

RL00170-CS-1658_02 / Henry Donaldson (primary interviewee) and Laura Donaldson interview recording, 1993 July 16 / Duke Digital Repository

Henry Teman Donaldson: Didn't have cigarette money.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did you see a lot of that, Mr. Donaldson?

Henry Teman Donaldson: A whole lot of it. A whole lot of it. Some of them would buy automobiles but the average one would not buy a home. And, in 1973, when we built this home here, when I say we, my wife and I, we built a brick mason. That was what I wanted. And they really skinned up their nose at me then. "What do you want with such a big house? You're not going to stay in it." And this day, right here, this is the 16th day of July, we moved in this house, and another thing to it, the 16th day of July in 1973, we had it completed, we moved in, my wife had all the furniture here, everything paid for, and we moved in this house and this day, right here, make us 20 years right here in this house.

Rhonda Mawhood: Happy anniversary.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Thank you.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Thank you.

Henry Teman Donaldson: And I'm saying this is our year of the Jubilee, like the Israelites used to have. They went so 50 years Jubilee. And, at the end of that time, they wasn't supposed to owe anybody anything, all their debts was forgiven and whatnot. What I'm saying, this year is our Jubilee year.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: We did have an older house we had bought and remodeled. I've always been a tomboy. If it was something that I wanted and then—Don gets on me now about wanting the best but we bought an older house and we remodeled that. And—

Henry Teman Donaldson: Sold it.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Sold that and we came here. And, together, with—

Henry Teman Donaldson: Put that in this.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: With his brick masonry and with my father having done brick masonry and carpentry.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But Her father didn't do any break masonry on this.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: No, no, no. No. He was dead long before then because he was dead—I had

neither parent when I married Don. Both of them died when I was just a child. Both my mother and father.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But what she's trying to work up to is she learned how to do a little carpentry work and she helped carpenter on the little things that she could do.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Put down most of the hardwood floors and made all my drapes.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, she did all of her sewing.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: All over the house.

Henry Teman Donaldson: This house, if I had contracted it out to real estate, they wanted, at the time, \$50,000 to build this place. By me knowing and what we wanted and how it's supposed to have been done, do you know we got in this house, in \$100 of being \$30,000. 29,900. We were in here and staying like we are now. And, now, they have the tax value on this house as \$150,000.

Rhonda Mawhood: It's a lovely house. Have many rooms.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. The second floor up there, that's our living quarters. Had four bedrooms up there and the large walk-in closet. We have two and a half baths here, half downstairs and two full baths upstairs. It's just a comfortable place but, I'll tell you, it took a lot of work to do it. And the guys' prophesied that I wouldn't stay in here two years but now it ended up, this day, 20 years. And we hope to continue.

Rhonda Mawhood: Mrs. Donaldson, where were you living when your husband was working through Alabama and all those other places?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Staying behind, being lonely. But I'll tell you—

Henry Teman Donaldson: She lived in the projects. The housing project.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Lived in Hillcrest.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Hillcrest. Then, we left Hillcrest after we moved out there. Now, this is where I was working and running up and down the road and she was living in Hillcrest at the time and, from there, when I came in, we built this housing project there on Eighth and Dawson over on the south side of town. This is when we bought our first home on the north side of Wilmington [indistinct 00:04:17] and we paid—During that time, work was so scarce, I paid \$3,700 for that house. It had three bedrooms. A living room, dining room, kitchen.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: We remodeled that completely.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We remodeled that completely. I paid \$3,700 for the house in 1971. We sold it cash

for \$10,500. This is what launched us this way, over here. We sold out, got out, and we stayed with a friend one year and—Not quite a year.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: In November 19—

Henry Teman Donaldson: The last of 1972, I came out here and I put the foundation, the blocks, in for this house.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And it snowed.

Henry Teman Donaldson: It snowed. Had two big awful snows, the last of 72, and around Christmas, and then I got a carpenter to come and frame it up, put the top on and we took it from there.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Did all the interior. Yeah.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I had friends to help me. Her brother sprayed these ceilings and the fellow that was working with him put up the sheet rock. She painted every wall in the house and she put down the floors while I was—That's marble out there in the foyer there. I laid every bit of that. I basically work around the house. I just knocked off.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: In the meantime—

Henry Teman Donaldson: I was working on the waterfront at that time.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I was laying away furniture, so that when we moved in, we had paid for everything in here. That was no problem. With his working and with my working, we were able—And my thing has always been, if you want something badly enough and you're willing to work for it, all things are possible, especially when you have a strong faith and faith is what has sustained me down through the years because I was only 10 when my mother died and, when I was just short of 17, my father died and there was a brother who was younger than I, that I had sort of had to mother him ever since my mother died, and for over the last three or four years, she had breast cancer and didn't have the medications to control that as we have today.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I've never really had time to be a little kid. It has always been planning, working and, even now, the younger brother who was little when my mother died, I not only had to mother him, but I've had to be the mother of the whole family. The others were grown and gone. It just fell my lot to step in. Maybe when I get to heaven, I can deal with kids.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, through it all, we came through. But God has blessed us until this day to come back, come through all of that, and to come and to just sit down and just wait. That's all.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did you have other family members here, Mrs. Donaldson? Aunts or uncles?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I had brothers and sisters here but, bear in mind, during the forties, if you were Black, unless you were one of the fortunate ones who had had the rare opportunity of a college education, if you were a woman, you worked in Miss Anne's kitchen and that paid little or nothing.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: This was the era that I came to Wilmington under. But, at home, after my mother died, the few years that my father was there, he had taught for a long time in their early marriage. He was also a brick mason and carpenter, so that made a little easier. I knew nothing about the farm life because I had not seen cotton until I was 16 and, at that time, I thought I was looking at a large field of okra.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: We went to Steve's Ferry, which was a few miles from Wilmington, to visit one of my old teachers and I told my Daddy, I said, oh, look at the okra. I've never seen so much okra in my life. And he laughed. A few minutes later he said, baby, what did you call it? I said, okra and a few—Just a little—Baby, what did you call it? And, by that time, I was getting sort of exasperated with him. I told you okra. He said, baby, that is not okra. That is a cotton field. But there was cotton growing within two miles of us but it was on some White person's farm. My uncle farm, but he did not raise cotton.

Rhonda Mawhood: And where was this, ma'am?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Verona.

Rhonda Mawhood: Verona.

Henry Teman Donaldson: That's just this side of—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Jacksonville.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Jacksonville, North Carolina up 17.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: It's interchangeable with Jacksonville now. But, anyway, remembering from his childhood days, he said that he would rather for a man to spit in his face than to ask him to let one of his daughters work in the cotton field. Even though we were that close to cotton, I never saw cotton because he would not allow his daughters to work in the fields. That meant that I knew nothing about it, and I've told my husband and I've told my children about my first time seeing cotton. And it was just one of those things, that he did not allow us to go that way.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did your father pick cotton in his years?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: No, not to my knowledge. But his was a hard life. I never saw either of my grandparents on either side of the family. But his father died when he was small. And my grandmother, of course, had to work in the fields because my daddy said, I don't know the—And this is something that I regret. I don't know—Not having seen either of the grandparents, and I'm curious about the past, but there

was no one really to fill me in on the things that I really wanted to know.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But many times he told us that he was so small my grandmother would take him to work with her. He could not do anything. But he said that the—And, bear in mind, this was right after the turn of slavery because he was born in 1880 but grandma would take him to work with her and the plantation owner would put him on the horse and tell him where to go. He couldn't work but he could take messages. But they wouldn't send him walking to take messages. They would put him on the horse. You go down the road and you stop at the first house this side, wherever they were sending him, and he would take the messages to the people the next place.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But this determination to learn was there. And, as he grew older, even after he married my mother, yes, my mother, you have to get married, he said that this burning desire was in my family to learn. And, bear in mind, that, right after the turn of slavery, especially in the rural areas, there was not the opportunity to really go to school. Maybe you went a few months out of the year but that desire to learn was there.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: He said that the principal of his school told him, shepherd, I've taken you as far as I can go. But he still wanted to learn, so he kept pestering. I want more, I want more. So he told him, if you are that determined, there is a school. I don't know the name of the school but it was in Syracuse, New York. And he said, if you want more, I've carried you as far as I can go and, now, I dare say you know more than I do. But if you want more, I'll give you the name of this college in Syracuse, New York. He did and he took this correspondence course. Upon completion of this course, they sent him crepe paper. Do you know what crepe paper is?

Rhonda Mawhood: Yes, ma'am.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: They sent him his cap and gown made out of the crepe paper. He called all the neighbors, got them all together, and the house was too small for the gathering. They built this big bonfire out in the yard. From that, I know it had to be in the fall when he had his graduation, built this big bonfire and they were all out enjoying themselves and congratulating him on having completed this college course. The wind blew a spark which lighted his cap and gown and he had to beat a hasty retreat and pull the thing off to keep from being—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: This, with me, has been a strong thing, to see that my kids got an education and I worked hard. While Don was working, I was working also and we succeeded in getting all three of them through college. And, to me, this is the crowning achievement of my lifetime because I could not go as far as I wanted to go with both my parents having died. But this thirst for knowledge was there and to see that my kids got it was the most important thing in my life, so thank God we did it. And when they wanted more, we were there to see that they not only got the basic college education but they went on.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Lana and Joyce both has their masters. Jerome, he is a minister now. He's working otherwise because, at this point, in time he does not have a church. He has little computer business

of his own. And, with the crunch that has come about lately with computers and with the family, he can't rely just on his computer business, so he's working with another firm but he also keeps his little business going because he, too, has three children that are going to have to have an education.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: As I've told them, if you do nothing else, see that your children have an education. The oldest daughter has only one son and he, as my husband told you, is a graduate of Harvard and Jerome's Cory will be 16 in August, and she is a very good student. But, even before my children could sit, they didn't know what I was talking about, but I was reading to them. They knew the pictures and to them it was the pictures because, before they could sit, I was pointing out pictures to them. Lana loves books better than anything in the world. They came up—I said I breastfed them with milk but their main diet was books.

Rhonda Mawhood: And they're librarians now. The two women.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yes, yes. But that was very important because, in the country, when I was growing up, when you're living out in the country, there's nothing to do but go to church or the children to play. But there were books and more books. You read books. You didn't look at the book and put it—You read books in my house and, sitting by the fire at night, the long winter nights, my parents read to us. The thirst for knowledge has been there and, as I tell them, I cannot accept—I can't do. It's I will do. It has paid off and I can look back now with no regrets at having tried to be the best mother that I possibly could for them.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And, the little ones, they think that I'm the greatest grandmother who ever lived. But it hasn't been easy. But I'm grateful that we have had family, and when I look around and see so many others, it's not from the standpoint of boasting but, as I told my children, just because you don't have everything you want, I can't give you everything you want, I can't give you everything I want you to have, but I can see to it that you have the basic tools, that what I can't give you, you can give yourself. There was never a question about not going to school. It was you will go to school, you will learn.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I am grateful that they listened. And as I told them, I'm not asking you to do this for me but do it for yourselves. And, a lot of times, I would tell them, like when we moved in here, five years before Don even agreed to build this house, Mr. Sutton down here, Sutton Council will tell you, I was laying with friends, he said, baby, I can't do it, I can't do it. We've got these children. That's why we got these children. They're not responsible. We have to take care of these children. But there's also something for me.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And I can remember when I was just a little kid growing up in the country, two of my uncles—Three of my uncles, one of them died before I was old enough to remember him, but his house was directly across the road from our house. They had two-story houses. And, when we would go to visit my uncles, my mother had no problem with me because I would climb up and down the stairs, and I can remember when my legs were so short that I couldn't get up to the—I would have to hold on to the little spokes in the stairwell there. I would have to hold on because, if I tried to raise my foot on my own, I would tumble, so I learned, if I held onto the side—When we went, this was what I did the whole time up and down

the stairs, up and down the stairs, so my mother didn't have to worry about my going to sleep when I got home. My little short legs would be so tired.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But this was my dream. And I told Don, he said, don't lay away on our furniture, girl. Don, I'm going to get my house.

Rhonda Mawhood: Two-story house, you wanted.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And this house we bought over there, every once in a while, I think about—Do you like poetry?

Rhonda Mawhood: Yes, ma'am.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Oh, I love poetry. I even write a little poetry. It may never get published but it's a very dear thing and, the long winter nights, that was something we did at home when we were—I remember my mother reading and my father reading to us, and I loved to hear them read poetry. I do the same things with the grandchildren. I did it with my children. I like writing a little poetry. It may never get published but I have the satisfaction of knowing that I can put a verse together and we would sit and read.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And even after Joyce has been grown, when she would come home, she'd say, mother, just read to me like—You are a woman now. But I just remember when you used to read to us, so read to me now.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But this house over there, we bought it and Don said, baby, we can't make it here. Don, we can. We can do it. So we got in there. I don't mind working. You can see from my steady fingers that I must've done a lot of work, but we knocked out all that old plaster walls that was in there and we put up sheet rock. Then we had someone to—The walls. We got the hang of it somewhat. And we got in there, we did that, and I did the painting. Every room in this house I've painted and the sheet rock, when we were putting this up, we just paid the man to do the framing.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Don would hold up a piece of sheet rock and I would go up the ladder and nail it and, while he was getting another piece in place, I was coming down the sides nailing, because you got to nail it all the way down, I was coming down the side of the ladder, nailing it down. I pity a person who says I can't because, if you want it badly enough, you can. This is the story of my life. Believing that it can be done. And, if you really want it and you have the faith in yourself and in your God that, if you try, that he's going to help you see the fruition of your dreams. It happens. It happens. Don, many a night, he would say, baby, we can't make it. Ever since we started dating, he started calling me baby. Baby this, baby that, hey baby this, hey—Don, we can do it. No, we can't.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And I love antiques. The sofa that I bought for this house is out there in the garage because this type of thing you don't see anymore in the stores. I bought this—

Rhonda Mawhood: It's like a love seat.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I bought this and had it reupholstered because it wasn't what I wanted. But this is how we have managed in 50 years now. 50 long years. But, when you look back, it seems like just yesterday when we were holding hands, and we still hold hands.

Henry Teman Donaldson: That was Neil.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Oh, yeah?

Rhonda Mawhood: Mrs. Avon.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: She was a very sweet old lady and I have a bracelet upstairs that she gave to me. It's sterling silver. But she used to call me her daughter. And, during the lean years, I used to make all of my clothes and all of the children's clothes, all the girls' clothes and it was, where did you get this? Where did you get that? In addition to working, I did a lot of sewing to help get the things that we wanted. And once I was ill and she called me and she said, what's wrong? And I told her, I said, I'm sure you can barely hear me because I'm so hoarse. She said, get off the phone, daughter. Get off the phone.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And she said, I'll be there, I'll be there. And I've never felt so humble or so elated. She lived about two and a half blocks—Actually, about three blocks, all told, from where we were and, a few minutes after I had hung up the phone, here she was, the doctor's wife, one of the oldest doctors in town. She came in. Daughter, you just lie right there in that bed. You just stay right there.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I had gotten up and given the children their breakfast and sent them to school. Don had gone to work but I was too sick to do the dishes. I was going to do them because I hate dirty dishes but I had gone back to bed and I said to my—Who and the devil is this? As badly as I'm feeling. Went to the door. And here she was. Daughter, just get right back in the bed, get right back in the bed. She came in my house and washed my dishes, put them away, got the broom and swept my kitchen and there I am with a temperature, about 103, and she's back there.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I have never felt so elated but, at the same time, so humble to know that she thought this much of me and she told me about a lot of her experiences as a doctor's wife. They were very fair people. She and her husband. Dr. Avon came from Southport, wasn't it, Don? Somewhere over that area. But she was just a wonderful person and she told me about when he started his practice.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: She was a nurse in Philadelphia, so she met him while he was away in medical school. But she told me, when they came back, when they came to Wilmington, that they were so poor, he could not afford an office, so there was this little shack that they fixed up and this is where he started his practice.

Rhonda Mawhood: Where was that located? Do you know?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: On Red Cross Street between McRay and Ninth on Red Cross Street. It's a large two-story brick building on the—If you're going toward downtown, it would be on the right-hand side of the street. Right across from that, diagonal, is the Shelton's home. But, back during that time, I think hers was the first Black family. They were not Black. They were not even teasing tan because, if you saw her or him, their complexion was just as fair as yours. But, because they had that—The eighth or whatever of Black blood in them, they were still considered Negroes or Blacks. But, if you saw them on the street, you would not have known the difference.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Her hair was a brighter color than your hair and so was his. He had the green eyes. I mean green, green eyes. But, they knew, if you had that grain of Black blood in you, no matter the complexion—They were not racist. The point that I'm making is that they too were of the Black race but they were those folk who tried to make a difference and they encouraged others to try to.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: They only had one child and Sarah is still living. She's somewhere in DC. Her husband died not too long ago. She became a teacher and her husband went back to school and became a lawyer. He was a lawyer there in DC. They had one son who is a doctor now, he's practicing somewhere in Pennsylvania. But they were just people who were trying hard to reach back and pull someone else along the way to help them. In other words, they were progressive people who wanted to see the race move forward rather than to stagnate, so I count it a blessing to have known them, and certainly I will never forget the day that she came and washed my dishes and swept my floor and dared me to get out of bed.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Were there some questions that you had maybe in your mind that you would like to ask, that we might be able to elaborate on?

Rhonda Mawhood: There are some things I'd like to ask. You've told me so much that we haven't asked. It's wonderful. But you did mention having gotten together in high school and I was wondering if you would mind telling me about how you met and a little bit about that. If it's not too personal.

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, it's not all that personal. When she came to Wilmington, I got a glimpse of her but, in high school, during my younger days, I played football and I was one of the, what they call during that time, dapper fellas on the campus. Now, I was a good sportsman and, naturally, all the girls, they went for those kinds of things, so I had a string of girls. But, anyway, when she came to Wilmington, the first time that I saw her, I saw the little—We all call them country girls and I thought, she was the cutest little thing that I'd ever seen. It used to be I would've my way, what I wanted with whoever it was or else I just didn't be with them but she was a little different.

Henry Teman Donaldson: And it's because she just come out of the country and she was afraid, that's the only way I would put it. She wasn't all that shy but she's afraid of different things. So I would play around with her and I took up some time and, naturally, during that time, I was a sexpot. If I went out with you, then that was it. But that—No. No, no. As the time went by, I would take her to the movies and whatnot. That was my next subject. I'd just leave you alone. I had other girls, and that was my thing. I didn't pay too much

attention to it but, after a while, it began to yearn on me. She's going to cut your dick off [indistinct 00:33:26].

Rhonda Mawhood: Do you want me to leave that on or turn it off?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I don't care.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I'm going to get me some of that. Yeah, I'm going to get me some of that. And I just sit down and we talked about it and she says, no, I can't afford no children. If we ever would get married, then I'll be yours but, until that time, no. Me being the progressive guy that I am, I'm get you some of that. She can say what she wants. And she still held out. If we ever get married. I come to conclusion, yeah, we'll get married. All the other girls—Because I had my way with them. I wanted to, anytime I wanted to, it just didn't matter. But, whenever I talked to her, no. Okay, he's this and he's that. My family was of a poor family and, at the time, I was considered, the little girl's, handsome.

Henry Teman Donaldson: And I didn't ever have any money but I just had that mouth, that glib that she called it. Not rude. But it isn't rude, that. And, finally, that day came around. We got married and then she was mine and it scared the devil out of me after we got married because the first time we had sex—Oh, my land, I thought I had killed her. She bled like everything. And we went to the doctor, the same old doctor over there, Dr. Bernie. Man, my wife is bleeding, and he sit there and he listening to me and looked at me and he started laughing while I'm all upset and everything. I don't know what's wrong with my wife, man.

Henry Teman Donaldson: He said, boy, you found a cherry. I said, what you talking about, man? I didn't know. He said she was all right. She'll be all right. Just handle her easy. And, from that day until this one, yeah, I married a virgin. She [indistinct 00:35:26]. I never had that experience with none of of them because they knew what it was all about and I didn't and, being young and foolish, I didn't ever know.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And my friend used to teased me. Laura Shepherd, I would hear the girls talking about went this place and did this and did that. And they started this thing about—Laura Shepherd is just as scared of a man as I am a bear. But, see, this was—I used to hear my mother talking to my sisters who were much older than I, I didn't know what she was talking about, but she would tell them about "always be a lady." Always be a lady. I knew I was supposed to be a lady. Then, as the sisters were gone by the time she died, but this thing about being a lady just grew up in me and then Don was really the first serious boyfriend that I ever had. You talk about this is my boyfriend, all the boys will say, this is my girlfriend.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And the only other person that I think I possibly could have married, of the people that I have known, he and Don became good friends. He used to tell me, you just wait until you're 18 and I'm going to marry you. And we corresponded when he was in the service but, when he went overseas, this was before I met Don, even after he went overseas, I heard from him. Then, suddenly, there was nothing. But when he came home, by the time he came home, I had married Don. I didn't know what had

happened because he—Just suddenly, there was no more letters and there was no answer. I didn't know if he was POA. I just didn't know.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And you heard so much about prisoners of war. POW. I said POA. I didn't know if he was a prisoner of war. I just didn't know, and I couldn't afford to run back to Jacksonville all the time. I went occasionally. But, after I started dating Don, I didn't go as frequently as I had gone. When he came home, Don and I had been married about three years or more because, by then, we had our first child. And he went to my sister's house, and my sister was devilish. She wouldn't tell him that I was married. She told him where I lived and he came and when I went to the door and opened the door, he was so glad to see me. He just picked me up.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: He said, oh, here she is. And Joyce said, put Laura down and take me up. Put Laura down and take me up. And I'm pushing him away. And I said, Vitus. He said, I'm so glad to see you. Now, we're going to take up where we left off and we are getting married. I said, Vitus, wait a minute. I'm already married. What? And I said, I'm already married. How in the world could you do this to me? You know I told you, ever since you were a baby, I was going to marry you. And I said, I didn't hear from you. And, after all this long time of not having heard from him—See, almost six years had passed. I had gotten an occasional letter from him when he was overseas but—And I still have a picture of him.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But, when I started dating Don, I realized this is it. And so, I had told Don all about him and the fact that I wasn't actually going with him because my daddy didn't allow me to take company. And I came here while Vitus went in service. It was just one of those things. But we were best of friends. And he and Don became best of friends, and Vitus had two wives after then, but he did not marry until after he came home.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But he—And the first wife left him. And the family all said that she told him that she—I knew that he was a good guy and, had it not been for fate, I probably would have been his wife but the bottom line was he had the same values that I had and there wouldn't have been any problem. Just like there was no problem with Don once we started dating. And I let him know the ground rules. You can kiss me, you can hold my hand. Thus far and no further. With him, it would have been the same type of relationship.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But after he came back, I told Don that he had come and I wanted him to meet him, but he went on back to Jacksonville. We went up to Jacksonville to see him. He and Don became the best of friends. When he was doing his long illness, we would drive up to Jacksonville and see him. When he died, it's been about three months ago now, hasn't it?

Henry Teman Donaldson: About three months.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: They called me. We had been to the nursing home to see him several times and Don was always—And sometimes he would say, let's go see Vitus. We haven't been to see him lately. There was nothing. My life is an open book so far as romance is concerned. Don knew that he had nothing to fear

from Vitus. By the same token, Vitus knew that this is a closed chapter. They got to be very good friends, so when they called us, Don was getting ready. I was cooking breakfast. Don was getting ready for Sunday school, and I told him, Don, Vitus is dead. He said, oh, no. He said, I've got to go to Sunday school but get ready. We got ready and went to the funeral. If there had been anything amiss, he would've said, no, but I'm going to Sunday school and you just go ahead and get ready and we'll go on up there, so we did.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: When I look back, my life has been a sort of Cinderella story, in that Don is my Don, Laura is Don's Laura and that's it. There is no inbetweens. It has just been the two of us. And when football—In the country, I knew nothing about football. I'd read about football but I knew nothing about it. And he would say—First time he wanted me to go to a game, I had to work. The person that I was working for said, aren't you going to the game? You [indistinct 00:42:53] you know I've got to work. He said, no? I want you to go and see the game. Don was playing football and Don was elated when I told him that I was going to get off to go to the game.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: When the game was over—The football field was across the street from Williston. We were at Williston. Football field was across the street, so when the game was over, I just walked on across the street because you know how, when you're coming out of a game, everybody is all mixed up? And when he came, he said, where were you? You didn't wait for me. I said, wait for you for what?

Henry Teman Donaldson: She was a stupid little thing.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I wanted to walk across the street with my girl and I couldn't find—But I didn't see any big deal about walking across the street with him from the game. But he had to go down in the basement and change clothes. I had gone on around the front and he's looking all over for me.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, she was a typical little country gal. I guess I fooled around with her about two years before this time ever come and, finally, I settled down and that was it. It's been ever since. In other words, we're married 50 years but, about pretty close to two years, I wouldn't fool with her. Just go on out, do my thing and come on back. But it has been sort of rough at times but we made through. To this point, we made it through.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: The only separation has been when he was working away and that wasn't a legal separation, it was just that his work took him there. But, wherever he was, he managed to come home at least once month. At least once a month. And he will tell you, proudly, in all the years that he worked away, he has never once called home, no matter what hour it was, when I didn't pick up the phone on the second or third ring. And no matter how intimate the conversation might have been, he knew plain well that, as modest as I was, that I would not say the things that we would say to each other had there been anyone present.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: That's the way it has been down through these years and, this late in the day, there's nothing out there that I'm looking for and there's nothing out there that's going to tempt him at this late date. On that, I'm sure. It hasn't been all roses, when I say that we were from poor families, but the

standards have been high and we have expected high standards out of our children.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: And, a lot of times, when Don would say, we can't do, Don, we have an obligation. We got these children. We are going to equip these children for life and we do that by seeing that they get the education that we didn't have the opportunity because I would like to have gone further. But when you look back and you've got a clean record behind you and you have reared three children and no one has a child before they are married, you've got to have done—