't do that no more. So I could imagine what a child feels like that made us feel again. When you get ready to react, you can't do that! And stuff like that. That causes that kind of depression and stuff.

Klaus (31:11): How do you think living in Chapel Hill shaped your experience of the pandemic?

David (31:20): Oh, man. Chapel Hill. I always wanted to live in Chapel Hill. And then when I got sick and had to come to the hospital here, oh, man, Chapel Hill... I'm glad I was here through the whole thing, because when you live in a smaller town, talkin' 'bout, it would have been worser than this. It would have been bad. Boy. Least Chapel Hill can add on to your life. It's got faults, now. It's got some faults. We fighting for some stuff, home for homelessness and 30% AMI. We're fighting to change that so everybody can work here and live here at the same time and stuff like that. That's the best way I can describe that. 'Cause Chapel Hill is alright for me. I like it.

Klaus (32:51): How has the pandemic affected relationship with your faith and spirituality?

David (32:55): Made it stronger. 'Cause I had to rely on that to make it through today. 'Cause, like I said, living by yourself is really interesting. And if you don't know how to pray, if you don't know how to meditate, you can't make it. And you wouldn't have made it through it because it's some people that did some harsh stuff and then the President didn't help it during that time because he said you could swallow bleach. And we all know you swallow some bleach, you goin' to be six foot under. It's interesting.

Klaus (33:59): Yeah absolutely. Is there anything that you wish you had done differently earlier in the pandemic?

David (34:05): No, I did just what I was told to do. And I find bein' obedient is better than sacrificin', 'cause I would have sacrificed my life if I wouldn't have locked down, closed the doors and stuff like that. And then a whole lot of times I... boy, I don't know how many cans of Lysol I went through spraying down because you didn't know what you might come in contact when you went to the grocery store or anything. And thank God my medicines and stuff be delivered at the door 'cause I didn't have to go out for that. Oh, man.

Klaus (35:00): What do you wish other people... or is there anything that you wish other people had done differently earlier in the pandemic?

David (35:07): Oh, man. I try not to point fingers, but I believe if everybody would have took the vaccine, everybody wore the masks and do what they were supposed to do, I think we would have been so far beyond this pandemic, 'cause hard head sure make a soft tail. Soft tail was the line of the coffin because they was hard headed and they were gonna to not give up and they not gonna do this and not gonna do that. And they six foot over now. They hurt the people that love them.

Klaus (36:01): What do you hope that future generations will remember about COVID?

David (36:10): Wow. What I hope they would? Mmm. It is real. 100% real. And stop listening to everything and everybody and go straight to the source to know your answer. Because medical... we live, we live and breathe medical and when somebody's mistampen with it, it cause us to be depressed and stuff like that also. But I just wish and I wish they would take a couple of pages out of this pandemic and apply it to life and find out that they ain't number one. They're not number one. And they'll start considering that it's other people around, because a lot of those people that wouldn't wear masks and stuff didn't know that you was makin' that thing stronger, 'cause as my knowledge of medical, that each time that you get around some kind of bug and you're not hammerin' that bug, that bug gets stronger and stronger and stronger. And you can have it, have things and don't know it and givin' it to everybody. Everybody get a piece of that cake. They cake could be baked and served and everybody get it if you ain't careful, because that's the way us humans is. We, we go right in and stuff like that. And I hope and pray that the generations after this, after us would know you got to take notice of your surroundings, because, you know, a whole lot of times we always going straight and we not lookin' to the sides. And that's why a lot of times we get in trouble in accidents, because we not lookin' everywhere. We not taking notice of everything around us. We just go head on in it. And see sometimes we can be in a rush that bad. And I'm hopin' future generations will slow down and smell the coffee, smell the flowers, smell everything. That's what I hope they do.

Klaus (39:22): What do you hope that we keep from the pandemic?

David (39:28): The... the love that we found about each other. I hope we keep that and stuff. And let's just learn how to love and lift up higher everything and everybody, because that's what we supposed... we are our brother-sister keeper. We are our brother-sister keeper. Yes, sir. And how you treat yourself and how you don't care. You're affecting somebody in the crowd,

because, 'cause that's just like catchin' a cold. If you don't take time to stay home and kill that cold, you're goin' to give it to everybody else. And that's what I hope we take notice of things and know that this stuff is happening. And if we do what we can do and quit pointin' the fingers at somebody else, because Mama always said, "You point a finger at somebody else, you got three pointed back at you." And I hope and pray that people start thinking about that, 'cause we got to think about other folks, too. 'Cause it's better for me and everybody to grab your neighbor's hand and help them march and check... and speak to 'em and see how they doin', 'cause sometimes Klaus, a smile is worth a million bucks to a person that sufferin' in they spirit feelin' like an underdog and stuff like that. But see, we as humans is bad about beatin' that person down to make us bigger. And I hope the new generation would know that that's not gonna work. And what I like about the new generation already know that it's no such as white, Black, Indian or nobody, everybody's hand in hand. You watch these students, drive down Franklin and watch these students with the mixed couples and stuff holdin' hands and stuff like that. And it's gon' be no place for a person to think prejudice after a while, 'cause we're all the same. 'Cause we all the same. And I love to see the new generation gonna be better than what we are and stuff like that.

Klaus (42:44): Well, I got one more question for you before we wrap up. Is there any like entertainment of any kind, like books or TV or movies, music, anything like that that... that you feel... that was really important to you during the last two years?

David (43:07): YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, I mean, all them things, I didn't know that they could bring me pleasure until I had to take notice of 'em. 'Cause, man, I can watch YouTube and they doin' a quilt. They showin' me an idea to take the idea, 'cause when I was taught to sew, I was taught to bust seams, iron it and bust seams open. And I'm findin' out if you leave them seams together and iron 'em down together, it makes the quilt stronger and stuff like that. And that taught me also to tell people that if we do that together, we can be stronger and better. So YouTube and all those things seein' things and everything gave me ideas of doing stuff different than I used to do. And I learned somethin'. I really learned. And there's no reason for nobody to go without knowing things. And then, you know, another thing that the pandemic did, it taught people how to cook 'cause they couldn't go out. So they had to stay in and cook. So a lot of people cooked. Probably a lot of babies were made, too. But like I said, YouTube and all that stuff was just, oh, man, it was a help. It was a help, and thank God it was here because, you know, it taught us that we can watch the church service that we thought we had to set up in the church, man, the pandemic taught us that we can watch it virtual and get the same thing. The same thing. When you've beeb programmed, you was programmed to go and set in them pews and listen to the preacher. And then when you couldn't get there, a lot of us couldn't take that.

But we learned that we could watch it on YouTube, too. You was able to download those apps and stuff and watch your church service. And Facebook was, lot of people talk against Facebook, but Facebook was all right with me, too, because it's got Messenger. You can see the person you're talking to there, too. And see, it made me take notice of all those things. And I always, I always, by me not bein' able to read as well as others, I always listen to novels, books. I always listen to 'em because you can even get 'em on tape now. There's no reason for nobody to miss out on nothing.

Klaus (47:01): I know. I love listening to audio books.

David (47:08): And I like them because you can listen to them while you're sewing or doing any little craft that you want to do and stuff. That's my favorite date.

Klaus (47:18): Yeah. Did you listen to any... are there any audio books that you...

David (47:21): Well, I got a chance to listen to Obama's book. What's that? Life... Whatever. I can't remember the name of it.

Klaus (47:37): Promised Land? Something like that.

David (47:37): Yeah, Promised Land. But anyway, I was able to listen to that. That's a big book. I listened to that.

Klaus (47:45): He narrates it, right?

David (47:46): Yes, sir. And it makes it more interesting. And stuff like that. 'Cause I always did listen to 'em. But it made me do more and stuff. Because, like I said, I don't read that well. And that was a way that I learned a lot of things, because without knowledge, you're dead. And the more knowledge you get and learn, sit still and listen and learn, you can make it, you can make it in this world. You can be rich and don't have a lot of money, 'cause life itself is a rich. It's a thing. Because you can wake up in the morning, man, and say, "oh, nobody had to turn me over this morning. Nobody had to dress me. Nobody had to feed me. I was able to do it myself. So that's what made it great. Life!" Because you can go out here and look at the trees, buddin' and stuff. When the pollen and flyin' too heavy. And see masks help with that.

Klaus (49:17): True. I didn't even think about that.

David (49:19): Yeah. And they were saying that on YouTube when I was watching it and stuff when I watch it, they said the flu was so far down during the pandemic because you had a mask on and people sneezed or something, you had the mask on and they helped. And see, it taught us that way, too. If you have allergies during the pollen season, you put that mask on and wear maybe glasses, you don't have nowhere to worry about, 'cause even my brothers and stuff, they didn't, they don't suffer much with those masks. And we still wear masks out about, stuff like that. It's cool, man.

Klaus (50:21): They're not all bad.

David (50:24): It's the way to life, it's the way to live, my friend.

Klaus (50:27): Well, is there anything else that you want to share or any questions you wish I had asked you before we wrap up?

David (50:37): No, you know I talk too much anyway.

Klaus (50:38): I don't think so.

David (50:42): Because... I tell people because I live by myself. And when I get some company, I just go overboard.

Klaus (50:48): Well, this is, that's what this was for, this was for you to talk, so I appreciate that about you. I appreciate you being willing to share.

David (50:57): I hope I didn't talk you to sleep.

Klaus (50:59): Do I look like I'm asleep?

David (51:00): No, no, I hope I just didn't talk you to sleep.

Klaus (51:05): No, that was wonderful David.

David (51:07): Like I said, I love people. I love people.

Klaus (51:16): Yeah, well, I'm going to turn off the recorder now. Unless there's anything else that was remaining for you.

David (51:21): Only thing I want and believe in: live and let live! Find a reason to live even more and not die. It's no reason for us to die. Even when we draw our last breath. It's an after this, so there's no reason to die. Live and take your brother-sister by the hand and carry them on with you. Don't leave nobody behind. And 'cause I tell people now where you used to walk behind somebody. If you walk beside 'em, you get a chance to notice things much better. Because when you walking down the street and you're walking together and you're going straight, nobody going to miss out of a car or something coming down the road, 'cause both of you going to see at the same time, and that's why we need to grab our brothers-sisters by the hand and I'm not talking about your born brother and sister, I'm talking about the people in the world get their hand and pull 'em on up there anything they weak in, grab their hands and pull them up there. Don't point fingers no more and talk about 'em. That's a waste of time to point fingers and talk about 'em pull them up there have them to come up to that level that you are and so they can see things much better. Don't walk behind, walk beside. 'Cause I don't believe in walkin' in front of nobody and I don't believe in walking behind nobody. I want to walk beside you and just enjoy everything the way it is because you might be walking beside each other and there's a bloom over there! And that person'll see that pretty bloom that's bloomin' over there. Everything! 'Cause I was walking with a friend one day and the iris, you know the iris is bloomin', the purple iris, they've been bloomin' and we were walkin' side by side we got a chance to see it at the same time. That beautiful flower. 'Cause it was no reason for, for nobody to say "I missed that." You were right beside them and you saw at the same time. That's what I want people to do. Live. Let live. And pull your brother up to the expectations to you, instead of talking about 'em and things will be better in this world.

Klaus (54:30): Well, thank you, David. Thank you so much for that.