

Rochele Brown, Class of 2013
Dartmouth College Oral History Project
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World
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WOMICK: I'm Cally Womick. And I'm here in Rauner Library with Rochele Brown. Today is Friday, April 19, 2013. So to get started, why don't you talk about where you grew up?

BROWN: I grew up around Royal Palm Beach, Florida. It's kind of a cute little suburb town with lots of parks. And it's a little bit away from a small city and kind of on the edge of some farmland. So not hyper rural, not hyper city, just pretty suburb. And I grew up—I had two loving parents and a brother. I went to the local school when I was younger. And then I went to Performing Arts School for middle and high school. So my parents always wanted me to get like a really good education. And I was able to pursue a lot of things that I loved: I played soccer, I rode horses. So it was a really good life. [Chuckles.]

WOMICK: So what made you decide to come to Dartmouth for college?

BROWN: I got a lot of, I guess, spam from a lot of colleges, and Dartmouth's was pretty unique 'cause they said: "Come visit us." And I did. And this was my junior—the summer after my junior year of high school. And I visited, and it was July, and it was like 50 degrees at night and I was like, It's so cold. I'm never coming here. [Laughs]

WOMICK: [Laughs]

BROWN: But then later I got into some other schools, and I visited them. And when I really thought about it, Dartmouth was just where I felt most at home. I loved how like not remote, but I loved the sort of quiet mood and small town atmosphere. And of course the academics I'd heard were really good. And I came and sat in some classes, and it was just the environment that I felt most comfortable.

WOMICK: Wonderful. So did you make your decision then?

BROWN: I made my decision like when they were due [laughter], like at the end of senior year in high school, because I couldn't decide and then it was just—I sort of woke up one day and it was like, "I'm

going to Dartmouth.” And my family was like, “Okay. She’s going to Dartmouth.”

WOMICK: Wow! [Laughter] So then when you came up here for orientation, you’d already seen the campus.

BROWN: Mm-hmm.

WOMICK: So what was orientation like?

BROWN: Orientation was really fun. I got here for section J Trips. So I went on my trip and then came straight in for orientation. And that was my birthday, which was kinda weird because I’d never been away from home for my birthday. But my parents came for orientation just for my birthday; so that was fun. Yeah. It was just sort of...everything was new, and I was just really excited to sort of be like out on “my own,” quote unquote, and make new friends and just have a lot of fun. Because I had these like wild expectations of like, college is gonna be so awesome! And it was awesome—is still awesome ‘cause I’ve still got a couple weeks left. Holdin’ onto those.

WOMICK: So for freshman fall, did you feel prepared for everything?

BROWN: Um, feel prepared? Yeah, I guess I felt prepared. I was not really sure if like academically I would be prepared. But I felt pretty safe. I felt like everything went pretty well.

WOMICK: Where were you living?

BROWN: I lived in the River in Judge in a two-room double.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: The tiny inner room of the two-room double.

WOMICK: Oh.

BROWN: Which I kind of actually miss. It was really cozy. [Laughter] I don’t know. It was like the one room I had for three terms in a row on campus. And, you know, I decorated it really nicely. And then after that I was like, Uhh, I’m gonna move in a term, and I didn’t put as much effort into it. And, yeah, I just have lots of great memories. My floor was really close. And so we’d all like hang out in each other’s

rooms. And I'm still...like my closest friends are mostly floormates that I had freshman year.

WOMICK: Nice.

BROWN: Yeah.

WOMICK: So then going forward into freshman winter, how was that?

BROWN: That was dark and cold. [Laughter] I missed my sunshine. And I think it was definitely a little bit of seasonal depression. So I started exercising obsessively 'cause it made me happy. And I think my academics were a little tougher that term, too. But I think it was more just because I was moody than because they were actually tougher. But, yeah. Lots of cardio [chuckles] got me through it.

WOMICK: So then spring, was that better?

BROWN: Spring was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen in my life. [Laughter] It was sunny and.... That was a really, really warm spring, and I didn't know that. I just knew that I could wear my dresses again. And I for some reason didn't really think about leaves coming out on the trees 'cause I'd never seen this before, of course, being from Florida. And like all these like itty-bitty baby leaves; they were so cute.

I was riding on the equestrian team which I had joined freshman fall. And then we kind of don't ride as much in the winter 'cause the weather's bad. But I started riding almost every day, and like that made me extremely happy. And I was taking Anthropology of Religion with Professor Watanabe, which I absolutely loved. And I think I was taking a linguistics class which I absolutely loved. And Arabic. And so I just loved all of my classes. And I just loved being outside and swimming in the river; that was a little chilly at first, but got better. [Laughter] So, yeah, I was happy.

WOMICK: And you were here for the summer, right?

BROWN: Yep, I was here. And I took classes.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: Because they decided late in the spring that I was gonna do an FSP, the religion FSP, in Edinburgh. So I needed one more class. I

was actually like a little bit bad because it had just started to get beautiful, and I just started to really love being outside and being here. So I was like, Oh, I'm gonna stay for the summer. And originally a couple of my friends were going to stay for the summer, too. But then they... didn't. So I was just like, Okay, that's fine. I'll just make new friends, which I did. So I took classes and just kinda had a great time being outside and enjoying New England summer, which is far less humid and more encouraging to move around in than Florida. [Laughs]

WOMICK: And you got to know a lot of '12s over their sophomore summer, right?

BROWN: Yeah. I got to know a few. I think I'd hang out more with sort of a post-freshman-year mob, though. There were a couple of other '13s on campus. I think I actually got closer to them than to the '12s. But, yeah, I did get to know a few '12s.

WOMICK: Great. And so then you were away in the fall.

BROWN: Mm-hmm. Went to Edinburgh. That was a really, really fun experience. I hadn't ever really traveled outside of the United States and Jamaica, which is where my family's from so it was kinda like home again, so I didn't really count that as being away. It was just kinda the other home. So it was my first time really being away, and it was great. I feel like I realized—I always thought of Europe and America as being like pretty much the same. But I kind of like got to see all the little differences, and that really was interesting and fun and weird [chuckles] all at the same time.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: And then I had really, really good classes. I took Kierkegaard and existentialism with Professor Green, and it was great because we got to fly over to Denmark and, you know, see all the stuff going on in Kierkegaard's life. As we were reading about it, we could go visit the places and stuff like that.

WOMICK: Wow!

BROWN: So that was really fun. And I got to—I joined like student clubs and stuff in Edinburgh. And so I got to meet a bunch of students there and make some friends.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: And, yeah, it was great. I traveled and met one of my friends—one of my freshman floor mates who was in Spain on the Spain FSP. And so we got to gallivant around Spain together for a while, and that was really fun.

WOMICK: Sounds so cool.

BROWN: Yeah.

WOMICK: And you were hanging out a lot with the students there, too, not just Dartmouth people.

BROWN: Right. Yeah. The Dartmouth group was great, though. I mean we definitely got along. But I think I spent most of my time with Scottish students.

WOMICK: Huh!

BROWN: So, yeah. 'Cause like I said, I joined a drumming society, and so I made a lot of friends through there. And, yeah, it was great. It was nice because I think on a lot of FSPs you're always with your Dartmouth group. And then my other FSP that I did was more like that. And I think it was refreshing to sort of like branch out and like really connect with the students at our host school.

WOMICK: Yeah. So then what did you do for the winter?

BROWN: That winter I came back to Dartmouth and jumped back into Arabic class, which was very hard [chuckles] after missing two summers of studying Arabic. Yeah, it was rough. It was also my sixth term in a row [chuckles] at that point.

WOMICK: Yeaah.

BROWN: And it was winter again and cold and dark. Oh, yeah, that was the bad winter, too. That was the really, really snowy winter.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: And then I had...I think I had Spanish language drill because I felt like taking Spanish. And I remember getting up for drill and it being like 20 below one day and being just like, I don't think this is okay.

And like going outside and my nostrils being all crinkly. [Laughter] That wasn't fun. But, yeah.

What else do I remember from that winter? Oh, I thought about rushing for like five minutes and then didn't. [Laughter] Which was fine. It was like nothing.... I was just lazy, I think. Like I knew you had to...I'd just heard that the process was kind of arduous. And like none of my friends were really in houses either. So I didn't really feel like I really had to, to like be social. So I just didn't. And, yeah, it was fine. I think I just sort of had to take that one one day at a time just because I was getting a little weary.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: But I got through it.

WOMICK: So when rush happened, did you feel like a lot of your friends rushed or—

BROWN: I know a lot of people did. But my like closest friends didn't.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: Didn't really rush. So it didn't really feel like I was missing out on all that much. And I also, from like knowing... I'm on the equestrian team, of course, so we had a lot of upperclasswomen who were in sororities. And when they talked about them, they didn't really sound like places I would have fit in anyway. So I was just like, Oh, it's fine. I guess I can always do it next term if I'm feeling less lazy or...I don't know if that's true. Can you rush in the spring? I don't even think you can rush in the spring. [Laughter] But I don't know. I was just not concerned about it. And I went back to being in my drum group and—I was in the World Music Percussion Ensemble—and I went back to riding. And I just didn't really feel like I was missing anything in life. So it was fun.

WOMICK: Yeah, yeah. So what about the rest of sophomore year? How'd that go?

BROWN: Sophomore spring was my seventh term in a row.

WOMICK: [Sharp intake of breath]

BROWN: [Laughs] I dropped down to two classes at some point just because I was still feeling pretty behind in Arabic, and I was pretty extensively trying to catch up. And I took something else, too. But I think it was a religion class or an AMES class; I don't know. That was...once I dropped the second class, it was okay. Oh, it was a religion class with Professor Frankenberry.

And then I think I might have declared my major at that point because the registrar was bugging me. Because technically I had been a junior. So, yeah. And so I did that. And that was fine, I guess. It was kind of hard for me to pick a major. I just kind of picked one because I had all the classes, and the classes were fun...I guess. And it had a lot of, you know, philosophy, and it had psychology, and it had anthropology, and it had history. It just had a lot of things that I thought were interesting in it. So I did that.

I don't remember that spring being quite as magical as the first one. And I think it's just because, again, I just was really burnt out. So I got through it, though. And I think academically I did really well in both of those classes, even though it was a struggle especially in Arabic.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: But, got through it.

WOMICK: And then after that, did you take an off term?

BROWN: I did. I finally took an off term. But I was at Dartmouth. I was working a few jobs. I was working in computing. I had like the computing intern position at the AHRC. And I was working on a project in Arabic trying to like make flashcards, like digital flashcards for people, 'cause, like, I couldn't remember all of those words. I was like, Okay. I'm going to help myself and some future students out.

And that was actually really fun. It was sophomore summer, so all my friends—that's why I wanted to be here, 'cause it was sophomore summer! I was like, Why did I, why did I try to stay here? Yeah. [Chuckles] I wanted to stay here because it was sophomore summer, and that was a really good decision. All my friends were living in sort of the same area. So it was really easy to just pop over after work and see everybody. And it was just really chill and it was just really what I needed.

I think it was the first time that I ever just like walked into Sanborn and just like picked up a book and read it. [Laughter] It was the best feeling ever. Because like, who has time to read for pleasure at Dartmouth? I certainly don't. And it was great. I went to all sorts of lectures that normally during the term I would have been like, Oh, I would go, but I have to ride. Or I have homework, or whatever.

And it was probably one of the most intellectually-stimulating terms at Dartmouth just because I can just explore whatever, and I can make use of all the resources. And it was fantastic. And, like I said, my work was pretty easy and like not anything taxing. So I had the energy to do that kind of thing—

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: —in my spare time. And like I said, I loved being in Hanover in the summer and being outside. So I did lots of hiking. I got really active in Cabin and Trail, which I'd always wanted to do, but I hadn't for a while. But since I wasn't riding and I wasn't drumming, I just thought I'd do that. And it was a great decision.

WOMICK: So then, moving into fall.

BROWN: Uh, yeah, the fall I went to Morocco. And that was a really good experience. The FSP wasn't my favorite, I think partially because it was a really small group of students, and we spent like all of our time together. And it wasn't necessarily like a bad group, it was just like people that I probably wouldn't have ever hung out with otherwise. And [chuckles] I actually like haven't really seen them since. [Laughter]

So, I mean, it was fine. I ended up kind of being a bit of a loner and sort of venturing out on my own. I mean not dangerously so. But like I would often go to the café to work on my own, which I know a lot of the other students weren't comfortable doing. And, yeah, it was a great experience.

I learned a lot of like survival Arabic, I think, too, especially when we were in the mountains, and people spoke Berber and not Arabic. And my French was really, really rusty. Yeah, it was definitely a lot of like survival skills that I think will definitely come in handy in the future.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: But I loved being there. I loved meeting people. I loved just the environment. I loved having a different perspective besides just the typical like Western perspective. And you know I grew up in a very like religious household, like Christian—Protestant. And so it was really nice to sort of go over and.... You know my hosts were Muslim, and I had a lot of chats about religion which were really cool. I'm not religious personally, but I felt like I saw a lot of connections between the two. And a lot of differences, too. But it was just refreshing in general.

WOMICK: Yeah. So did you come back to Dartmouth the next term?

BROWN: Yes. Yeah, I didn't give myself a break much. Came back to Dartmouth... Wait, no I didn't. That was winter. Winter, no, I didn't come back to Dartmouth. I went to San Diego, had an internship with the International Rescue Committee, which was refugee resettlement. And so I worked in employment, and I helped newly-arrived refugees from mostly...they were mostly originally from Iraq. But a lot of them had been moved around in camps in like Syria. Clearly that was the current idea at the time, and turned out that way. And a lot of them were from Somalia. But I got mostly Iraqis because I was the only volunteer intern who spoke any Arabic at all. So that was fun because I don't speak Iraqi Arabic. [Laughs]

WOMICK: Right, it's pretty different.

BROWN: Yeah, it's pretty different. So they would say something, and then I'd say it back to them in Modern Standard Arabic. And sometimes they'd be like, That's not what I said at all. And I'd be like, [chuckles] Okay, say it again? Or write it down. You know, it was tough. But we communicated. And then a lot of them did speak some English.

And I got to teach a lot of computer classes, and my computer skills from sophomore summer came in handy. I got to place a few people in jobs, so that was really rewarding. And I actually went with one of my friends who had an environmental internship on the coast, and we sort of lived between our two jobs, which was great, 'cause it was easy to find like a nice little apartment to split the rent.

And I had a Tucker Fellowship. So I had a mentor who was really great. And he just invited us in to visit his home, and that was

fantastic. So I had a friend, and I had a pretty rewarding job. So life was pretty good. It was nice and sunny in California. Actually I hear it wasn't that bad of a winter up here. But that's okay. [Laughter]

WOMICK: Yeah, it was probably the mildest winter in the past four years.

BROWN: Yeah.

WOMICK: But it's fine. [Chuckles]

BROWN: Yeah. I had a good time there. I'm sure I would've found something fun to be with up here, too, had I been here.

WOMICK: Yeah. So were there other Dartmouth people in the area, other than the person you were living with? Who did you spend time with?

BROWN: I spent time mostly.... Well, I had a full-time job, so I did a lot of that. And then I decided to teach myself more Spanish because I did. And so I would literally just kinda come home from work and hit the books because I was really motivated to do it. [Chuckles] And then I'd go to the gym. And there was actually a Dartmouth alum who we met randomly at the gym. [Laughter] And, yeah.

And then like I would do like.... My job had a lot of young recent graduates, and so I hung out with them a lot. We'd do like a lot of after-work activities or like during lunch we'd kick around a soccer ball and stuff. So there were people my age that I hung out with. But again, I tend to be kind of a loner in like those situations where I'm like only there for ten weeks. It kinda takes me a while to make friends, and so... [Chuckles] So I wouldn't say like I made any like close, close friends. But I still had a good time, and I still hung out with people.

WOMICK: And then you were back here in the spring?

BROWN: And then I was back here, yes. Which was an adjustment after being—not taking classes at Dartmouth for three terms. 'Cause I took classes in Morocco, but it was kinda different.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: It felt a little bit like going out into the real world when I had a job, and I had to like make sure I paid all of my bills on time. Whereas, you know, being Dartmouth and like I have financial aid. Like my

parents pay for like part of my rent and stuff. So I don't usually have to remember those things.

And then I had to like dress like a real person, 'cause at Dartmouth I tend to just kinda roll outta bed. You know when I was doing work, I had to like actually be a presentable person and professional-looking human being. So I feel like I came back to Dartmouth and people would be like, "Why are you all dressed up?" And I'm like, "I'm not.... Oh, well I guess I kinda am, for Dartmouth." It was like an adjustment back.

And the schedule of a student was like not something that I was looking forward to getting back to; because, you know, even though I kind of made myself study a lot during the winter, that was totally voluntary and if I didn't want to that day, it was fine. I could go at my own pace. So getting back into that was like kind of uh, okay. But I did have—I did like my classes a lot. I took something else with Professor Frankenberry, and I took—I don't remember. But I remember liking my classes. [Chuckles] Yeah.

Once I was hanging out with my friends again, we were all sort of on campus, that sort of group I had freshman year from my freshman floor, I started to feel more and more at home again. And so, yeah. It definitely took like half the term—maybe even the whole term—to be completely like re-acclimated to life at Dartmouth.

And also just after—I feel like I saw so many like real world things, and Dartmouth isn't really the real world, you know. Like I saw a lot of people, especially in my internship, really struggling. And sometimes you forget that at Dartmouth, even though there are students who come from families that really struggle. It's not really something that, I think, I've experienced firsthand. It's always just kind of been like stories.

But, you know, when you have a refugee in front of you who, you know, the best thing you can do, because they don't speak English, is get them a minimum-wage job that they have to take two buses to get to—it really kind of wakes you up to, you know, the hardships. You know they have three mouths to feed, or more, and you just like want to do more for them. But you can't really. All you can do is try to help them get that job and help them get the next job and help train them for better things. So, yeah. So that was a bit of a reverse culture shock, I guess.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: But I was happy to be back for sure. I definitely missed being here, so. Because I think by that time I had definitely sort of thought of Dartmouth as one of my homes. And I hadn't been here in a while, so I missed it.

WOMICK: And then that summer, what did you do?

BROWN: That summer I was trying to get a gig in South America, after I'd studied all that Spanish [chuckles], working at a ranch. But it kind of felt a little bit sketchy to me.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: So I didn't end up going. And last minute I was like, What do I do? [Chuckles] So I decided to stay at Dartmouth again [chuckles] and ride the horses at the barn—at the Morton Farm—for the equestrian team. 'Cause in the summer we don't have anything official going on. And so I just kind of went every day and rode. And then I had to make money. So I went back to my sophomore summer jobs, stuff and, you know, did some more hiking, swimming, [chuckles] and all of those summer things.

And there were actually a few of my friends were here over the summer doing various things: taking classes or FYSEP or internships or whatever. So that actually turned out to be kind of like sophomore summer only with less people that I knew on campus.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: Which, summer to me is perfect amount of people on campus. I'm very like sort of...I don't like crowds. I liked going into—not that I ever ate at Collis 'cause I didn't have DBA—but I liked sort of going into Collis and filling up my little tea thing with water 'cause that's what I did, 'cause I had to bring tea from home or buy it, which was just not economical. You know, I'd go up, fill my little thing with hot water, and I'd just sit in Collis, and I'd drink my tea. And it was so nice and quiet. [Laughter]

And then it's like the fall comes and like everybody's here, and you're like, Who are all these people? If I wanted to go to the library and read a book, it was like not crowded. I don't like crowded

libraries; they stress me out 'cause other people being stressed out makes me feel like I should be stressed out.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: So, yeah. That's why I love summers at Dartmouth. [Chuckles]

WOMICK: And so then fall happened and all of the people came back.

BROWN: And all of the people came back. It was nice, though, 'cause I hadn't been on in a fall since my freshman fall.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: So it was really good to sort of be a part of DOC trips. I led a trip, horseback riding of course. Everybody on the team who signs an application, it's like, Oh, you're gonna do horseback riding. Don't even sign up for anything else. [Laughter] They just put you on horseback riding. So I led a trip, and that was great to, you know, sort of see like the fresh '16s coming in. That made me feel old. [Laughter] But it was really fun. And, you know, like Homecoming I hadn't seen since my own. So that was nice. And I did a lap with some of my tripees. So that was really fun.

But, yeah, I think by then, I think kinda starting junior spring I was kind of done being [chuckles]...not done being a student, but I was kind of done with the routine, I guess. I was like kind of feeling ready to not constantly have something due, something due, something due and have to work at it like all throughout the day. I really liked having a job and being like, Okay, now your job is over. And like, you know, it's not like I didn't want to stop learning; 'cause like I said, even when I had a full-time job, I still came home and studied just 'cause I wanted to.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: But I really liked that sort of independence. Like I had an Arabic tutor over that winter in San Diego. And I found it so much more helpful than being in class just because it was like learning what I needed to do instead of like necessarily having to follow the pace of the class. So I think I had sorta come to, like jaded like, Okay, what's the point?

But, you know, I started working on a thesis. And so that was something for me that I think was really important to start. And, you know, I just kinda got through the rest of my classes. I think my grades definitely suffered from apathy [chuckles] starting a little bit in the spring. But by the fall, it was definitely just like, Eh! I really just don't even care right now. And I think part of it was just I was taking classes that I was like kind of, meh, interested in, but not really. So I would do like the parts of the class that were interesting. And like if I just didn't care, I just wouldn't do it.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: So, yeah. I should been more proactive about my GPA, but I wasn't.

WOMICK: And were you spending a lot of time with friends at that point?

BROWN: Mm-hmm. Yeah. I was still hanging out quite a bit.

WOMICK: The same friends still from freshman year?

BROWN: Yeah, same friends from freshman year. I have definitely more friends also from like Cabin and Trail from those two summers I was like pretty active in it. So, yeah. I also broadened my horizons a bit. But, yeah, I would say definitely my friends [chuckles] from my freshman floor were still pretty much the go-to. [Chuckles]

WOMICK: What about winter?

BROWN: Winter was actually pretty fun, 'cause I finally took the skiing PE because I realized that even if it is a few hundred dollars, it's still a few hundred dollars less than it would be otherwise. So I finally took it and it was so much fun. And like having something to go outside and do was amazing. And I somehow ended up with no class on Fridays. And so I would just get up Friday mornings and go skiing. And then the PE class would be like in the afternoons. So I'd just spend like half of Fridays skiing. And it made me really like being outside even though it was cold. So that was great.

WOMICK: Wow! Yeah!

BROWN: My classes were fine, too. I think having physical activity [chuckles]—as you can tell, my freshman winter when I just did cardio to make myself happy—I think having like a physical activity

to do outside made all the difference. And I didn't really notice winter being long and dark and cold as much. And, you know, before when it snowed, it'd be like, Oh, man, it's snowing, and then I'd be like, Oh, yeah, okay. I'm cool with some snow. Like, makes skiing more fun.

WOMICK: Yeah. And now it's spring.

BROWN: Now it's spring. Now I don't hang out so much 'cause my thesis is due in less than a month. [Laughs]

WOMICK: Oh, yeah? What's your thesis on?

BROWN: It's on commitment signaling, or religious commitment signaling, in different types of societies. So I'm looking at, you know, the hunter-gatherer versus, you know, the more egalitarian versus, like, an early state, versus what we call axial states. And, yeah. It's just sort of examining how peoples...how the way people interact with each other and show their affiliation to different things, changes as a society grows or shrinks or different complexities come in. So, yeah. It's interesting.

WOMICK: And you're working with a professor on this?

BROWN: With Professor Frankenberg whom I've mentioned to you. [Chuckles]

WOMICK: Yes, same professor from...almost all of Dartmouth. [Chuckles]

BROWN: Yeah. [Chuckles] She's great. I mean she's so seasoned in this. Like she knows exactly—I've heard so many other students that are writing theses be like, "Oh, my advisor is like not really...like knowing exactly how to help me." But Professor Frankenberg always knows how to help me, so. [Chuckles]

WOMICK: Yeah. And do you like being able to work together and do independent research like that? You said you liked being able to do independent learning.

BROWN: Yes, I really do. Yeah. And like I said, Professor Frankenberg is great at that. Like she lets it be my project. And even if she starts going down a path and I'm like, Mmm, I think... not really, she's like, Okay, then don't. Do something that you want to do. So I really enjoy that aspect of working with her. So, yeah.

WOMICK: So I know you've been kind of on and off and then on for long periods of time, but how would you say that Dartmouth has changed during your time here?

BROWN: How has it changed? I can definitely see a lot of social change as far as.... I think when I came here, there was a lot less emphasis on awareness. I don't know if it was that there was less emphasis, or that I just wasn't aware. But like I feel there's a lot more like sexual assault awareness, a lot more like racial, racism awareness, a lot more just like the way that people treat each other. I think there's a lot more awareness.

I wouldn't say it's necessarily gotten better or worse, the way people treat each other. But like for instance my freshman year, running around the bonfire, people were, you know, like slamming us together and like yelling "Touch the fire!" and all that kind of stuff. And then I remember like going to Homecoming after being away for two Homecomings and thinking it's gonna be the same thing. And then people were like, "Yay, Freshmen!" I was like, Oh, this is... tame. [Laughter]

And I would bet that it's largely because of like this awareness of like how people are treating each other. And, well, you know, it's like kind of a tradition. And I like didn't really mind the way that my freshman year was. And I don't think a lot of people did. But I think it did bother a lot of people, and I think it's important to consider that. So, yeah.

WOMICK: How do you think Dartmouth has changed you as a person in your time here?

BROWN: Hmm. Well, I think...let me think about that. [Chuckles] I think a lot of the changes have happened as a result of being here and then not being here. So I think like having that sort of contrast and like realizing sort of like how fortunate I've been in the world. That, you know, I've just been able to like make the choice to come here and to like have the resources that I have. And then being able to travel and realize that what other people have is like different and not necessarily like better or worse. Sometimes there's like quite a discrepancy. But sometimes you know I just realize more like who, like who I am, I guess.

I think it's definitely been...I've definitely had an interesting experience in that I've had the same friend group since my freshman floor. And I think a lot of people at Dartmouth haven't experienced that necessarily. So I think it's really like taught me how much I need to anchor myself in relationships and stuff like that.

So I think I've just grown in general into more of an adult than I was when I came. I think I was just sort of, you know, whimsical and like, Yay, college! And then like it sort of turned into, like... But actually, when you get into the real world, this is gonna be important. So, yeah. I think it's just helped me to mature.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: But at the same time I think it's allowed me to be more myself even than I was at home, just because I have a lot of different views than like my family and stuff. And so like being on my own, I think, has been really good for me.

WOMICK: So freshman year you were in the River [Cluster].

BROWN: Mm-hmm.

WOMICK: You mentioned that you've lived a lot of different places when you've been on campus. Why don't you talk about that?

BROWN: Yeah. So I was in the Gold Coast Cluster; I was in Streeter in the summer because they close off a lot of housing. And that was great. It was nice and centrally located. And then after that I was away. And then I came back. I had a room in East Wheelock. But I spent most of my time off campus in off-campus houses. And so then I decided that I should move into one. So in the spring, in sophomore spring, I moved into an off-campus house, and I've been living there ever since.

WOMICK: Wow, nice.

BROWN: Yeah.

WOMICK: So there hasn't been as much shifting around since you moved off campus?

BROWN: Well, I moved off campus for a term, and then I was away. And then I was.... Or, wait. No, I moved off campus for two terms, and then I was away. And then I came back to the same house. So, yeah. So there's like kind of been moving, but instead of like moving into storage and then across campus, it was just like move things to the basement and then move them back out of the basement, which is much easier and cheaper. [Chuckles]

WOMICK: Mm-hmm. And has it been mostly the same group of people that you've been living with?

BROWN: Mm-hmm. Mostly, yeah.

WOMICK: How would you say that compares to living on campus, other than the convenience of storage?

BROWN: [Laughs] Yeah. It was great because I like to cook, and I loved having the freedom of getting up on the weekend; and if I had a lot to do, I didn't have to go anywhere. I could just go into my kitchen, make some food, and then, you know, as I was. That was maybe not the best, 'cause I could become kind of a hermit on the weekends. Because, you know, I had this sweet house, so my friends all came to me. [Laughter]

So, yeah, that was good. I mean the group of people I moved in with weren't people that I knew really that much beforehand. I knew one of them, but she ended up moving out and not coming back. And I stayed. So... But that was fine. I mean like the people I live with are great. And I mean they're definitely not my closest friends, but they're definitely my friends, too.

WOMICK: And how did you find out about this house and decide to live there? How'd you meet those people?

BROWN: Well, the friend who was living there that moved out.

WOMICK: Right, So, that was it?

BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

WOMICK: And then she was gone.

BROWN: And then she was gone. And I stayed 'cause I really like living there. [Chuckles]

WOMICK: Nice. So, you said that part of what you liked about Dartmouth is the location. But why don't you talk more about what you like or don't like about where the campus is located?

BROWN: Yes. Well, I think a lot of people coming, especially from cities, think it's like kind of in the middle of nowhere, there isn't a lot to do outside of campus. And people kinda get like, Oh, my gosh! I've been on campus for so long. I think I ended up getting away a lot because I traveled a lot for riding, and like the barn isn't on campus. And so I did do that. And I actually ended up...I have a car that I got over last summer because to get to and from the barn I needed a car.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: And so I've been fortunate, especially this year that I just...if I want to go to like Boston or whatever, I'll just go. And it didn't really bother me. Like when I'm in a city, I don't really go out that much anyway. Like I don't really like going clubbing or I don't really you know do that kind of thing. Usually to entertain myself I just go to friends' house or go outside. Clearly that's something I'm able to do here. And so I never really missed it.

I tend to be kind of a loner sometimes, like I said. And so I just love being able to just walk out into the woods and be like entirely alone. And I also got off campus quite a bit doing stuff with Cabin and Trail, which again isn't really going to another city. But it's just being away and like stepping away. And I think some of the best things I did with Cabin and Trail were just like, you know, get up kinda early on a Saturday and go out into the woods and come back finally. And just like that just getting away was really refreshing.

So that's one of the things I like that I think a lot of people dislike. What have I disliked? Hmm. I haven't really disliked a whole lot. I mean I definitely miss, you know, being able to wear my flip-flops [laughter] and dresses all year round. But that's like not really Dartmouth-related, it's more so Hanover-related.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: And another thing that I kind of like about being here is , I feel like.... When I used to, you know, see like commercials or something at home, I used to feel more like that's what real people

looked like and did. But when I'm at Dartmouth and then I go home and I see a commercial or I see like a TV show, I'm like, Nobody does that. Nobody dresses like that. Nobody looks like that. What?! [Laughter] So I think like in that sense the Dartmouth bubble has been helpful in allowing me into sort of enjoy being myself and like respect being myself. And like being a real person versus whatever the media or Hollywood or wherever TV shows come from these days [chuckles], whatever that image is, like what people do [chuckles] and look like and say and...yeah.

I guess in that sense also the Dartmouth bubble is definitely...definitely it's easier to sort of like fall away from current events in the world, especially when I've got this rigorous schedule. When I am not at Dartmouth and when I'm on an off term, I read the newspaper every day—I mean multiple newspapers every day. And then it's like when I'm taking classes, I'll, you know, I'll glance on CNN for ten minutes before I go on Facebook and before I start my work. So, you know, definitely the Dartmouth bubble has its pros and cons.

But I think I've gotten better at balancing that, especially since being away for a large chunk of my junior year and getting like really used to and like dependent on, you know, being more aware of what's going on. And maybe I don't every day read multiple newspapers, but probably throughout the week read more newspapers.

WOMICK: Yeah, yeah.

BROWN: Yeah.

WOMICK: Have there been any times while you were at Dartmouth that you felt sort of out of place or that you didn't belong?

BROWN: Some times I didn't belong? I've felt pretty at home here from the beginning. Like I said, I came here because I felt at home. I think one thing like sort of going on right now that makes me like kind of question that is I feel like especially with all the awareness of like racism and stuff, like there's always a article in *The D* about, you know, about like a racial incident. And I've definitely had a lot of people ask me, just like friends and acquaintances, like how I felt as a black woman.

And a lot of the experiences that people have experienced just haven't happened to me. And I think part of it is just growing up it was never...like race wasn't ever something I thought about or identified myself as being black. I mean I identified as like Jamaican/Caribbean-American just because, you know, I went back there a lot growing up. And like my parents were active in like a Caribbean-American community. But it was never about being black. It was about being Caribbean. And there were a lot of white people there, too. And, you know... I don't know.

Just, race has never been something like on my mind. And so I guess even if somebody did like say something to me or like do something to me and somebody was like, "Oh, yeah, like that was racist," I don't usually think that myself. Like, I don't know. A lot of the issues I think people have and like link to racism, I'm like, Well, I don't think that was because you're this race or that race. I think it's just 'cause like they were just being mean. Like, I don't know. [Laughter] Like I don't tend to racialize things for myself. And whether that's become I don't notice or what, I'm not sure.

So it's like not...that like kind of is the only place where I'm like, Well, what are you talking about? Why do you feel that way? Why do you feel that like because of race...? Because that's just not something I've experienced. I mean I'm sure those people who have those experiences like have definitely legitimate experiences. And I think it's just really sad that they feel so uncomfortable and that—and it makes me uncomfortable that a place that I feel so comfortable can make somebody else so uncomfortable. And it's like...I don't know. That's just kind of strange to me.

Otherwise, like I said, I feel pretty comfortable. I don't really go outside of my circle all that much anymore these days I think just 'cause I'm old and crotchety and stuck in my ways. But I did do a lot more sort of exploring out of my comfort zone in like freshman and sophomore year. So, yeah. I wouldn't say it's because I'm uncomfortable that I don't explore more. I think I just have things to do, and I'm prioritizing being with the people that I really love and I'm not going to see every day again very soon.

WOMICK: Have there been any times when you've felt particularly welcome?

BROWN: Yeah, definitely. Like coming in for like trips and orientation was really, really welcoming.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: I think the first time I went out to the barn, it was like the moment where I was like, I am completely, 100 percent happy now. [Laughter] And then, yeah. Just sort of like anytime I really joined anything that became significant in my life, I felt really welcome there.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: So like when I joined drumming and when I joined the equestrian team and when I like just sort of walked into Cabin and Trail one day randomly, yeah. Those were all like very, very welcoming things. Whenever I went to like events at like, you know, like Amarna or Phi Tau, like Wine and Cheese and Milque and Cookies. Those were all like welcoming places to me. Yeah.

Actually I think also, as much as the Greek system gets pretty bashed here, I think it is a pretty open system. I mean even though I didn't always take advantage of the fact that they had open doors, I think it's great that they did have open doors. And when I went with my friends, I felt comfortable 'cause I was with my friends, and it was us, you know, hanging out or going to see people in those houses, hanging out with them. So, yeah.

WOMICK: So you've mentioned drumming and equestrian and Cabin and Trail a lot. You want to talk more about each of those?

BROWN: Sure. I guess I'll start with equestrian, since it's what I do the most. I mean I grew up riding, I think I mentioned, early. And I came to Dartmouth partially because I knew they had a varsity equestrian team, and that I could ride a lot and pay a little or nothing. [Laughter] So freshman fall I was like, alright, I'm gonna go try out for the team. And like I said, that was...it was a great moment for me 'cause I got to the barn; and, you know, we got in the tack room, and the coach said, "Okay, this is how we're gonna do blah de blah de blah." And then she just kind of delegated people to go get the horses that we were gonna use for tryouts.

I went and got this little Arab pony; her name was Tango. And I just remember, you know, takin' her out of her stall and brushing her. And like all the sort of like stress—not stress—but all the sort of tension of, you know, like being in a new place and like doing new

things just kind of left; I didn't even know it was there. And I was just like, Uuh, this is where I need to be. [Laughs]

So I made the team, thank goodness. And I just was really...it was like something really important to me in life and just, like...if I couldn't have ridden, I don't know what I would have done. I would have been really sad. And I think it's definitely kept me going. And those days when, you know, I'm feeling kind of a little sick; but I guess if I can ride, I guess I can do other things, too. [Laughter] So, yeah. That's been a great thing to have here.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: And then World Music Percussion Ensemble. I haven't done it in a while because when the equestrian team went full NCAA—because we were really like varsity but not NCAA before—all of the practices, the drumming practices and the equestrian team lifts were always at the same time. And so I haven't done it in a while, but I do miss it a lot.

Oh, another student group that I did on campus—I always forget that this is a student group because it was literally just like my friends—was Ballet Folklorico, the Mexican folkdance. I started doing that freshman spring, which is when it started up. And, yeah, that was like literally just all my friends. So I always thought of it as just hanging out and not like an official group. But it was! And I got PE credit for it, too. [Laughter]

So, yeah, that I haven't done this term either just because I've been really busy working on my thesis. But that has been a great release for me, too, and just like learning a dance form, 'cause I can't dance anything else. [Chuckles] But it's great, 'cause it's so like...I don't know. The movements are so like choreographed that like you can't mess it up 'cause you just have to do what the choreography says. So, yeah. So I did that throughout, pretty much throughout, starting freshman spring until just now.

And then...what was the other one?

WOMICK: Cabin and Trail.

BROWN: Cabin and Trail, yeah. Like I said, I've always been pretty outdoorsy. And I don't know why I didn't do it sooner. [Chuckles] But I think that was another thing where I was just sort of looking for

new things to do early on at Dartmouth. And then it just sort of happened that the perfect opportunity when a lot of my friends were having homework and stuff over the weekend, and I didn't have any 'cause I wasn't taking classes. So might as well go for a hike or go for a swim or do whatever was happening that week.

WOMICK: Yeah.

BROWN: So, yeah. It's been a great journey. [Chuckles]

WOMICK: Mhmm. So would you say there's such a thing as a quote "Dartmouth community" here?

BROWN: Yeah. I think that there is a Dartmouth community, but I think that people tend to put their sort of micro-commun—[chuckles] this is so my thesis—I think most people tend to identify with their micro-communities first in a lot of ways within Dartmouth. So like, you know, if you are—you know, like when I was in the gym in San Diego, and I met that Dartmouth alum, I'd be like, Oh, my gosh! Like, Dartmouth—cool! You know? And like I had this mentor who went to Dartmouth like years ago. But we have like this Dartmouth connection.

And I think it comes through really strong outside of Dartmouth. And then when you get to Dartmouth, everybody tends to identify more with their sorority or fraternity or their like racial identity within the Dartmouth community or their sexual identity within the Dartmouth community. And then I think it becomes almost like more fragmented like when you're actually at Dartmouth. But then as soon as you go beyond that, then all of a sudden there's this community that doesn't really always show up when everybody's together. So....

WOMICK: But you think it's something that everyone can be a part of here?

BROWN: Yeah. I think it's something that everyone can be a part of here. I just don't think I see it come out here as much as I do other places. 'Cause I think like in the heat of the moment, people...there's just so...you're seeing everybody every day and you're, I don't know. It's very hard to unify unless there's something to unify around at that time. So like I think when people leave and they look back, the fact that you went to Dartmouth in the wider scheme, now you have other macro-communities that are really important at the time. And like you're tuned into like the nuances that would separate you.

WOMICK: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: For those things. And so you're not really so tuned to the nuances that would separate you when you were at Dartmouth.

WOMICK: Yeah. When you think about your time after graduation, have you anticipated being involved with the college?

BROWN: Well, I don't have a job yet. [Laughter] And some of the jobs I've applied to happen to be at Dartmouth. So I could actually still be here. And if I'm away, I think at some point I would definitely wanna visit. You know, if I make a lot of money in the future, I definitely want to donate to the Morton Farm. And I think—I've been lucky enough to be here on an endowed scholarship—and I think like that's really important. I definitely want to give back if I am in that situation in the future.

And if I'm not, then I think, you know, like being a mentor for like a Tucker student in my area, that's like definitely something I would love to do. It's something that, you know, I experienced that I think was great. And, you know, I think I would be one of those people involved in the alum community and like interview [chuckles] prospective students; because, you know, it has become my home, and I sort of like have another family here. And so I think I would love to stay involved in some small way in the future.

WOMICK: So is there anything I haven't asked you or that we haven't talked about yet that you think we should cover?

BROWN: Hmm. I think Dartmouth has been a great place for me to grow both intellectually and as a person and a great place for me to mature. And I know not everybody feels that way. But it's definitely been somewhere that I've always felt comfortable and I've always loved being, obviously; I'm still here. And I mean I honestly...you know, it was just Dimensions, and, you know, I was working with the Dressage Club. And, you know, I had prospective students be like, "Oh, so you're a senior. How have you liked it?" And I can honestly say it's been a great time, and I've really made a home for myself here.

WOMICK: So you said that you don't think everyone has a great time here. Do you think there are any particular things that make it more difficult to have a good time here?

BROWN: I'm not sure 'cause I'm not those people. [Chuckles] I don't really know what's going on in their head. But I think I've had a lot of friends be involved in certain circles and then switch. And then do this. And I guess I've just been really consistent. And I think I just got really, really fortunate to have a really good group of friends early on. Which makes sense, because college is a time when everybody's changing and everybody's growing. And, you know, people change onto different paths that sometimes don't really come as close together as they might have started. And you know D-Plans, people just don't see people for a really long time. And, you know, that kind of thing. So, yeah. I mean I don't know. You'd have to ask those people. [Chuckles]

WOMICK: Yeah. So what advice would you give to incoming students or maybe even students who are just considering coming to Dartmouth?

BROWN: I would say that people should definitely try lots of things. And if you don't like it, don't do it. But try it. And don't just try it. But like, give it a chance. And that's something I definitely wish I had done more of, especially like academically. And even socially. Even though I did try a lot of things, I think there are still a lot of things that I didn't try. But I mean you also can't try everything or you'll kill yourself. And what else? Just do what you love.

WOMICK: Yeah. Okay. Do you have anything to add before we turn of the machine?

BROWN: No. I think I'm done.

WOMICK: Okay.

BROWN: Peace out.

WOMICK: Yeah!

BROWN: Don't write that in the transcription. [Laughter]

[End of Interview]