

Molly Graham: [00:03] This begins an oral history interview with Dr. Quay Dortch on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, for the NOAA Heritage Oral History Project. The interviewer is Molly Graham. It's a remote interview with Dr. Dortch in Washington, DC, and I'm in Scarborough, Maine.

Quay Dortch: [00:23] Yes, that's fine. I agree to recording it.

MG: [00:27] My first question is about the proper pronunciation of your name. Is it Quay or Quay [key]?

QD: [00:33] Quay. That throws people.

MG: [00:36] That's what I thought. But I didn't want to call you by the wrong name. Can you say when and where you were born?

QD: [00:44] Richmond, Virginia, in 1948.

MG: [00:48] You provided me with so much great genealogical information. Can you trace your family history starting on your mother's side?

QD: [00:59] My mother's side of the family was in Pennsylvania. They go back –besides what I sent to you – many, many generations. I'm quite astonished at what we have. My grandfather and his brother maintain family records that go back to the 1700s with a sheet of paper on each person: where they were born, how many kids they had, who they married, where they're buried, and any notable things they did in life. It's quite enlightening. It's not quite so much on my mother's mother's side, but even then, her father did a genealogy, so it goes back quite a ways.

MG: [01:58] Are there ways that this access to such rich family history shapes your identity? My own family history is lost after my grandparents' generation.

QD: [02:11] That's an interesting question. I've never thought about that. Because the family stories don't go back more than one generation beyond – I knew my great-grandparents on my grandmother's side. I have heard their stories, so that takes it back another generation. But there's nothing particularly unique about their stories other than my grandfather, whose father died when he was young. I think they were solidly middle-class. But when his father died, life changed pretty drastically for them. He had lots of stories about being poor. But I think it was poor in a relative sense, poorer than they were, but not truly poor.

MG: [03:14] It sounds like the record-keeping you have dates to around the 1700s. Do you know where the family might have hailed from previously?

QD: [03:25] My grandfather's side was probably German. But the records that we've been in – “we” the family have been in the United States for so long that other than the fact that my great grandfather on my father's side was a printer, and he printed in both German and English. I've assumed that that meant they lived in a German-speaking community, at least that far back. We even have some of the things, for example, birth announcements and christening announcements, that were these very colorful and beautiful things that now get framed. If you can find them,

people collect them. Our family has several where the printer that my grandfather owned was listed on the bottom as the printer. Some of them are in German.

MG: [04:23] Oh, interesting.

QD: [04:24] Yes. The other side of the family is much more mixed on my mother's side, but probably mostly English if I were to guess from names and things. Again, they were here so far back that the immigrant experience is not part of the stories.

MG: [04:46] Did they all tend to settle or stay in that mid-Atlantic southern region?

QD: [04:51] Even just Pennsylvania. Sometimes, there is a little bit of variation around Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, but some in a little town outside of Harrisburg, and occasionally some work in Philadelphia, but not much travel.

MG: [05:11] Do you know if any relatives fought in the Revolutionary or Civil War?

QD: [05:19] My grandmother was A member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, so she must've traced somebody back. I've got this whole book where she's traced it all back. Not being as interested in that as she was, I never spent a lot of time thinking about it. Whether they fought in the Civil War, there's no mention anywhere in – I told you about these records that were kept – there is no mention at all of the Civil War, which I find really interesting given that some of them must have lived through the Civil War. Although it's been a long time since I've been through the records, and I suspect with the sensibilities that we have now, if I were to go back through them, I would see some hints of what they might have done that I just wasn't paying attention to.

MG: [06:17] That's interesting. You'll have to add an addendum to this conversation if you learn more.

QD: [06:21] Yeah, yeah, it would be interesting because there's one part of my family that I know nothing about: my father's father's side. They come from the South. I've wondered what their status was [and] whether they were slave owners. I'm pretty sure that all the other parts of the family were not slave owners, and if they fought in the Civil War, they probably fought on the side of the Union. But this one part of the family I don't know.

MG: [06:51] Interesting. You said you were lucky enough to know your great-grandparents on your mother's side. Can you tell me about them?

QD: [06:59] My great-grandfather was a crusty and irascible lawyer. He ran the household with an iron fist. He was very highly educated, obviously. He himself was an orphan – his parents had been killed in a carriage accident – but was raised by what must have been a friend of the family and lucked out in terms of his education. He became a fairly wealthy lawyer in Pennsylvania and also worked for state government. I've always wondered – this was in a period of patronage and things like that, and so there have always been hints that there were some things

that we would consider not acceptable now. But nothing that I really know about for sure, and the people who would know are long gone.

MG: [07:59] Okay. And do you know how he met his wife, Sarah?

QD: [08:06] I have no idea. She was a second wife. In those days, it was really rare to divorce, and he was divorced. She was a kindergarten teacher. He had a couple of kids by his first wife, and I have no idea. I think people didn't talk about those things very much. But she was a very proper person, so I can't imagine that there was any hanky-panky, so to speak. But I don't know much about her family.

MG: [08:41] In what capacity did you know them? Would you visit them? Did they live in your home?

QD: [08:46] Well, they lived right across from my grandparents in Harrisburg, sort of catty-corner. The lots had one corner that attached. They lived until I was – well, let's see. I have pictures of my sister, who's named after Sadie, sitting on her lap until she was about two years old. So that would be 1959. So I would have been ten or eleven when she finally died. My great-grandfather died earlier. But I remember as a kid being at my grandparents' house, staying with my grandparents, which I often did by myself, and they would send me or let me go. I'm not sure what the right word was. I always felt so grown up that I could go from one house to the other house. They had this funny doorbell that my sister now has, but I just rang it to let them know I was coming in. I just was always so tickled by going over there. They always made such a big deal out of it that I always felt quite cherished, I guess is the right word.

MG: [10:05] Would they tell you stories about their lives and the so-called olden days?

QD: [10:11] Not really, or if they did, I don't remember. My grandparents would do more of that. But my great grandparents, I don't really remember. I sort of remember my great-grandfather. He got pretty crazy the last year of his life; he died at ninety-four or something, and he had dementia. I remember that. They say that I was the only person who could sit on his lap and pull his mustache, but I don't remember doing that.

MG: [10:43] And did you say your mother's parents, your grandparents, lived across the street from your great-grandparents?

QD: [10:49] No, that was confusing. My grandparents lived on one street, and my great-grandparents over on the lot catty-corner to them.

MG: [10:57] Okay. So nearby.

QD: [11:00] Yeah. My grandfather's parents were by then dead. They also had lived in Harrisburg. This is confusing. My grandmother's parents and my grandmother looked down on the family of my grandfather. I've never quite figured out why. Sort of lower class – and I never quite understood that. My mother would talk about it. She would go with my grandfather to visit what would be my great-grandparents on the other side. But my grandmother never went,

or if she went, she wasn't very interested in going. But my grandmother never really talked about it. I think, back in those days, people were somewhat more tight-lipped about these things. Or at least in my family, I think they were.

MG: [12:05] Could it have anything to do with their religious practice or orientation?

QD: [12:11] I don't think so because my grandfather's family was Lutheran, and my grandmother's family was Presbyterian, and that's not that different, or at least to me, it's not that different. Maybe to them, it was. It was more of an income thing that my grandmother's family was probably upper middle class, and my grandfather's family was probably lower middle class. But my grandfather was highly educated. Both of them had bachelor's degrees, which was, I think, very unusual for that period of time. And so there was nothing that I can see about my grandfather that they should have looked down on. But the impression I get from both my mother and her sister was that there was this sort of rift.

MG: [13:09] Your mother's mother had a bachelor's in chemistry. What do you know about her education and career?

QD: [13:16] She went to a public high school in Harrisburg, which I'm not even sure how common that was back in that period of time. Then she went to Smith College. After she graduated, she got a job as a technician in a milk-testing company, which I think was not what she would have chosen to do, but her sister had died of strep throat in the last year of college, and her father, the irascible, crusty old guy, said, "You are coming home, and you are living with us. You are not going anywhere else." She got whatever job she could get. I didn't realize, as a kid, probably how unusual it was for her to have a job at that time in a chemistry lab. But she quit the job, I think, when she got married and then started teaching school later at a private school – math. I don't even know that the private school had chemistry because the class was like five people or seven people. I don't know if they had the capability of standing that up.

MG: [14:35] It was also a girls' school, so maybe teaching chemistry wasn't considered as important at the time.

QD: [14:39] Yes, yes. That's possible. I never asked her. All these things I never asked her that later I thought I should have asked her.

MG: [14:48] That's precisely why we do oral history.

QD: [14:51] Yeah. [laughter] Yes, it's unfortunate that there are so many things that, now that everybody's gone, I would wonder about

MG: [15:01] Yes. Did your mother's mother, your grandmother, graduate around 1919? Does that sound about right?

QD: [15:08] Probably.

MG: [15:10] I was curious if she lived through the flu epidemic or has memories of that.

QD: [15:16] Never mentioned it. My grandfather had fought in World War I [and] never talked about it. What little I know, I learned from other people. He was apparently in the Calvary. If I ever knew anybody who had no interest in a horse, he was that person. But apparently, he rode a horse while he was over, and he was over in France. He lost his hearing because of the noise from the big guns around him. He would talk about what it was like to be in France. He had a very romanticized view of being in France, I guess when they were on leave. But the war part, he apparently talked to my father about it, but my father wouldn't talk about it either. So it must have been pretty awful.

MG: [16:18] Yes. I wondered if the Calvary ruined him on horses, and that's why he was horse averse.

QD: [16:26] That's possible. It also could be that, as a city boy, he had no experience with horses. He did it because he had to do it, and then that was done. But I really have no idea.

MG: [16:38] And what about his life postwar? He must have met and married your grandmother. I think in your notes, you talked about him starting some businesses.

QD: [16:46] Yes, well, he was an engineer, and what he wanted to do was engineering. Initially, he went to Schenectady, and I think he worked for General Electric. But when my grandmother had my mother, her father said, "You are coming home now. I will build you a house." So, he built their house, which is why it was catty-corner. It was in this community that was not quite a gated community, but a special community for basically people who are well off. And they moved there. I always got the impression that my grandfather did not want to go. He was very unhappy. This would have been in the Depression. He couldn't get a job as an engineer. My great-grandfather tried to help him start various businesses, one of which was a candy factory. There was lots of talk in the family about Daddy Rob (the name his grandchildren called him) and the candy factory. But I think it was not his cup of tea at all. He was not a businessman. He didn't want to do business. He wanted to be an electrical engineer. And so many, many years later, he got a job with the state. Of all things – and this I never understood – testing electrical meters, which seemed way below what he was capable of doing, but given that so many years had passed since he got his degree, perhaps that was all he could find. When I knew him, he was doing that, and he seemed to enjoy his work.

MG: [18:42] They moved briefly to Schenectady, where he worked for General Electric, and then they moved back to Pennsylvania to be near his in-laws

QD: [18:35] Yes, yes.

MG: [18:52] Okay. Interesting. What do you know about your mother's early life?

QD: [19:05] A fair amount. I think they had everything they needed, even during the Depression. She took music lessons, and I think started out playing the piano, but then switched to the harp. Her father hauled her around with the harp. There were lots of family jokes about the harp. I have some lovely pictures of her sitting at the harp. She wanted to be a musician, but

at some point, and I don't know how this happened, she decided, or she was told that she didn't have what it takes to be a musician. So she got into early childhood education, which is ultimately after my sister was grown up enough, what she made a career in. I think she had a pretty good childhood. Both she and my aunt adored their father and did not like their mother. I mean, I can see why; she was like her father, trying to run everybody's lives. My grandfather was much more easygoing and, I think, was a very good father. I think my grandmother was a good mother in all the senses that counted, making sure things got done, but I don't think she was very loving. She was a great grandmother. We all laugh about that because all of us grandchildren thought she was a wonderful grandmother. But both my mother and her sister thought she was a terrible mother. They got angrier as they got older, which, to me, seems pretty harsh. But boy, it was there. There was no doubt about it.

MG: [21:29] Your mother also went to Smith College.

QD: [21:34] Yes.

MG: [21:35] Did she study education there?

QD: [21:38] She started out with music and switched to education. She didn't make – it's funny, there was this whole family lore about how she was so smart. And then, at some point, when I was cleaning out all their stuff, I found her grades from Smith College, and they were not actually very good. I'm not sure where this thing came from that she was so smart. I mean, she was smart, actually. But I think she didn't apply herself very well in school, is what I think.

MG: [22:21] Yes, grades are sometimes not a good metric for those students.

QD: [22:24] Yes.

MG: [22:28] Where did she work as a preschool teacher? Where was that? Tell me a little bit about the program that she worked for in Montgomery County.

QD: [22:40] Well, she started out first at a Montessori school with kids that were normal. She really did not like the way Montessori schools were run. I don't know how she got into teaching special education. The names that they call children with special needs have changed over time. So, she referred to them as “retarded” children. It was called the Montgomery Association for Retarded Children. They ran a preschool. She started out as a teacher's aide [and] went back to school to get the training for that kind of teaching – special education. I don't know if she ever got another degree; she certainly got all the certifications that she needed in order to become a teacher, as opposed to a teacher's aide. She was very devoted to that. She put a lot of effort into the kids. Sometimes, they would be over at the house; I'm not sure why. Maybe somebody had a daycare problem or something. Also, they hired adults who were also disabled to help out as teachers' aides. Sometimes, the adults were over at our house. I have no idea why, but she was clearly very devoted to her work. When she retired and moved to Bedford, Virginia, she got on the board there for their school for disabled children. I'm not sure exactly what it was; I don't know as much about that part of it. But she put a lot of effort into that and also into tutoring

middle school and teenagers who were disabled with learning how to use a computer and things like that.

MG: [24:52] Yes, I'm curious what this program looked like. I imagine it was fairly progressive in its development of approaches and programs for developmentally disabled children and adults and must have looked very different than for previous generations.

QD: [25:10] Yes, and I think one of the things they did, which was, I think, different from now – so she had a mixture of children with all sorts of different disabilities in her class. I think now – my niece works at a school for children with autism, and that's all they have there. I don't know how common it is with other types of disabilities to have them sorted in schools by the kind of disability they have. It would make sense in a way, because then you can – because the difficulty for my mother was coming up with individualized plans for children. She talked about that a fair amount, how pleased she was with successes when a severely autistic child would actually say a few words. But other than that, I don't know a lot about the details.

MG: [26:10] Yes, I imagine that was challenging work.

QD: [26:12] It was very, I think, but she never gave the impression of being burned out, which I thought was interesting because I think that, after a while, it would just be so hard. But when I asked her about that, she would say, "Well, you know, there are successes, and I enjoy those successes. I liked the kids and the aides." I think she thought she was doing something really valuable, which she was.

MG: [26:21] Yes, I also wonder if having children of her own helped her, you know, she could focus on work at work and on her family when she was home with her family.

QD: [26:51] Yes, she became a much nicer person when she started back to work. My sister and I both think that she was not cut out to be a full-time mother. Maybe that was the problem with my grandmother, too. Once she became somebody with her own career and her own life, she became a much – she didn't have the energy to put into being just a mother, [laughter] which was a good thing, I think.

MG: [27:09] This is remarkable to me because this was long before the Women's Movement where she was working and independent. I meant to ask, Dr. Dortch, what brought your mother to the Richmond area?

QD: [27:44] Well, she married my father at the end of the war. He got a job in Richmond. I think he was working for the Veterans Bureau for a while. They lived in a boarding house at first because there was no housing right after World War II. Then they lived in somebody's attic. I think that's where they were when I was born. Yes. They talked about how they went up this disappearing stairway to get to their "apartment," in quotes, I think.

MG: [28:26] Do you know how they met?

QD: [28:28] Yes. My mother was actually engaged to somebody else. Supposedly, an heir to the Hershey family fortune named Whitney. Now, I've never gone and looked up whether there was a Whitney that was an heir to the Hershey family fortune. My great-grandparents had bought a second home up in the mountains in Pennsylvania in a place called Eagles Mere. The family used to go up there for the whole summer. From the time my mother was maybe [in] middle school or something like that. For much of the war, my father was stationed at Bucknell University, which is in Lewisburg, PA, so it's not very far from Eagles Mere. I think he had gone up to Eagles Mere, maybe with some friends. I don't actually know how. But he had leave, so he went to Eagles Mere, which is a logical place to go because it's cooler and very pleasant with a lake. He met her out on the dock where she was swimming. She may have been swimming with Whitney, or Whit, as the family used to call him. I think my father swept her off her feet. That's the family story.

MG: [29:58] He must have been very handsome because he was athletic. He was helping with an athletic training program at Bucknell.

QD: [30:04] Yes. He'd been a football player. He was very attractive. And she was very pretty. So they were a good match in that way.

MG: [30:19] Did they have a good marriage? I'm wondering if it was true love because, really, she didn't have to end up in an attic.

MG: [30:28] Yes, and I think her mother was pretty pissed at her for that for a while. Wouldn't come visit. You can see this family pattern with each generation. It's hard to judge somebody else's marriage. There were certainly issues – she got very ill; she had COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease]. My father was an alcoholic. I think life was not easy for the last ten or so years of their lives. I think there were good and bad points, but on the other hand, he took care of her through the whole illness – and it was a long, drawn-out, difficult period. It's hard to judge. To have asked her, “Are you sorry you did this?” – and I never did. I don't know if my sister ever did because we both knew the story. I'll have to ask my sister if she ever asked my mother.

MG: [31:36] Yes. Well, tell me a little bit about your dad's side of the family. I know you know less about that, but you provided a family tree. So there are a few generations you're aware of going back.

QD: [31:48] Yes, so that's as far back – trying to think – on my father's side, I think that's as far back as we – I have pictures of – his father's side is the side that I know nothing about. My sister lived in North Carolina for a while, and Dortch was a not uncommon [name]. I mean, she ran into the name Dortch occasionally. He was from – my grandfather was from Tennessee in that area where there might have been people from Tennessee in North Carolina. I think whether they'd been there a long time or a short time, I have no idea. That's the part I don't know. On the other side – this is the only immigrant story. My grandmother's family was originally from Ireland, probably Anglo-Irish, if I were to guess because they were pretty wealthy. My great-grandfather was a younger son, which meant he didn't inherit. He tried the Army, and it didn't work for him. So later, he trained to become a doctor, and I think he did that in England. But



then, they decided to emigrate to the United States. So some of the kids were born in Ireland, some of the kids were born in England, and then my grandmother and her sister, who were the two youngest, I think, were born in Virginia. My parents and various other family members, but not me, have gone back to Ireland and seen the family homes. There's Raheen, that was the country home. And [Lenaboy](#) was the name of the city home. Raheen is gone, but there's a huge shopping center called Raheen. We've all wondered if that's – I've wondered, not we all. I've wondered if that's where it was originally. But when they last went, it was pretty tumble-down, and nobody in the family was living there. Then, it burned down shortly after my parents were there. I think the original, the Lenaboy house is still there, I think. If you look up historic homes, they list it anyway. So someday, I'd be curious to go back and see if it's there. But they used to have – my grandmother had contacts with people in Ireland, and one of her brothers got sent back to Ireland to live with some maiden aunts. But apparently, that didn't work out too well. They were using him as a servant. Yeah. So he came back to the United States, and the family stayed in touch. Not so much my sister and me anymore. But my father stayed in touch with all of what would be his first cousins. Some of them lived in Virginia, in the area where my sister now lives. My mother and father moved back to the little town where my father grew up. That area also has some of the relatives still.

MG: [35:24] Is that Bedford, Virginia?

QD: [35:25] Yes. Although they've also lived in Lynchburg. Back when my mother was so ill, it was easier to be in Lynchburg, where it was near doctors and stuff and hospitals.

MG: [35:40] What was in Lynchburg for the older generations? Was there an industry that drew them there? What was the draw to Clarksburg? What was there for the family?

QD: [35:54] You mean Bedford?

MG: [35:57] Clarksburg and then Bedford.

QD: [35:38] Well, I don't know what was in Clarksburg because that's the part of the family that I know absolutely nothing about. So, my father's father claimed that he was the bad boy of the family and got sent to various schools to try and straighten him out, and he never finished school. The only person in the family who would have anything to do with him was his step-grandmother. I have her name somewhere. I know nothing about her. I don't have pictures or anything. But he kept an incredible scrapbook which I have, which, when I finally really retire, what I want to do is try and find a place where I can get it scanned because [it contains] a lot of the family pictures are from that side of the family. Anyway, my grandmother's family came here. My great-grandfather was a country doctor. But he couldn't make enough money as a country doctor, so he was also a farmer. And so they lived way outside of Bedford in a suburb of Bedford. They were way out in the country. He went around [to] all his patients by horse and buggy, and it was apparently a pretty hard life. He became an opium addict. Still continued as a country doctor to the very end and died of an overdose. It's unknown whether it was deliberate or not. But they found his carriage by the side of the road with him dead.

MG: [37:47] How old would your dad have been when that happened?

QD: [37:51] I don't think my father knew him. My grandmother was still – I mean, she was probably in her early twenties, if I were to guess. But they kept from her apparently for her whole life – but I find this hard to believe – the fact that he had died of an opium overdose because she was very into temperance. Which is really unusual because my grandfather, her husband, was not into temperance and was a source of – I suspect he was an alcoholic, and a number of family members were alcoholics. My father talks about one family member who was buried with all his bottles in his coffin after drinking himself to death. There's all these family stories like that. I wish I had asked my father to draw out for me a family tree because my father's father's family is the part I know the least about. So, someday, I'm going to try and figure that out. I've always wondered, were they ever slaveholders? Did they fight in the Civil War? I know my father's mother's family did not serve in the Civil War because they weren't even here.

MG: [39:29] It's so interesting. In your father's childhood – it sounds like he was involved in sports. He graduated from Bedford High School and played football, basketball, and baseball.

QD: [39:42] Yes, yes. He was not so much into the academics. But he got into college, and he finished on an expedited – I think they did it in two and a half years or three years because the war had started and they wanted these people, and he went into Officer Candidate School and flunked because he couldn't do the – it was in the Navy, and he couldn't do all the things he needed to do for navigation, which was strange to me because, for example, he could add up a column of figures in his head. It was never clear to me why he had so much trouble with math, which is why he flunked out of Officer Candidate School. What he did during the war with athletic training was the alternative. He never ended up actually serving in the war – I mean, he served in the war, but he didn't go –

MG: [40:47] Overseas.

QD: [40:48] – to fight overseas. Yeah. He was headed to Japan when the end of the war came. He told everybody, "I've got my orders to go to Japan. I'm on the way." And then it ended.

MG: [41:02] He graduated in '43 from Virginia Tech with a degree in Business Administration and went right into the service, serving at Bucknell.

QD: [41:10] Yes, Bucknell and then Muhlenberg University, both tough training, physical training of recruits.

MG: [41:23] He worked under Gene Tunney, who was a well-known boxer at the time.

QD: [41:27] Yes, yes. He admired him greatly.

MG: [41:10] Did he share any other stories about Gene?

QD: [41:36] No, that's interesting. I'm not sure how involved he was on a day-to-day basis because he talked a lot about other people that he worked with. For example, one of his stories

was he served with an Italian. They had to cook for themselves; there wasn't a mess. The Italian taught him how to cook spaghetti. One time, when he went up to Eagles Mere, he cooked spaghetti there for the first time, which nobody had eaten. This was not food that people normally ate in the United States, and he shocked my grandparents by throwing this spaghetti at the wall to see if it was done. Then later, when he made spaghetti down in Bedford for his family, he looked all over for garlic, and all he could find was garlic salt. So his spaghetti sauce ended up really salty because he made it with garlic salt, which gives you an idea of how hard it was to get things. I mean, this was also the war. Things might have been even more difficult.

MG: [42:48] I think it's also interesting that he'd cook for his family.

QD: [42:52] Yes, it's interesting. He learned to cook as a kid. Well, I'm not sure. I'm not sure how it actually happened. He says he learned to cook from this person called Luce, who was his second mother. That's my interpretation of things. I don't know. He might have said that. Luce was the servant to my grandfather's first wife. Apparently, [she] came with her when she married my grandfather. This sounds absolutely awful, almost like slavery. She stayed with my grandfather through the birth of his first child, who had spina bifida, and then the death of his first wife. She died of a stroke while pregnant with her second child. Then, the little boy died when he was seven or eight from the complications of the spina bifida. So Luce, by then, was a grown woman. She married somebody in Bedford and had her own house but continued working for my grandfather. I think my grandfather, the family lore, is that he paid for her house to be built. I mean, it was a couple of blocks away from my grandparents' house. But she taught, at some point, my father to cook, and so he had all these recipes that he cooked from her. Whether she actually sat him down and taught him or whether he learned by watching her, I have no idea. But things like fried chicken. We talked about having (Luce's?) fried chicken, and all sorts of things made with cornmeal that are typical of that area of the country and salt fish, and fish roe, and a whole bunch of things that I think are more typical of the Black community than the white community in that area. As he got older, he talked about her more and more because I think, from a day-to-day point of view, she was the person doing a lot of the work and mothering him. Not that my grandmother was not a good mother because she doted on my father, but I think the way things worked, then she did some things and Luce did other things. But it's interesting about Luce. It's bad in the sense that she was definitely an employee. And they considered her that. But, for example, in my grandfather's scrapbook, there are as many pictures of Luce herself, not just Luce taking care of my father or something like that – pictures of Luce and Luce's family, as there were of my father and my grandmother. Actually, more pictures of (Luce?) than my grandmother for some reason. It was an interesting dynamic that I think was perhaps not typical of that time. My father would tell stories about how for Christmas, (Luce?) and my grandfather would have what they call the snort, which is he would pull the whiskey out of the back of the toilet tank, [laughter] and they would have a drink on Christmas morning, which my grandmother did not join, [but] my father did when he was old enough.

MG: [47:04] It sounds like they had some connections to maybe bootleggers because this would have been around the time of the 1920s.

QD: [47:10] Yes, yes. There's a lot [of] interesting stories there. According to my parents, Luce got sick and quit working. But the last time Luce came to work was when they brought me to

my grandparents' house for the first time. There are pictures of her holding me. Then, when she got really sick, she came and stayed at their house, and my grandmother took care of her.

MG: [47:47] So, she really became part of the family?

QD: [47:51] Yes, but in the pictures, for example, there are two places where my grandfather refers to as "Lucy Hudnall, our good and faithful servant." It's a mixed – I don't know what to say exactly.

MG: [48:23] An interesting dynamic.

QD: [48:24] Yes, yes. But my father talked about her all the time when he got really old.

MG: [48:32] Did he stay in touch with Luce's children?

QD: [48:35] For a while. The last time we talked about it, there was an obituary for the last one that he knew in the newspaper, Luce's great-granddaughter. I have a picture of – so this would have been Luce and her daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter. I have a picture of the four of them at my grandparents' house, sitting together on a rock outside. I've always debated whether I should try and contact the family. Because of the obituary, I was able to find a lot of the families who are still in that area. I have this particular picture of the four of them, which is a really nice picture; this would have been early when people just had box cameras. Along with the other pictures of Luce, whether anybody in the family would like to have those pictures. Something to be done when I fully retire.

MG: [49:56] When is that, Dr. Dortch?

QD: [49:50] Good question. I don't know. [laughter] I'm halftime now, so I'm not a Fed anymore. I'm a consultant to a contracting firm, working in the same office but doing different things than I was before.

MG: [50:11] I wanted to ask one more question unless you had something else to add.

QD: [50:14] No, go ahead.

MG: [50:16] Just about the nature of your dad's work after the war and after you and your sister were born. What was he doing for work?

QD: [50:23] He was an insurance examiner for homeowners insurance and some kind of business insurance. And when we lived in – well, early on when we lived in Virginia, and then later when we moved up to Maryland, he would be going around, going to individuals' houses to assess the damage, to make sure that the claim was correctly – that they got what they were supposed to get, but not more. I don't know what kind of business insurance it was because he would talk about going to meet with people that were businesspeople. I just don't know enough about business insurance to know what it was as a kid. But then later, he became a supervisor, which he hated. That probably lasted ten years or so. Then, he retired early.

MG: [51:33] Well, we're out of time for today, but this has just been such a fascinating look into your family history. I'm so impressed with all the details you have. When we pick up next time, I'll be curious to hear about your childhood and education.

QD: [51:47] Okay, yes. Want to look at the calendar?

MG: [51:51] Sure. Let me pause the recording.

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