

RL00170-CS-1659_01 / Henry Donaldson (primary interviewee) and Laura Donaldson interview recording, 1993 July 16 / Duke Digital Repository

Laura Shepard Donaldson: —most of the time. And when he does it, when the song Nat King Cole did about, what was it, "Lord, I pray that you'll listen to my plea, keep her close to you till she comes back to me, and calls me baby." Well, he has called me baby down through the years. About the only time that Don calls me Laura is in an introduction. But other than that, it's, "baby this, baby that." Well, right away, I started calling him Don. Henry is okay, but to me, he was more than just Henry. He was my Don when we started going. His name being Donaldson, I just shortened the Donaldson. Instead of saying Donaldson, I started calling him Don.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Now, practically everyone else calls him Don, because I called him Don down through the years, but it has been Don and Baby for all these years. If he gets to Heaven, and I'm already there, he's not going to come around looking for Mrs. Donaldson, or looking for Laura. He's going to look for Baby. Somewhere around the throne, I hope he'll find Baby. And if he goes first, that's what I'm going to go looking for, Don.

Rhonda Mawhood: I'd like to ask you just some questions. We have forms that we try to fill out with all of the people whom we interview, and it's just family information, mostly, so that we can have the same kinds of information for everyone. We ask about the names of your parents, and church memberships, and things like that. We'll try not to let it take too long. Would that be all right?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yes, that's fine.

Rhonda Mawhood: The envelopes have sealed, but the heat —I'll open this up, and I'll do one for each of you. Maybe I'll ask one of you a question, and then, the other, and try to do it efficiently. It's not as romantic as what you've been telling me recently, but we'll try to get through it. Okay. So, Mr. Donaldson, your last name is Donaldson. Do you have a middle name, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: I have one, but I've never used it.

Rhonda Mawhood: Never used it?

Henry Teman Donaldson: The middle name is Teman, T-E-M-A-N.

Rhonda Mawhood: Teman.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But I never used it. There's nothing on any of my correspondence, or anything.
Henry Teman Donaldson.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay, I'll note that you don't use it.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. And your address is 4821 —

Henry Teman Donaldson: Gordon.

Rhonda Mawhood: What is the ZIP here, please?

Henry Teman Donaldson: 28405.

Rhonda Mawhood: And when your name appears on the tape, Mr. Donaldson, and on the transcript, how would you like your name to appear? Henry Donaldson.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Henry Donaldson.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Very few people know about the middle name. Very, very few.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: They all use my name for him, Don.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. Mrs. Donaldson, do you have a middle name?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Leola.

Rhonda Mawhood: L-E —

Laura Shepard Donaldson: O-L-A, Laura.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. Laura, that's pretty.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: My maiden name was Shepard, and mine was S-H-E-P-A-R-D.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. Your address is the same. And how would you like to be known on the printed materials, Mrs. Donaldson?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Laura. Because Don is the only one who calls me Baby.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay, I won't put Baby on.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: During that time he called me Tangerine a lot at school before. So it was

Tangerine, and then he narrowed it down to Baby.

Rhonda Mawhood: Why was it Tangerine?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I guess it was that popular song that was out there.

Henry Teman Donaldson: And I liked them so well.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Tangerine. He loves Tangerine, yes.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I tell you, used to love those things. If there was one anywhere, I get one, and eat half a dozen. I love tangerines until this day, so I guess that's why I —

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I started out as Tangerine, but as time went by, I became Baby.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And Baby I will die.

Rhonda Mawhood: Do you want to be Laura Shepard Donaldson, or Laura Donaldson?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Well, you can use the Shepard. I'm proud of that, too. All right.

Rhonda Mawhood: Now Mr. Donaldson, could you tell me your date of birth? You told me a minute ago.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yes. 8-22-23.

Rhonda Mawhood: 22-23. Okay. And you were born in Wilmington, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, I was born in Brunswick County.

Rhonda Mawhood: Brunswick County. Not far.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Winnabow Subdivision, Lebuck, L-E-B-U-C-K. That's where I was born. But out from the little headquarters of Winnabow, North Carolina, that's in Brunswick County.

Rhonda Mawhood: How do you spell Winnabow, please, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: W-I-N-N-A-B-O-W.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you.

Henry Teman Donaldson: And then, right out from Winnabow, just jot down Lebuck, L-E-B-U-C-K. That's me, raised right outside of Winnabow.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay, thank you. You're married with spouse, okay. And your date of birth, Mrs. Donaldson?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: 7-1-23.

Rhonda Mawhood: And where were you born, ma'am?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Gray Town. No, I was born in Verona, but the little community that I was born in was called Gray Town. My mother was a Gray prior to marrying my father, and it was such a large family. They called it Gray Town, G-R-A-Y, T-O-W-N.

Rhonda Mawhood: Have you been back there recently?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Oh, yes. I can't. They bought up our property for the Marine base. A lot of our property, we had 120 acres back in there. During the '40s, when they were building the Marine base, up at Jacksonville, they took over this. Actually, they changed the name. The whole area became known as Jacksonville, but there's still a little marker there, and the little depot that says Verona. And in our neck of the woods, back down on the river, it was Gray Town, because there were so many Grays. One of my uncles had 23 children. This was about two wives. The first one died.

Rhonda Mawhood: I was feeling sorry for the wife. I feel better, now that I know there were two.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yeah. The first wife died, so the second wife took up with the first wife, and there were 23 children in his family. And Uncle Sam had about eight. But this is where it is. If you look, if you blink your eye, you'll miss it. But there's a small marker there that says Verona. And we were born, our place was back down in the area. Because there were so many Grays down there, they called it Gray Town.

Rhonda Mawhood: The 120 acres your family had, was that from your mother's family?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: When my parents married, they had, my daddy bought this 15-acre plot. When the first child came along, this, of course, was all before my time, He bought a second plot, and then, in the latter years, he bought this additional 80 acres of land. To show you the change in things, from then and now, both of them were dead, when the government took over this property. When we went to settlement, for all of that property, we got less than \$1,000 for all of this property.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Well, my daddy, after he stopped teaching, he did a lot of building, and he also had a blacksmith's shop that he did a lot of —Well, I think we were about the only one in that area who had what is known as a forge. Some called it a bellows. He turned this thing to make the flame, and he used to shoe their horses, and repair their carts and wagons, and things like that.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Well, we didn't have money. But I would say that, because of his having taught for so long, and with his being such a needed person in the community, if it were a chimney, he knew how to lay brick. If it were a mechanical thing, like needing a tire repaired, the rim on the cart, or something, this metal thing that goes around it, he had this forge that he could do, weld this thing, and put it back on. He was just, well, as the Bible say, he was well known in the gates, because he was a person who was needed in the community. So looking back, it was an interesting time.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: It was a painful time. Because, as I told you, my mother died when I was young. And then, suddenly, he was killed just before the takeover of this property. The lady's name is Mrs. Renie Griffith, he was standing by the side of the highway, and she veered off the road, and struck and killed him instantly. This is how Don got his baby, because I came to Wilmington with my sisters. But looking back, some of the memories are painful, like losing both of them. But when we went to settlement, this was before I married Don, we had to go back to Jacksonville, because the government was taking over all this area.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: They started at Camp Davis, then they moved on up into the Verona/Jacksonville area and took that in, for the Marine base. So I was in school here then, and I had to get out of school, and go to Jacksonville about this property, because all the heirs were supposed to go. I remember this lady's name, Miss Allen. But when we went, they wanted, for all of this property, to give us \$200. And I said no. My brother was trying to shush me up. Because if you were Black, back then, they didn't call you Black, unless they did it in a derogatory way.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: You were a Negro or nigger, which I didn't like. I accepted the classification of Negro, but I could not abide nigger. But in most instances, you got called this. But my brother, when I stood up, the judge said, "What?" And I stood up and I said, "I refuse to accept this." He said, "Girl, what do you mean, you refuse to accept this?" I said, "I refuse to accept given away the property that my father worked so hard to leave for his children, for \$200, when we have over 120 acres of land back there."

Laura Shepard Donaldson: He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I just told you." So my brother's pulling me over to, "Sit down, Sis." He called me, Sis. "Sit down, Sis, sit down." And I said no. He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "And I resent you telling," what's this lady's name, Miss Allen, she was White, "this lady has a big farm, and her husband is dead, and left her with all these children. And you're going to tell her that she can only have \$300 for her farm?" My brother said, "Sit down, Sis, sit down." He said, "Well, what do you know about property?" I said, "I know that my daddy worked too hard for it. And I know that Mr. Allen worked too hard for his."

Laura Shepard Donaldson: So he said, "Well, we'll call a recess." This was the first time we had played with—in our community. It wasn't as racist as some. We had grown up playing with the White children, and we were used to them coming to my house, where we were living in the country. But this was the first time that an adult White person had ever embraced me. I was afraid she was going to drop some of the snuff. She dipped the snuff. It was brown stuff. But she grabbed me, and she said, "Honey, thank you so much. Thank you so much. I didn't know how to talk to him like that, but thank you so much, and the Lord's going to bless

you. Because I didn't have nobody to talk for me, and I couldn't afford a lawyer, but thank you so much for telling him, for me."

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I don't know how much she got, but when she came out, when we went back, she was happy. I didn't know what we were going to get. They notified us months later by letter, but he got up off the little bit that he was offering, and we came out to about \$1,000, which still wasn't enough, but it was more than we would've gotten. But my brother, with him being older, being the oldest one in the family, and he knew about Jim Crow. I was too young, really, to know, because we had not been exposed. We younger children had not been exposed, as he had.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But with my daddy's background of having taught, I can remember when the White people, because of his educational background, if they had a business letter that needed to be written, they would come and ask him to write it for them. As time went by, I can remember them coming under cover of darkness. Because, as I grew older, I could imagine how humiliating it was, that here is someone you consider beneath you. But because they had the perseverance to push forward, and to learn, you have to come to them. But on the other hand, they were friendly with us, in a lot of ways, because we kids played together. They thought nothing of it.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But when it comes down to, you've got something of importance that has to be attended to, here, you have got to come to someone you consider beneath you to do your correspondence. But so be it. This is the way it was. But I never felt superior. By the same token, I did not feel inferior, but I felt that we are equal. This was the way that my daddy, he always told us, "You are just as good as anyone, and don't ever let anyone tell you that you are not just as good as the next person." So I grew up with that feeling, that I was just as good. And even though they were with me for only a short time, I appreciate and pass on to my children the things that my parents taught us. End of story.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you very much. It's a wonderful story.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay, Mr. Donaldson, could you tell me your mother's name please, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Blanche Brinson Donaldson.

Rhonda Mawhood: And her first name, is it C-H-I-E, or C-H-E?

Henry Teman Donaldson: C-H-E.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay, and her middle name? I'm sorry, I don't know how to spell it.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Brinson, B-R-I-N-S-O-N.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Brinson.

Rhonda Mawhood: Was Brinson her maiden name, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: That's right.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Do you know your mother's date of birth, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, let me see. No, but I can get close to it. Mama was 53 years old in 1948, when she died.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay, so she was born about 1895, I think.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. Yeah, something like that.

Rhonda Mawhood: That be right? Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: About 1895. She was 53 years old, when she died the 13th day of December, in 1948.

Rhonda Mawhood: Wasn't her birthday in May?

Henry Teman Donaldson: It was in June.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: June, June.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, it was in June. June the 6th, I remember that.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. And my daddy was born in 1882.

Rhonda Mawhood: When did your father pass on, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: He passed the 5th of January, 1939.

Rhonda Mawhood: Where was your mother born, Mr. Donaldson?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Columbus County, Chadbourn, North Carolina.

Rhonda Mawhood: For her occupation, what should I write, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Well, Mama was a teacher, and I say that was, she went to school, here in Wilmington, to the eighth grade. During that time, they could go out to what they call a Rosenwald school, and teach from the first through, I think it was the sixth grade. And this is what she did for a while. I don't remember the year. But there came a time that teachers had to be certified, they had to get a certificate, and they would go ahead to this federal, state, it's federal/state now, but they call it federal, some teachers call it.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But anyway, and it was \$300 to go get this course. Mama didn't have the money, so she had to come out of the school, and go into the White people's kitchen to cook for them. That was a great milestone for them, about "being a nigger school teacher to cook for me." Anyway, Mama taught from the first through to sixth grade, over in Brunswick County, over at Winnabow. It was a Rosenwald school, as they call it.

Henry Teman Donaldson: At that time, oh, teachers made a lot of money. I think it was something like about 60 cents a day, and they was in school, and school didn't last as long then, as it did now. I think it was three months out the year, for something like 60 cents per day, that they got from teaching. She taught all of her children, except my youngest sister. All of us went to school. Mama, she was the only teacher at that time, over in that section. I don't know whether it was the county, or the state, or who it was, who built this little one-room building and all the classes. It was about half as, say from there to there, this little narrow place. He was sitting in the middle of it.

Rhonda Mawhood: The Rosenwald school?

Henry Teman Donaldson: The Rosenwalds, right, what they call them.

Rhonda Mawhood: A man named Rosenwald, who was the President of Sears Roebuck, who dumped a lot of money—

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right.

Rhonda Mawhood: He was a Northerner. But they didn't have money for—

Henry Teman Donaldson: That's right.

Rhonda Mawhood: African-American children in the South.

Henry Teman Donaldson: They named a school after him, Rosenwald. That's right.

Rhonda Mawhood: And what was—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: They say there's one, right out here on Market Street.

Rhonda Mawhood: On Market Street? I've heard about it. I haven't —

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And then, the Hampstead—

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, it's at —

Laura Shepard Donaldson: A little further up.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Camp Davis area. Those tall buildings.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: The outbuilding, in the Scottsville area?

Henry Teman Donaldson: No.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Is it down in —

Henry Teman Donaldson: Out of the way now.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yeah, out there beyond Nick, where Roland lives.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Is that one of them?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: That's one of them.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I know they talk about that.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: That's one of the Rosenwald schools, that has the high, high walls.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I think it has a marker on it that says Rosenwald School.

Rhonda Mawhood: Mm-hmm.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Go out, right out here to the end of this road, and —

Henry Teman Donaldson: Well, she would never find it, love, because all that building around there, she'd just see another little building.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Well, shush, if you have time, we'll jump in the car, and run you down, and let

you see it.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Probably.

Rhonda Mawhood: If we have time when we finish with the forms, I would like to.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, well —

Rhonda Mawhood: But I know how to get to—

Henry Teman Donaldson: I got to be at some meeting, too, sweetheart. I got to do the meeting, too.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Well, I'll run down there with the right face, if you don't.

Henry Teman Donaldson: You couldn't even find it. But anyway, [indistinct 00:22:55].

Rhonda Mawhood: I know, I know how to get to Market Street from here.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Okay. Well, go ahead.

Rhonda Mawhood: But I might be able to look for it on my own, or [indistinct 00:23:02].

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Do you know where White Bridge is? This exclusive neighborhood, down —

Rhonda Mawhood: No, I don't.

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, I don't.

Rhonda Mawhood: I don't know any exclusive neighborhoods in Wilmington.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: They got rocks that live back in there. But it has this little sign there that says, White Bridge Community. But this is just before you get there, and it's on the right hand side of the road. The building is almost as tall as a one-story building.

Henry Teman Donaldson: They were the one [indistinct 00:23:32] bodies at Camp Davis, up there where we built the big pile, the big white brick house, where Liletta Mae taught?

Henry Teman Donaldson: The building's still there, right in the yard of Mount Holly Church. That's where you're talking about.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But this one, over across from Mount Holly?

Henry Teman Donaldson: This is one, the one, that's where you're talking about. But that's way up there at Camp Davis. You've forgotten where it is.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: No, that's before you get insults.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Okay. Well, then, okay. We—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Never mind. But we know where we're talking about.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But we know where we're talking about.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But if you go take her out there to Scotts Hill, you're not going to see no Rosenwald school.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I know it when I get to it. It's on that road.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, well it's all at Camp Davis. But go ahead with your questions.

Rhonda Mawhood: Well, we don't work tomorrow, so maybe some of us will take it.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah.

Rhonda Mawhood: We've been taking tours around Wilmington, looking at older places, so —

Henry Teman Donaldson: Okay.

Rhonda Mawhood: And what was your father's name, Mr. Donaldson?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Leonard, M-A-R-S-L-E-N-N-I, Marslenni, Donaldson.

Rhonda Mawhood: M-A-R?

Henry Teman Donaldson: S.

Rhonda Mawhood: S.

Henry Teman Donaldson: L-E-N-N.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Where that derives from, I don't know. Never have heard him say.

Rhonda Mawhood: Interesting. Where was your father born, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: He was born at Winnabow, in the same Lebuck section. Mama met him when she went over there to teach.

Rhonda Mawhood: And what was your father's occupation, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: He was an old farmer, a plow and a mule.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did he own his land, or did he rent?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, he owned his land, and it came down through the family, and he had about 80 acres. It was handed down from his grandfather, and then his daddy lived there.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Actually, he was the oldest one, so it came down to him. He divided that between the other brothers.

Rhonda Mawhood: And Mrs. Donaldson, I forgot to ask you, in what county Gray Town or Verona is?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Onslow.

Rhonda Mawhood: Onslow? Thank you. And what was your mother's name, please, ma'am?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Mary Alice Ann Sylvania Gray. Just put Mary Alice Gray, because back then, when the baby was born, everyone said, "Name of this, name of that," So she got tagged with all these.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But Mary Alice Gray was the maiden name, and my father's name was Edward Willie Shepard. And I was S-H-E-P-A-R-D.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. Do you know your mother's date of birth, ma'am?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: February 5th, 1880. My dad is September the 19th, 1880. She had him by a few months.

Rhonda Mawhood: And your mother passed away in 1933?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: September the 19th, 1933, 11:19 at night.

Rhonda Mawhood: 11:19, '93?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: No, I said at night.

Rhonda Mawhood: At night? Oh, my goodness. I'm sorry.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: That time is burned indelibly in my brain.

Rhonda Mawhood: Sure, yes. The time of my father's death is, too. We remember these things.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: One does.

Rhonda Mawhood: Your mother was born? In Gray Town?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yes.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: It was better known as Verona, but on the postage, I mean, on the address it fit Verona, but Gray town was in Verona.

Rhonda Mawhood: And your mother's occupation, ma'am?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Just housewife.

Rhonda Mawhood: Your father was a teacher? And was your father born in Verona?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yes, he was.

Rhonda Mawhood: Mr. Donaldson, could I ask you the names of your sisters and brothers, please, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: All right. I'll start at the oldest sister Thelma McFadden. That's her marriage name.

Rhonda Mawhood: And if you know the years that they were born, if you remember, then I'll put those down too.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yes, Thelma, I need to go upstairs and get the Bible, but we can figure it out right here. Thelma is seven years older than me.

Henry Teman Donaldson: She'll be 77, the 6th of August, and I will be 70, the 22nd of August. Now she's seven years older, so I was born in '23, and seven from 23 would be what?

Rhonda Mawhood: 16?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: 16.

Rhonda Mawhood: 1916. Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: All right, that's Thelma. Now the next one, brother, Leonard James Donaldson. There's two years between our age.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Excuse me just a minute.

Henry Teman Donaldson: So you figure from that.

Rhonda Mawhood: He's older than you by two years?

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, he's older than me by a few years. When I say that, it's two years different between his age, and Thelma's age.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. So, 1918?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Right.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Okay. Now there's another sister that's two years younger than he.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Sadie Muhammad. She turned Muslim on us.

Rhonda Mawhood: Oh, and where does she live now?

Henry Teman Donaldson: She lives in Federal.

Rhonda Mawhood: Oh.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, she went in New York, stayed a long time, got with Muslim guy there, and came back with a new name. Sadie Muhammad, M-U-H-A-M-M-A-D. She lives in Federal.

Rhonda Mawhood: How did the family take that, when she came home with her husband?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Well, we didn't like it too much, but we've never discussed it too much. We just busted it off as one of those things.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Then there's another brother that's a couple years younger than Sadie, Laverne.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Then comes me.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Born in '23.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Then the youngest girl's sister, Ernestine, she's couple years younger than me. She's 68 this year. Ernestine James. So that's the family. Three boys and the three girls.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you. And Mrs. Donaldson, if I could ask you the same question, your brothers and sisters?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Percy Gerald.

Rhonda Mawhood: That's Percy Gerald, okay.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Percy Gerald Shepard. Harvey, no middle name, Shepard. Roy Edward. Mary Ellen.

Rhonda Mawhood: Does she have a married name?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Armstrong.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Annie Louise Sellars.

Rhonda Mawhood: How does she spell her last name?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: S-E-L-L-A-R-S.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Victoria Jane, J-A-N-E, Wells. And Lowell, L-O-W-E-L-L. Lowell Edsell, E-D-S-E-L-L, Shepard.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I'm between. Well, he's the youngest one.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And I'm Laura Leola.

Rhonda Mawhood: One question you have in common is your children. So if I can have the names and the dates of birth of your children?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Well, just Lenora.

Rhonda Mawhood: Is that L-E-N-O—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: O-R-A.

Rhonda Mawhood: A? Okay. And her married name?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Adam.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: A-L-L-E-N.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. When was she born?

Henry Teman Donaldson: March the 10th, 10/19/44.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We got married in '43, and she was born in '44. All right? Edward Jerome Donaldson.

Rhonda Mawhood: J-E-R—

Henry Teman Donaldson: O-M-E.

Rhonda Mawhood: O-M-E? Okay. I saw you looking at Mr. Donaldson, to see if he would get the birthdate.

Henry Teman Donaldson: He was born March the 14th, or 19th, was it '40?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: '49.

Henry Teman Donaldson: '49.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. Yeah, Alexis

Henry Teman Donaldson: Lana was the one you probably talked with.

Rhonda Mawhood: Lana?

Henry Teman Donaldson: 8/20.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: A-L-E-X-I-S, Lana Alexis.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Her birthday is May 20th, 1948.

Rhonda Mawhood: 1948? So she's between —

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, no, she's the youngest.

Rhonda Mawhood: She's the youngest? Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. Then Jerome was born, Lana was born in '48. Jerome was born in '49, right?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: No.

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, wait. No, no, no. Lana was born in '50, 1950.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. '49 and '50, that's right, because I was working in Washington, DC —

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: When Lana was born. I keep thinking about Mama's death in '48, Lana was born in 1950, yeah.

Rhonda Mawhood: And they were all born in Wilmington?

Henry Teman Donaldson: All of them were born in Wilmington.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. How many grandchildren do you have?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Four. Three little girls in the world. Grandson belongs to Joyce. His name is Arnold Bradford Taylor. That's the grandson.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Joyce has been married twice.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: The oldest three girls are Corey and Michelle. You weren't taking [indistinct 00:34:40].

Rhonda Mawhood: You could say them for the tape. I haven't been writing down people's, their names. It's like, Corey and Michelle?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Dominique Sharday.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Hart and Caree.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Angel Face, Lauren Caree. L-A-U-R-E-N, C-A-R-E-E. They convinced my first name, and her other grandmother's first name.

Rhonda Mawhood: Hm. And the young man who just graduated from Harvard?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Arnold Bradford Taylor. Brad Taylor.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Due to the economy, he hasn't landed off us yet.

Rhonda Mawhood: Well, I hope he'll find something sooner. I know what's hard these days.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. Now Mr. Donaldson, where did you first go to school, please? I'm going to list the names of the schools that you've been to.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Well, the first school was the Rosenwald School, over at Brunswick County.

Rhonda Mawhood: Right. Where your mother taught, right. Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: From there, I went to Brunswick County Training School at Southport, BCT, Brunswick County Training School. That was a high school, only Black high school in Brunswick County.

Rhonda Mawhood: In Southport?

Henry Teman Donaldson: In Southport. Then we moved to Wilmington in 1933, which was Williston Industrial High School.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay, so you started there in '33, and when did you finish?

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, we moved into Wilmington in 1933, which, I didn't go to school that year.

Rhonda Mawhood: Oh, okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I was out of school about two and a half or three years. In other words, three school years, I was out of school. This is what made me graduate later, I mean, in the Class of 1943.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We had the Depression during that time, and they just couldn't afford to buy shoes for me, for school. So I stayed out.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But school was on my first year, I think it was 1936, my first year there in Williston. I went from then on, until I graduated, and this way, I took up the trade of big masonry.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. Mrs. Donaldson, where did you go to school?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Town Creek.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I was at Verona. Then I went to Georgetown High, in Jacksonville, ended up here at Williston.

Rhonda Mawhood: And when were you at Williston, then?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I came to Wilmington in '44.

Rhonda Mawhood: '44? No, Baby, you're thinking '41.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: '41.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Your daddy died.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Skipping ahead. Yeah, I came to, went to Williston. That was my first year at Williston, '41.

Rhonda Mawhood: And you finished there in '43?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: In '44.

Rhonda Mawhood: '44? Okay.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: One in '43? I said '40.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. You remarried.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay, and Mr. Donaldson, I took notes while you were speaking. You worked as a brick mason from '46 till '54?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Right.

Rhonda Mawhood: And a longshoreman from about '54, to about '88?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: '88, right.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay. Okay, so I have that, and I'll write that, I'll fill that in later. Mrs. Donaldson, what work would you like me to list for your work history?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I worked as an office nurse for Dr. Upperman.

Rhonda Mawhood: Dr. Upperman? We're interviewing him.

Henry Teman Donaldson: 32 years, and how many months?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Many months. He put 35 years, because I had worked occasionally when someone was out, prior to that. So he left all the years together.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yeah, 35.

Rhonda Mawhood: When was it that you retired?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Right.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Let's see, it's been two years now.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Is there anything on the papers?

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay, so nine years.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yeah, babe, it's right there.

Henry Teman Donaldson: June 28th, '91.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you.

Henry Teman Donaldson: He gave her a plaque.

Rhonda Mawhood: That's very nice. I'm sure he appreciated your work.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Well, it was a pleasure working with him. He's one of the kindest, most unassuming people one could ever hope to meet. To see him in the street, you would never think that he had the credits under his belt that he has. But he's just a down to earth person, and it was a privilege to work with him, a privilege to know him. I worked there so long, he treats us like family.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: We're just a family, so to speak. His daughter was here from California. She had her husband to see us Sunday. He often has said to me, "Miss D," Donaldson is too long, so he calls me Miss D. He has said to me many times, "Miss D, I never had a sister." So we have just been family. He lost his son a couple of years ago, and they kept up with me. Anytime they would call, and anytime Linda calls now, if he doesn't sound right, she'll call me. "Well, I talked to Daddy, was he sleepy, or was he not feeling well?" So it's just a wonderful relationship. Wonderful.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: In all the time we work, he has never yet yelled at me. He has never scolded me. He has always treated me with due respect, in every sense of the word. I count it a privilege to have had the opportunity to work with him, for the many years that I did.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you.

Rhonda Mawhood: Are there any offices, such as church offices, maybe, or awards that you would like me to list, either one of you, on the sheet?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Well, you could. I'm a deacon over at Ebenezer, at Missionary Baptist Church. I'm a Sunday school teacher.

Rhonda Mawhood: Oh.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I'm chairperson of the Judge's Nursing Home Ministry for the church, Ebenezer.

Rhonda Mawhood: The Judge's Nursing Home?

Henry Teman Donaldson: The Judge's Nursing Home, of Wilmington. Yeah, Ebenezer sponsors that ministry

there.

Rhonda Mawhood: For people who can't get out, to go to church?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Can't get out, that's right. So I go first, third, and the fifth Sundays, we go over, and I have service with them. Also, I'm a volunteer for Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. We feed the hungry.

Rhonda Mawhood: Certainly.

Henry Teman Donaldson: They're all new offices.

Rhonda Mawhood: And Mrs. Donaldson?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I'm on the Deaconess Board. For many years, I had a Sunday school class, and a BTU class. For about 40-some years now, I've been in charge of doing the announcements for the church, welcoming the visitors, and doing the announcements.

Rhonda Mawhood: You have such a nice voice, too, for that.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Thank you.

Rhonda Mawhood: So you are Baptists?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yes.

Rhonda Mawhood: And you both are members of the Ebenezer Baptist Church?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Right.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We've been there over 40 years.

Rhonda Mawhood: Were you a member of any other church before that?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yes, Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, in Brunswick County. It was my childhood days. My dad was a deacon there.

Rhonda Mawhood: And Mrs. Donaldson, your past church membership?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Okay. I am currently a member of Ebenezer.

Rhonda Mawhood: And for first church?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: First church was Cedar Grove Baptist Church, in Verona.

Rhonda Mawhood: We're almost done. Besides the ones that you've mentioned, are there other organizations that you belong to?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Masonic, Masons.

Rhonda Mawhood: You're a Mason.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Went as far as the Shriners, and the Masons were —

Rhonda Mawhood: Which lodge are you a member of, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Deer Bloom? Well, no, might not put that down, because I'm not affiliated now.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: So don't write that down.

Rhonda Mawhood: In this case.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Because I'm not affiliated now.

Rhonda Mawhood: When were you a Mason, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: This was from 1946 through '61-something. I belonged to the Blue Lodge.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I'd give them Lodge Number Two, and then, I went to the Shriners, of that same organization. But then, I—