

Oral History Questions for Autumn Pacheco

Christina: Today is March 8th, 2021. My name is Christina Stuart, today we will discuss the experiences of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, we are in San Antonio, Texas, and I am interviewing, here-

Autumn: Autumn Pacheco.

Christina: Yes. Uh, so, Autumn, when were you born?

Autumn: November 10th, 1998.

Christina: Where were you born?

Autumn: The Nix hospital, in downtown San Antonio.

Christina: Uh, what is your occupation?

Autumn: I drive carriages in San Antonio downtown.

Christina: Nice. When and how did you first hear about the virus? Can you explain your experiences?

Autumn: Uh, Twitter. 'Cause that's where I get all of my news information. Um, before it even came to the U.S. I think it was still only in China at that point, and I remember hearing it being compared to the flu, which, I had never had the flu, but since there was a vaccination for it, I didn't really take it that seriously until it did come to the United States.

Christina: No one thought it was gonna be here, it was like, "it's not gonna come to Texas,"

Autumn: Nah.

Christina: And then it's in Houston, "it's not gonna come to San Antonio," "WHOOOPSIE..." Can you explain how the Coronavirus has affected you and your family or friends? What has changed?

Autumn: I used to go out every weekend and eat during the week if I felt like it, and now I can't. Um, mainly because a lot of my friends have never taken the virus seriously, and I live with my grandparents, who are at risk, so, even if I wanted to see my friends- 'cause I can- but I choose not to, because I'm too scared to get my [grand]parents sick by my own negligence. And my [grant]parents, besides, for grocery shopping, occasionally going to Home Depot for "house things," they don't leave the house.

Christina: Yeah. Can you explain how COVID-19 affected your daily or weekly routine, like shopping for groceries and spending time with family? You kind of answered that.

Autumn: I- I've driven to my family members' houses for, like, drive-by parades, or even going, I stay in my vehicle with my mask on, my family will stay inside their gate parameter with their masks on, so I still can talk to them, but there's no, like, physical contact. Um, I didn't, besides

going to work, I didn't leave to go anywhere else up until a few months ago. I started going to, like, chain stores like Joann's Fabrics to get fabric for sewing, thrift stores, um, but I usually go in the middle of the week when I know it's not gonna be that busy, and I only go to stores that have mandatory masks.

Christina: Mm-hm. Due to the pandemic, are you... Are you able to work from home? Why or why not?

Autumn: No. 'Cause I don't own a horse or a carriage at my home.

Christina: That's unfortunate. You should fix that. Do you know any... Do you know anyone that has been infected with the virus?

Autumn: Myself. Me, a handful of my family members. I know that old neighbors of mine, their son that was 6 passed away from COVID- it sucked. I- I'm trying really hard right now to schedule an appointment to get vaccinated because it was very uncomfortable, and I was sick for 17 days.

Christina: What was it like? Did you- were you symptomatic? Did you, like, loods- loose taste or anything like that?

Autumn: I didn't loose my sense of taste or smell, but I was practically bedridden. Um, I basically, from what my doctor said is that I had mild symptoms, which, my mild symptoms were horrible; I couldn't sleep. I slept in intervals, where I'd be asleep for an hour and I'd wake up, and then if I went back to bed, I was in bed for an hour, and then I'd wake back up, and I would also sweat out my fever in my sleep, so I would wake up drenched in sweat. I had a fever for my entire, I think it was, 15 days that I had the fever, and it went up to 102, and my oxygen levels had gone down to the 70's at one point, and I had to go to the hospital to get put on oxygen, because I could no breathe.

Christina: Wow, and you're 100% better now?

Autumn: Not 100%, I still have an inhaler because sometimes it hits me like a big truck, that I can't breathe again.

Christina: Mm-hm.

Autumn: And, ever since I had COVID, I still find it hard to sleep and I still wake up sweating, and my doctor can't figure out why, 'cause it never happened to me before.

Christina: Yeah, wow. How had adapting to the virus affected your work, or school responsibilities?

Autumn: Having to wear my mask, especially since the majority of my job is outdoors. In the winter, it wasn't as bad, but in the summer, it gets pretty hot.

Christina: Mm-hm.

Autumn: Um, and then the constant bickering between my coworkers who refuse to wear their masks and having management that truly doesn't do anything to mandate it.

Christina: Yeah, and then, when you were- this is about the winter storm- when you were hit with February's winter storm, did you think about the virus? Why or why not?

Autumn: In the beginning, I had never forgotten about it. It wasn't until the power outages, the water issues, that's when I was more focused on, "how am I gonna eat food?" "how am I gonna feed my animals and give them fresh water?" "how am I supposed to keep my animals *and* my family warm?" So, I was more focused on what was present at the time, and frankly, I remember thinking about the virus in the aspect of, that was the only way to force people to stay home, because a lot of Texans aren't equipped to drive in snow and on icy roads. So, I thought about the fact that the cases would maybe go down, and we're still not sure if that happened, but that's the only thing I could think of, is, that was- that was so serious that we went into a lockdown, but having 500,000 Americans dead, that's not enough to go into another lockdown.

Christina: Yeah. We'll just, we'll just take the masks off, forget the mask mandate. But okie.

Autumn: Thanks, Abbott.

Christina: And what would you like to tell future generations about the pandemic?

Autumn: To learn how to be more considerate of other people.

Christina: Mm-hm.

Autumn: Just because you're healthy and you don't live with anybody who has a medical issue doesn't make it okay to put them at risk because you know that you're healthy. Um, and to just be more caring in general, and I would... if I was to compare this to anything, it would be like another civil war, because Americans are fighting with each other over human rights, and they're on either side of the spectrum. There's us, who care about other people, wanna keep everybody safe, and then the others who care more about the economy and their personal right to not wear a mask. So, it's a battle between Americans with different points of view,

Christina: Yeah. Well, alright. That was all my questions, thank you so much.