

Covid Gary Vashus

Cara: This is Cara Vanderree at the Ashland City Library. It is March 10, 2021, and we are speaking with Gary Vashus.

Cara: Gary, you do know we're recording your interview, right?

Gary: Yes.

Cara: Gary, when did you first hear about the coronavirus?

Gary: When I was in the hospital at the VA in January. I got out in March, and they were talking about it then.

Cara: Was this the VA in Wichita?

Gary: Yeah.

Cara: What were they talking about?

Gary: Oh, not too much, other than just the coronavirus was coming out of China. That was about all I knew.

Cara: What was your reaction?

Gary: Another one of them deals from China, and knowing them, they'd do anything.

Cara: Who lives in your home?

Gary: Just me and my wife, Judy.

Cara: Did Coronavirus make you have to make any changes in how you lived?

Gary: No, not at home. We don't do much running around or anything, so we stayed pretty safe at home.

Cara: When did the virus become real to you?

Gary: I suppose this last year when they were making all the fuss about wearing masks. They closed the hospitals down. It's been a year ago. They closed the hospitals down and Judy can't go in with me. If I have to go see a doctor, I go by myself. It's that kind of deal.

Cara: Do you remember when it started to impact how you lived?

Gary: A year ago.

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Cara: In March, when they shut down?

Gary: You don't run around talking to everybody unless you know for sure they ain't got it. There's have been so many people I know that's had it, and I've been very lucky I've stayed away from it.

Cara: Have most of the people you know been able to survive?

Gary: Oh, yeah, OK. A lot of them got over it. The only ones I know, like Bill Broadie, somebody older and got a weak immune system or something... Like me. If I hear somebody's got it, I don't go around them. I stay away from them.

Cara: Did anything in your life change then, how did it affect besides Judy not being able to go in with you? Were there any other effects on your life?

Gary: Not really. Well, you know, if we had to go to Wichita to go to the doctor, we had to find somewhere there was a drive through to get food. You couldn't go in and sit down and eat or anything like that. That's about the only changes I had, just when we went to Wichita to doctors' appointments or something, because when we're here, I just stay home. I've got two or three places I go kind of regular, and other than that I don't go.

Cara: You must have been devastated when the library was closed!

Gary: Yes, I was! There was lots of stuff I wanted to do.

Cara: Are there any changes that you didn't realize were happening at the time and now they're affecting you?

Gary: I don't think so.

Cara: It is your job or business or anything affected?

Gary: I don't have a job and I don't have a business. I just sit around and watch the clock.

Cara: So being retired made it not affect you quite as much.

Gary: Right. That may be a blessing.

Cara: When do you think life will get back to normal?

Gary: When the government people decide to get out of the way and let things get fixed.

Cara: Do you see that happening any time soon?

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Gary: No, at least four years.

Cara: OK. They're talking about, the "new normal," which means we're going to have to get used to some changes. What do you think this new normal will be?

Gary: I have no idea, because I don't know how far they're going to go. This new normal is more or less a political deal. It's not the virus itself that's going to cause the problem, it's the politicians meddling with it.

Cara: Did you get the vaccination?

Gary: Yes, I'm glad I did. I feel safer. Not that... I've still got to be careful I don't get it, but I do feel safer having the shot.

Cara: How do you think other people feel that the shot?

Gary: Probably the same way.

Cara: So, it makes you more willing to go out and go back to your normal life.

Gary: Well. Yeah, I guess you could say that because you've still got to be careful where you go. When we go somewhere, we've got to be careful where we go and who we talk to.

Cara: Do you think we'll be back to normal in four years then?

Gary: I can't answer that because I don't know what's going to happen. It's all the regulations and stuff like that's going to make a lot of difference on it, it ain't the virus itself, it's the people running all these programs. That's the biggest challenge we got.

Gary: Gary, thank you for speaking with us today.