

RL00170-CS-1659_02 / Henry Donaldson (primary interviewee) and Laura Donaldson interview recording, 1993 July 16 / Duke Digital Repository

Laura Shepard Donaldson: —Mrs. Donaldson?

Rhonda Mawhood: I was a member of the Jepa Chapter Order of Eastern Star for a long time. I'm not active now because working as I did and working in a Black community for the longest kind of time, my office hours were split night and day. So the meetings were at night and I couldn't continue as a member of faculty because of the office hours that I had to do.

Rhonda Mawhood: That was the only thing, the Easter Star.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Approximately what years were you a member, ma'am?

Henry Teman Donaldson: From 40 about—

Rhonda Mawhood: 40—

Henry Teman Donaldson: 50 through what? At least it's whenever Papa took me into the life. Trusts up until late '60s.

Rhonda Mawhood: '60s, uh-huh.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Late '60s, something like that.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you. And is either one of you a member of the NAACP?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Oh yes.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Oh yes, I was member of the NAACP. I used to be secretary of our local chapter of NAACP.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Now that you mentioned it.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Until my work kept me away from that.

Rhonda Mawhood: You were the secretary of the local chapter in the 1960s, 1950s?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: That was in Papoose Bay. That was back in the '50s.

Henry Teman Donaldson: In the '50s, yeah we used to.

Rhonda Mawhood: And when did you join the NAACP?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Oh Lord, years ago, years ago.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Because I used to take the kids when they were little, to the meetings.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah, remember. See, Josh is 49 now. Say about, you joined when you first come here.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Way back.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Shortly after that.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Way back.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. You were there when you was paying those 10 cents. But you could.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: In other words, if you are will Estonian, you had to belong.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Had to stand for the right.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did the teachers bring membership forms to class?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Oh yeah. Yes, sir. Yes indeed. Yes, sir. If you had 3 cents, a penny, it's for a cause. In other words, that's just something that has gone in our lives. Since there has been one.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: When you mentioned that, I thought about the other day I was going through an old bag of pictures, box of pictures that I have. And back then the kids bought the stamps. I gave, what were they? I have my 10 cent book, I think, and my 25 cent book that I was never able to fill.

Henry Teman Donaldson: That was for World War II.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: World War II.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We were buying those saving stamps. They would keep it so long, they would amount to something. But they introduced—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: It was the Junior War Bond. We couldn't afford to buy the War Bond. But you bought the little Stamps for Victory. Had a 10 cent book and a 25 cent book and that—

Henry Teman Donaldson: But that NAACP, that was a must for every child that went to Wilson. Yes.

Rhonda Mawhood: The pictures and things that you've been looking through, Ms. Donaldson, are there any of them, which I don't want to keep you now, but at another time before we leave in a week, would it be possible for me maybe to look at some of them with you? And see, would you be willing to have some of them copied to go into the archive?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Don, I think I had your class group. And most of these are just family pictures of during that timeframe.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Family pictures.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I have no objections.

Rhonda Mawhood: Maybe once we finished with this, I could see when I could come back too.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Okay. Well, I'm usually here practically every day. I run to the mall. Right now I'm in the throes of preparing for this 50th anniversary.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: So other than that, usually I'm a homebody. I don't care much for—I like church, and Don stays so busy now we haven't been to a movie in ages, but I like movies. But I don't mind sharing with you.

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you so much. What I'll do is I'll get back to this. One of our team members is making appointments for us today. She's trying to, she's calling people. So I'll get in touch with Sonia and ask her, if she hasn't blocked me off, when I'm free, and give me a couple of times and then I can get in touch with you about when we'll be convenient.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Okay. Well, I'm usually here.

Henry Teman Donaldson: And you want some pictures of certificates of things?

Rhonda Mawhood: Things like that, sure. Pictures of your family. Maybe you could look through and see which ones you might be willing to share, and then I could go through them with you and see which ones would be—

Henry Teman Donaldson: Appropriate for—

Rhonda Mawhood: —to go into the art archive. The last question that I had to ask you, I got all excited when you mentioned that, was if there is a favorite saying, or a quote, or Bible verse, or hymn or something like that, which you would like to have associated with you, that you'd like me to write on the sheet.

Rhonda Mawhood: Sometimes people have a verse of poetry, or they want me to write the name of their favorite hymn or something like that.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Which is my thing. I didn't mention to you, I like writing poetry.

Rhonda Mawhood: You did mention, actually.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yes.

Rhonda Mawhood: Do you have any of your own that you would like to quote a little bit of?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Offhand, I couldn't quote, but I have quite a bit that I have, and I have thought about, I've toyed with the idea of perhaps seeing about getting some of it published.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: A long time ago, the Crisis Magazine, I sent some of my poetry to Crisis Magazine, way back in the '40s for publication. Being an orphan, I was not able to buy the book, and they were not generous enough to give me a book of the poetry. But somewhere there are probably some of it published in the Crisis Magazine, because they sent back to me that they thought it was very good, but they wanted me to buy the book. But I could not because of financial circumstances.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: But even now, sometimes I will jot down a line or two, so I'll pull out some—

Henry Teman Donaldson: And you speaking of scripture, my favorite, the 27th Psalm and first two verses, "The Lord is my light and my salvation. To whom shall I fear."

Laura Shepard Donaldson: "I will lift up my eyes into the hills from whence cometh my help." That's my favorite.

Henry Teman Donaldson: 121st.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yeah. I love that 121st Psalm. Because I've had to do that all my life. "I will lift up mine eyes into the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help comes from the Lord." That's not all of it, but that's enough to give you an idea, but that that is my daily thing.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. When I was out there in that world, I used to have to be afraid of some of the

fellows, especially when I was down the road. But after I found him and I came in, and he reassured me I didn't have anything to fear. And then I can look back now, I didn't even have them to fear, but I just didn't realize that then.

Rhonda Mawhood: Of course.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But now I'm bold, ever since that day.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: "—my salvation, whom shall I fear?" Those are my two favorite passages. "The Lord is a light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" And I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.

Henry Teman Donaldson: That's the 127th and the 121st Psalms. We dwell on those.