

StoryCorps Interview at Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Blossom Smith and Raivynn Smith

BS: I started coming to the library when I was very, very young maybe four or five years old. My mom or my dad brought me to the library.

RS: And what's the first thing you remember, the smell or the sight?

BS: The first thing I remember is that the library was a big part of our lives. Both my parents were educators; my father was a professor at the University of Cincinnati and my mother was a schoolteacher, so reading and books and libraries were always a big part of our lives. And the Bond Hill Library is the library we used to go to and we lived very close, the library was like two blocks away. The library was a very small branch in the heart of Bond Hill and it was just amazing. I loved that library. Me and my younger brother we used to pull our little red wagon and we'd fill it up with books at the library and we'd go to all the programs and in their basement they would show cartoons on Saturdays me and my brother just loved it. I remember how everything was just warm and inviting it was, everything was wooden: wooden tables, wooden chairs. And I remember getting so excited when I learned how to use the card catalogue. And I could totally go anywhere I wanted with the library, with the books. I could totally read about outer space, or in other countries, I could read about how people lived. I could learn anything I wanted to in a book, and it was just amazing to me. That was like my favorite thing to do was sit in a corner and read. In the summer time you would get on your bike and you would just ride to the library and we'd run around and we would go to the store and get penny candy. It was a very good childhood, it was filled with a lot of enrichment, a lot of growth. It was a very strong community bond there.

RS: Yea. Now it's kind of...it's still a community but especially after 2008 with the change in the economy a lot of the stores have closed, a lot of...the mall is closed, it's a different neighborhood than how you described it seems.

BS: It's totally changed a lot but the one thing that's stayed consistent is the library.

RS: That's right, it's still there.

BS: Yea, the library is still there. I mean, they merged it with another library and now it's like even bigger and better and it's super, super busy.

RS: It is.

BS: There's always people there. The library gives so much back to the community. It's amazing and wonderful that the library was able to combine those two branches and make an even better facility for both of those communities to go to and share.

RS: And how long have you been working at the library?

BS: I've been with the library almost 23 years. I'm not a nurse, I'm not a teacher but I'm kind of like combination of that. I'm helping people grow, I'm still fostering a love for learning I'm still helping people mend their lives together.