

Rhonda Mawhood: You were telling us about work that you did as a brick mason?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yes. I'm a brick mason by trade, and from 1946 through 1950, this is what the kind of work that I did up and down the East Coast. When I came out of the Army, I was discharged on the 5th of February of 1946. This when I resumed my masonry after coming out of the Army. Construction work were scarce around here, so I went to the Marine base in Jacksonville, North Carolina and worked a while for \$1.50 an hour. That was top wages in 1946 for brick mason here around North Carolina, and especially in this area. Then we got a \$.25 raise, went to \$1.75 an hour. About this time, the work began to get scarce on that Marine base. I left Jacksonville and Wilmington and went to Gadsden, Alabama. It was the 1st of 1947, but then we made big bucks, \$2 an hour.

Henry Teman Donaldson: That was the top wages at that particular time for masonry on that end of the road. During this time, Black brick masons and White brick masons did not work together on the same building. It was a housing project being built by the federal government. During this time—Well, in North Carolina, we worked together even though they had better breaks on the job, they could take a break, but we could not. But on this particular job in Gadsden, Alabama, we would all go to work. Blacks and White would go to work at 8:00. About 9:30, the Whites on their building, they could take a 15 or 20 minute break for coffee or drinks or whatever not. But the Black brick masons could never have a break.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We worked from 8:00 until 12:00 for lunchtime. We had 30 minutes off for lunch. The only time that we could possibly get a break is when we'd go to the privy as they call it, and we mustn't stay more than five minutes or else the foreman would come by, knock or tick on the door, "You're not sick in there, are you?" "No, everything's all right." "Well, get back on the job." Then he would go home. We'd go back. We worked hard. Full eight hours every day. Maybe I'd say about 10 to no more than 15 minutes for period of time. But during that time, we were making a lot of money and I had a real nice room where I boarded and my room and board was \$10 a week. We got breakfast in the morning.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We had two sandwiches for lunch, and then naturally we would have very nice dinner, supper, we'd call it. During this particular time in Gadsden, the Black fellows could never get used to—They had, what do they call this thing, a curfew hour. No Blacks were to be on the streets of Gadsden, Alabama after 8:00 at night.

Henry Teman Donaldson: You had to be off of the streets. Well, we weren't used to that around here. I mean, it was tough with us. We would like to look around the foot of the mountain and see this, and then sometimes we would run over. But then there was always a law officer and all of them weren't dressed in uniforms. In other words, if he had a White face, he was an officer. In other words, they called them auxiliary cop. But then you must be off of the streets by that time. Even on where you groomed and you boarded, you must be off of the front porch or inside of that building by 10:00. You had to be inside. In other words, this

was to keep the peace of no disturbance, anything of the kind.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Finally the time that we lived down there, I got used to it because I didn't want to be locked up and you would be locked up. One of our fellows, he sort away laid one night and they put him in jail, roughed him up a little bit, let him know that, "Nigger, you're supposed to go by the rules and regulations. You from up north. You don't do that up there, but we do it down here to keep these Niggers in line." He had to stay in the balance of that night, half of the next day, believe that was Ed Thompson. The supervisor from our break job had to go and get him the next day at 12:00. They wouldn't let him out. This was to teach him a lesson and all the other fellows not to be on the street, but we got used to it and we stayed there until this job finished. Then we moved, the same company, which was Alginar and Bev Construction Company. They moved to another project in Atlanta, Georgia.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Well, it was Oglethorpe, Georgia, but we lived in Atlanta. This project was centered around Oglethorpe University. To me, someone would take you there. If you had seen Duke University up here, the buildings look almost alike and whatnot there. It reminded me a lot of the buildings, those dormitories and whatnot, it's built out of stone and it resembles Duke University a whole lot. But we were building this project there and it was built out of brick. Well, we had practically the same restrictions there working together. We never worked together. This was intimidating at times when we went there. The foremans was from Birmingham, Alabama, and they called the Black brick layers, Black scabs, "You Black scabs get on this building over here." We were unionized at a union, but the White controlled it. We could meet in the same building on Union nights, but we didn't have the same privileges as the White bricklayer.

Rhonda Mawhood: What union was that, sir?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Huh?

Rhonda Mawhood: Do you remember the name of the union?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Brick mason union.

Henry Teman Donaldson: It was a brick mason union, but I don't—See, they all had numbers like Brick Mason Union Number 11 of Atlanta, Georgia. Number 10 of Birmingham, Alabama. But this was—I don't remember the number of that union. Okay,

Rhonda Mawhood: Thank you. You were unionized, but they called you scabs.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Scabs, that's right. Black scabs or nigger scabs. That was a word that there was frequently used on the job, in the street or anywhere when you would see one of them, "I know that old nigger boy there, he works on the job out there." You had to accept that and go on.

Rhonda Mawhood: The reason why I ask about it is because the scabs are usually—They're non-union workers who are breaking a strike.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Right. They're non-union, but you see, that was the ignorant part of that. They used that. In other words, to degrade you. We were union. We had to pay those union dues. We had to pay those dues to work. They made sure each Friday when we got paid off on Friday evening around 3:00, then the White union leader would come through where we were working and get our name and our assessment and we met once a month. That union hall was on Peachtree Street. It was somewhere in downtown Atlanta. But we would go to meeting, all the Whites would sit up front, the nigger scabs had to sit in the back. We would state our name and how much we had paid. In other words, they checked on each other.

Henry Teman Donaldson: When they would send this, they would call this man to come through a shop steward. He was White. Whenever he came through and collected the dues, it was all cash. We would never get paid in the check. Everything was paid off in cash. To make sure that he turned in the right report to them, we would have to state how much we paid. Say if I paid \$2, I paid Mr. whatever his name was, \$2 on Friday evening, whatever day, then they would check that against what he had turned in.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did the White men also stand and declare how much they had paid?

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, no, no. They didn't have to.

Rhonda Mawhood: Just the Black man.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Just the Black ones. They didn't have to. Whenever they would read out what was going on, see, they would correspond with different local unions, say in Florida, say in Birmingham. They would always make it known about these other jobs. See those unions, they worked together. If they needed brick masons in Florida, then they would check with the job, the union in Atlanta. But it was always noted—Well, if there's a big job going on in Florida, they wanted only White bricklayers. Black bricklayers was never supposed to go to Florida. Never. No nigger scabs in Florida and they were paying \$1 more per hour in the state of Florida. Florida always have led in salaries and they would always state no nigger scabs was supposed to come, but they wanted so many White brick masons to come down to work on the special jobs. We were never to go that way. In fact, the first time I ever been to Florida, I was always skeptical of it that we went to Disney World with Cory.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Was Cory? Was Brad.

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, no. It was Brad. Our older grandson.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Oldest grandchild.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We went to Disney World and that was my first time.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: That was about 20 years ago, I guess now.

Henry Teman Donaldson: That's my first time ever going into the state of Florida. But never to go that way to work because they always warned you against that.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did any of the Black brick masons protest this—Well, this name that they were called for example?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Never.

Henry Teman Donaldson: No. No. You better not.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Not if you wanted a job.

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, and if you wanted to live. I'll tell you, one of the most hurtful things, my experience on the job there in Atlanta, they had all White was in charge of everything. Even we had a White foreman. He stood over us, but they—The labor foremans were White. Believe me, they couldn't spell their name if they saw it in letters big as a brick.

Rhonda Mawhood: Right.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Their word was nigger this and nigger that. Well, the labor foremans, they would—I think we found out that they were getting something like about \$.75 or \$.80 an hour. They took care of the loading of the scaffolds, seen to that done with Black labor, building scaffolds and whatnot. But what would hurt me—Now here I am, a brick mason working on the corner. Here's a labor foreman come up not even knowing how to pick up a brick hardly. He would come up, "Nigger, you're making a lot of money." I wouldn't say anything because it intimidated me and I'm trying to work. It was during summer, it was hot like it is now. We had one on the job, he just didn't like me because you see these khakis I have on, I've always liked to wear these because they're cool and they're clean and everything. I'd always go clean on the job.

Rhonda Mawhood: In khaki trousers.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I like this until today, it's cool.

Rhonda Mawhood: White t-shirt.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. He said one day, he said, "Every time I look at you, you don't look like you working hard." Say, "You're sweating, but you're not dirty." I said, "Why should I be dirty?" I said, "I came to work and I can't stand all this body odor thing." I said, "I wash every day."

Henry Teman Donaldson: What he did, I was building a corner and he's so stupid, now when you're laying brick, it has to set up before you can get hard. He took his foot and put it up on my corner and knocked it over. Well, right then, I just got upset. I said, "Man, what you doing?" I said, "You tearing the corner down." I

said, "The other brick mason will be over here and I won't have nothing." "Shut up, nigger and build it back." The supervisor came by and he looked, "What's going on over there?" I said, "This man come over here and kicked my corner down." I said, "This laborer come over here and kicked my corner down." You know what the supervisor say? "Go on, boy, and put it back. Hurry up. The gang will be over here after a while." Well then, I got upset. I really did. I said—I walked off and I walked I guess about six or seven paces and the superintendent, "Boy, you want to work?"

Henry Teman Donaldson: He came to me all a sudden, "Well, I'm down here. I need to work. I've got to work." I told him, I said, "Yes, I want to work." "What?" "Yes, I want to work. Yes, sir." I said, "Yes, sir." I went back to my corner, but I'm telling you that thing really got next to me. Now, here was this little old labor foreman and they were funny to me. Every one of them would close their eyes, one eye and all of them chewed tobacco. I hated that stuff. They'd be—Spitting all over. They spit all over your work, on the brick. I had to pick up—You had to pick them up and lay them, but you couldn't say anything about it. You better not if you want to work. This fellow here, just seemed like he just wanted to intimidate me all the time.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But I had to swallow a whole lot of time because I was from up north. That's what they call North Carolina, up north. But I stayed on there on that job until it finished. But this is the thing that we had to put up with. If you wanted to work, you had to stay there. I remember once one of the Black bricklayers from—His name—It's a funny name, Algandy or something, George, he was an older man. He couldn't work as steady and hard as we did, but they gave him a fit on the job. Finally, he had to leave there because one of the supervisors said something to him.

Henry Teman Donaldson: They were teasing him about being an old man and about his girlfriends you got. This, that, and other, just running on teasing. He told his supervisor, he said, "Well, the first place I got a wife and I'm too old to have any girlfriends, so to hell with that." He slapped him. This old man, this was a much younger fellow, this White fellow. But he slapped him, bap, "Don't you say that to me." That man had to hurry up and leave there because they was going to hang him up. They told him. We knew what that meant from hearing this, that and the other. When they said they were going to hang you up back during this time, you better get.

Rhonda Mawhood: He left town?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yes, he left. He went on back. Because perhaps if he had stayed there—I mean, that day, he had stayed there maybe a day or two later, we probably missed him. But they were pretty tight down around Alabama and Georgia. Now that was '47 and '48. We had a job in Marietta, Georgia that we would work on weekends. That was outside of Atlanta. Now this was in 1948.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Black folk had to leave out of Marietta by 5:00. That's Marietta, Georgia. I would almost hate to see the weekend come because this foreman of ours, he had this little job, what he called subcontracted. He wanted his brick layers to go over there and work only on Saturdays. But we'd be over there at 7:00 Saturday morning and 5:00 Saturday evening, we had to get board that truck and get out of Marietta. People there was a little more ignorant or stupid, I call it because it was right in the little town. The

sidewalks go right by the job and White people would come by, young ones and the old ones. There wasn't anything on that job. He used the Black bricklayers to do it. He paid us the \$2 an hour, but they'd walk by and they'd be making all kind of nasty like to remarks.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But other than that, we got along fine. This is the only place that my wife—We had the oldest child there. She came to Atlanta and spent a summer with me while we were down there. Let me tell you about her. She got all riled up. I told her about all of this kind of stuff before she got there. Well, Laura always have been a loving wife and mother and everything else. So Laura and Joyce came to Atlanta and I went down and I met them. I think they were down there Easter, but she always had kept Joyce spotless. That was where I had [indistinct 00:19:59] Street. We went down on Peach Tree Street. Laura, what was the name of this big store you'd walk across?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Rich.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Rich. There was a lot of departments store there. Rich's Department Store. We went down one Saturday. She loved to go shopping and looking and whatnot. Joyce, she was what we called her pretty little girl. She always had been knowledgeable. She didn't meet any strangers. She was just spotless, clean and everything. We went in this store and Joyce was running around playing. One of the sales ladies came over and Joyce was just talking to her, just jabbering away. This sales lady told another one, "Isn't she a cute little nigger baby?" She said, boy, she liked to had a fit. I had to get my wife out of there before we all got killed. Laura got so mad. She was just jerking like that.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I'm the one with the temper.

Henry Teman Donaldson: She wanted to go and get on this lady, but she would have been put in jail the next second and beaten, too. So I got her from downtown in Atlanta. We went on back out on Auburn Avenue where we stayed in this place. In other words, I was used to that. I mean, she could have said it with me, if Joyce would've been me, and I would've kept going, but boy, she burned up. It's like, she said, "Oh, isn't she a cute little—"

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Mothers are like that.

Henry Teman Donaldson: "She's a cute little nigger baby. Look at it, it's so clean." Boy, my wife—I had to grab her and get out of there right quick. It just tickled them because they were used to that kind of thing. But that was the incident we had with her.

Rhonda Mawhood: The saleswoman didn't—I'm sorry, the saleswoman didn't speak to you, Mrs. Donald, directly?

Henry Teman Donaldson: No. She was just talking about Joyce.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: She was talking to my baby.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Talking to Joyce, "Cute little nigger baby." She blew up. Said, "Girl, you can't do that down here. They'll lynch you. They'll hang you." We got out of there. I got away from there. Finally, I calmed her on. But every time she went shopping, I made sure that I was there with her because that one had a temper. But it went so far. Then the next thing, we never did have any—Been traveling from here to Atlanta and Augusta. I worked in Augusta.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We traveled by bus. I didn't have any car or truck or anything. We traveled by a bus and wherever the bus would stop, there was never no restrooms. Never no place to get water unless they had a pump, had a pump handle outside. But if you had to go to the restroom or something, we'd have to go out around the bus station over in the woods. If you were hungry, you'd have to go to what they call the hole in the wall. I guess you've heard of that. That's where you'd go and stand there and wait until somebody in the little cafe would come over and probably sell you a hot dog. But that's the way we would have to eat. But most likely whenever I would leave here to go to Atlanta, she would fix me a lunch enough to last me until I get down there.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Seldom ever, I had to go to the hole in the wall to get anything. I'd always carry enough sandwiches to last me until I get to my boarding place. If we had to go to ourselves in the bushes, we'd have to go around the back of the place. They always—There was wooded areas somewhere, but I lived through that and I never was once arrested or beat up because I always tried to adhere to their laws and whatnot because I heard so many different tales about people being lynched and hung and the people that we would always stay with. Each time, the Black bricklayers would go say to Augusta, we would go to the YMCA to find the best place in town for us to live. God blessed us through those times because everywhere I've ever gone, I found a nice place to live.

Henry Teman Donaldson: We'd always go to that YMCA every time we would go to a different town. When we went to Atlanta, we went to the YMCA and they found us—They would tell us where the best place to live and the places that you ought not to go. Atlanta, this Decatur Street, at that time, that was, oh, my land. That was a rough place and we weren't supposed to go there. I belonged to Ebenezer Baptist Church here in Wilmington all of my life. When I got to Atlanta and got this particular room, I wasn't too far from the Ebenezer Baptist Church there. The Sunday that Martin Luther King Jr. preached his trial sermon, I was as close to him—I was on the front pew as close from here to the stairway. The little young fellow walked up on the roster and his father came.

Henry Teman Donaldson: He was the minister there at the time. He was telling people about his son and how God has changed him. He's going into the ministry and he's going to do his—They called it trial sermon, but naturally it was the initial sermon. He stayed up there about 30 minutes. He read some scripture and he taught. Well, to me it was just another young preacher going into the ministry. As the time went on, I never did think or dream that I was looking at or as close then around one of the—Well, the world's most noted persons.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Pardon me to interrupting you, I thought while you're on King, you might

mention the fact that where we lived was just about a block and a half. We could—As we walked in the gate, the little yard space had a little fence around it and you looked directly on the King porch.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Front porch.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: We used to see Mother King, Alberta King, sitting on the porch

Henry Teman Donaldson: With all the children. They were all small during that time, bit of thing.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Right. Just a block and a half from their house. We were on Hogue and Hogue runs directly into Auburn.

Henry Teman Donaldson: This was—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Irwin was between.

Henry Teman Donaldson: —I think it was Irwin, Irwin Street. In other words, the old King homestead. It was a two-story building.

Rhonda Mawhood: Yes, I've been there.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Two-story building. But I'd attend church there, Ebenezer the whole time we were there. Then after I left there, I worked my way on back up this way. I stopped in South Carolina and then I worked in Virginia. This is whenever he started all these set-ins and walk-ins and whatnot down on that end of the road. Today, there's a church, Shiloh Baptist church over here on the north side of Wilmington here. Reverend Vaughn, I met him here. But during the time when King was doing all of this, marches and whatnot, this Reverend Vaughn over here was working with him just like Abernathy. Reverend Vaughn over at Shiloh Baptist Church. Often we'd sit down and we talked about all of those things, but I was away from there then. Reverend Vaughn, until the day, he likes to talk about how he assisted the young man in these marches and things to Alabama and all these kinds of places.

Rhonda Mawhood: You said, Mr. Donaldson, that Decatur was a rough place and you weren't supposed to go there.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Decatur Street.

Rhonda Mawhood: Decatur Street.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Right.

Rhonda Mawhood: All right. Not Decatur, Georgia. Decatur Street.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Right.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did you know any Black men who did go there?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yes, I do. One of our bricklayers went over there and liked to get his head knocked off. There was a section on Decatur Street, and there's one in Augusta, Georgia, too, that—There was a White guy had a large department store and he only hired the fair Black women to work there. Now if a Black man would go in there and get out of line with one, say like, "She's pretty and I may want to say something to her," you weren't allowed to do that.

Henry Teman Donaldson: This fellow, he's dead now, his name was Gus Mickens. He saw this girl in this department store and he went over there and he was getting what they called smart with her. He wanted to know her name and whatnot. This man that owned the store, he hit him with a blackjack and liked to knock his head off, "Nigger, get out of here. That's my woman. Get out of here." And Gus did. Bill Boykins went over there and came back all beat up. In other words, our landlady told her said, "Don't go on Decatur Street for nothing. Stay away from there. Anything you need to have, go anywhere else."

Rhonda Mawhood: Now your friend, Gus Mickens, was the woman who he spoke to was a light-skinned African American woman?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Light skinned working in this particular building. She was one of the sales ladies.

Rhonda Mawhood: The White man who owned the store said, "That's my woman?"

Henry Teman Donaldson: That's my woman. There's a place on Gwinnett Street in Augusta, Georgia. When I had a room there, the lady told us, said, "Don't go to that drugstore down there for anything. All those girls that work in there, they're mistresses to this," whoever this fellow that owned it. I didn't ever go that way. I was always afraid. Didn't ever go that way. They would pick these pretty, what we call our pretty girls, and that was theirs. You just didn't say anything to them. Another Black man, no, better not because they'd hang you up in a minute or beat you up. There was nothing never done about it. When Gus got hit, oh, he got a little upset about this, say he went in the store to buy something and this man walked up and hit him with the blackjack.

Henry Teman Donaldson: He told the cop and policeman told him, "Boy, you need to learn how to stay in your place." That's all there was to that. The landlady told us, said, "I warned you, told you, don't go down there." But I was always a little timid of those kinds of things even though I had feelings, but I never would go. I was just afraid anyway to participate in any of those kinds of thing. But back during that time, the '30s and the early '40s, all the way through the '40s, it was rough there or throughout the south. In other words, if you came from North Carolina, you came from up north, you was branded. In other words, all the people up this way, the nigger, they're supposed to have been listed as smart. You go down there, they put you in your place, both of your places hanging on one of those trees, beat up or dead somewhere.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But in all, I was blessed. I didn't ever have get arrested or I wasn't ever beat up or anything. When I came from down that way, I think we have been through there about once or twice because the first year our oldest daughter was in college, she went to Talladega. I persuaded her, with her not to go down there because she was a little mama's girl around the house and she's never been out. But Joyce's first year to Talladega, that ended because the middle of the year, the Ku Klux Klan ran through and they set the buildings a fire there at Talladega College. They had a White lady instructor there and something happened. This is when the Klans paraded across the campus and the officials there notified us not to come down there. Joyce would call, she would cry, but we could not go to Talladega to see about Joyce.

Henry Teman Donaldson: She would let us know what was going on. Long as she stayed in the building, she would be all right. At the end of that school year, we went and got Joyce. Joyce didn't go back that way. She went to North Carolina Central up here in Durham. That broke off Talladega. Well, Joyce, that was supposed to have been handpicked college as they call.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: She gave her that scholarship.

Henry Teman Donaldson: She had a little scholarship to go there and nothing could go there unless they, what you call it, the academy, the record was high. Joyce's fitted that, so they gave her a scholarship to come there. But at the end of that year, we didn't have no more worry with Joyce about Talladega. She came back here and went to North Carolina Central University.

Rhonda Mawhood: Around what year was that?

Henry Teman Donaldson: That was—

Rhonda Mawhood: Fifties?

Henry Teman Donaldson: Wait a minute. [indistinct 00:34:08] I left here with—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Would have been '62.

Rhonda Mawhood: Excuse me, '62.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. Yes, sir. Some kind of book, Talladega, oh, Lord. She got everything out of there.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Well, '62 then.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. This is pictures of the college. Laura, where's all the information was in there?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: She probably took it out.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Joyce probably come inside, just left the book back, but that's the school.

Rhonda Mawhood: Building, right? A beautiful building.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. This, they had one White—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: [indistinct 00:34:45] experienced so much pain.

Henry Teman Donaldson: This, they had one White instructor there. She was a doctor somebody and the Klansmen didn't want her on that campus teaching or something. They started all this rigmarole. They shot into some of the dormitories and the kids could not come out.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: They couldn't go shopping unless one of the instructors went with them.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yes. They definitely told us not to come down there. Your parents, stay. In other words, anybody from North Carolina, don't go that way. Naturally, we suffered here until it was over. But I hated it happened like that. But I told Joyce, I said, "Now, baby, I have been on that end of the road working and they call you nigger, they'll kick you, they'll do anything. They'll spit on you and you can't do anything back." "No, Daddy, I got my scholarship and I want to go down there and they have high standards." I said, "Well, you're not going to like it." Sure enough, it came to pass, she didn't like it. Wasn't a thing that we could do about it. She left there once and they took so many of them from Talladega and carried them to Atlanta to some conference thing they had there. But they were pretty well guarded.

Henry Teman Donaldson: She went back. But that's the only time. Joyce left Talladega that first year that she was there. I was so glad when it was over with, when they did tell the school was out, we could come and go. But we went on down. We picked her up and we got on away from there. After that, then that was down in there. But anybody from North Carolina that was from up north, smart, this, that and the other. But it was rough during that time. I came up on this end of the road. I went to Washington D.C. in 1950 and I worked up around Maryland laying brick in Bethesda, Alexandria, Virginia. I lived in the district room. She didn't ever come up to me then. At that time, our other two children were born, so she stayed at home with them.

Henry Teman Donaldson: In 1953, I worked in Norfolk, Virginia and being up and—I call it up and down the road and living in other folk houses. I just got tired of staying away from home. I told Laura, I said, "Baby, I'm coming home. If we don't have but \$.05, we going to enjoy that together. I'm just tired of rooming and working on jobs," and work was slow around here. I couldn't hardly make ends meet. This is why I worked up and down the road. But I came home in 1953 from Norfolk, Virginia. At the time, things began to look a little brighter around here so far as working conditions. In 1954, this waterfront here in Wilmington, which always have been a port city shipping. Then things escalated up and I went to the Longshore Association. They were wanting men to work. They even sent to South Carolina.

Henry Teman Donaldson: This is when they opened up this ammunition depot on the waterfront over here in Brunswick County. Oh my land, this is when we started—I started leaving. I went and I joined this union, ILA, International Longshoreman's Association. I was paying \$110 and I went to work there on the ships loading and unloading ships. I made more money then than I had ever even dreamed of. They were paying \$4 an hour. Now, brick masons, at that time wasn't getting but \$2.25 an hour. They had gone to 2.25 an hour here and whenever you could find a job. This just suited me. I laid my trowel down aside. Of course, I've never put it away because right now, I lay a few bricks once in a while after retire. From 1954, I went out and I started loading ammunition. They started sending to these war zones and from time to time we got periodic raises.

Henry Teman Donaldson: From 4.54 at different times at different ammunition, we would load over there. I have made as much—I'm not exaggerating, on particular day, \$104 an hour. I worked one day, six hours. Now this was handling this poisonous gas that the Army would use. See, this was dangerous work. All of it's dangerous. This is why they paid so much. But on this particular project, that's as much as I've ever made. I guess they don't be talking about that too much, but the fact they was getting rid of some of this gas, the Army, and this is what they paid. We were all backed down and this, that, and the other, gas masks and whatnot for our safety. They sent that stuff away from there. But we would get paid during that time, whatever your hourly rate was, after 5:00 in the evening, you got double time, or if you worked at night.

Henry Teman Donaldson: The highest I made one week that I would work. I didn't work long hours because—For my own benefit, but you could make \$2,000 a week if you wanted to work that long.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: He didn't see many of those days.

Henry Teman Donaldson: No. I wouldn't work because when I would get tired, I was jittery of that work because it was so dangerous. You could stumble and fall and get killed just that quick. But when I get tired, I come away from there. One week, I worked enough to make \$1,500 in, I believe it was three and a half days. This particular year, I made \$41,000 in about five months. Now this wasn't working every day. Didn't need to do that.

Rhonda Mawhood: In the 1950s.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yeah. This was in the '60s.

Rhonda Mawhood: Sixties.

Henry Teman Donaldson: This was in the '60s. I made good salaries down there and saved and when this war started over here—What do you call it? The Gulf War?

Rhonda Mawhood: The Gulf War.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Some of those fellows made \$150,000.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Sam was not in there.

Henry Teman Donaldson: No, I was there then. No, I retired at 1988.

Rhonda Mawhood: Okay.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I made 32 years and nine months from 1954 to 1988, I worked down there and mostly I made on that waterfront and money had \$41,000. I'd always average around from 20, 25 and 30 and 35. Now, I could have made far more than that had I pushed myself, work night and day, but I wouldn't do that. A lot of the fellows, I noticed they would work until they'd fall out. Some have strokes, some had heart attacks, just working at all that money. But I didn't ever do that.

Rhonda Mawhood: Mrs. Donaldson, did you worry about your husband doing this work?

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Yes, I did.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Whole lot. More than she should have.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: I guess I was his guardian angel and to me—But now, bear in mind, these large payrolls were not a weekly thing.

Henry Teman Donaldson: No.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: You didn't do this every week.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Do that every week.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: When you average it out on a yearly basis,—

Henry Teman Donaldson: Yearly basis.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: —it was nothing like that amount. But it was just that hourly, the pay was very good, but it didn't come every day.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Every week.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: It didn't come every week. That made a difference.

Henry Teman Donaldson: But it was so much farther, more than I had ever made. Whenever I would, we would put it to what we call good use.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: He had his brick masonry job to fall back on—

Henry Teman Donaldson: Always.

Laura Shepard Donaldson: —at the time when there was no work on the front.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Now during that time, they had some awful strikes. Ships didn't sail. Sometimes. I remember once we had one that lasted three months. Well, during that time, I would go back to my brick laying job. The fellows that didn't do anything but work on the waterfront, they suffered. But I always had something to fall back on. This was something else, too, of my people, they're some of the darndest folk there is in the world, I'll put it that way. They're jealous. A lot of them are hateful and they don't want to see—When you hear the word, they're like a lot of crabs. You ever been crabbing and see—You catch some crab and put them in a bucket and one try to get out and one just pull it down. This is the way it was on that waterfront. The guys hated to see you excel and they would do everything they could to pull you down, in other words, to get you not to have anything.

Henry Teman Donaldson: Alcoholism is one of the main menace it is down there. A lot of those guys. They'll go out and say, they'll make a thousand dollars this week. They'll spend the biggest of that drinking and whatnot, especially during that time. I didn't ever fool with drinking with them too much around me because I knew how treacherous they were. Then they put a brand on me, "Well, you think you more than anybody else, you don't associate with us." But I couldn't put up with the things that they were doing because—

Laura Shepard Donaldson: Hen pecked.

Henry Teman Donaldson: I was always looking forward to one day retiring and having something that I could feel proud of. They always give me the heart in to go. Finally, as God would have it, I worked and stayed there and I took all of that because I knew one day that if I retired, this would be good for me. Finally, the last 10 years that I was there, I worked up to be what they call a header, which is the supervisor over them. Then they had to adhere to me then because they wanted a job. I could hire them, but I always would treat them like I wanted to be treated because—