

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Kinds of things he did was [indistinct 00:00:02].

Rhonda Mawhood: [indistinct 00:00:02] the first thing that I'd like to ask you, Dr. Randolph, is how long you've lived in Charlotte.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I came to Charlotte in 1944 and I have lived here ever since. I came here To teach.

Rhonda Mawhood: To teach. I see.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Uh-huh.

Rhonda Mawhood: And where— I'd like to come back to your teaching, but where did you move here from?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I grew up in Raleigh.

Rhonda Mawhood: In Raleigh. I see. Mm-hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: And since I brought you back a little bit, I'd like to ask you a little bit about growing up in Raleigh. Were you born in Raleigh?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No, I was not born in Raleigh. I was born in Farmville, North Carolina, down in Pitt County. My mother was a teacher, but my father was a plastering contractor and he traveled where the construction jobs were. So, we moved from place to place until we finally settled in Raleigh.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I was born in Farmville and my brother, my oldest brother was born in Farmville. And we moved from there to Norfolk, Virginia. And from Norfolk, Virginia, we moved to Southern Pines, North Carolina. And then my mother got tired of moving and so she told that my father that we were going to decide on a place that was going to be home and he could travel and we would stay there and be a family and welcome him when he could come home.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: So, we settled in Raleigh and that's where all of us grew up. The six of us. My parents had three girls and three boys, and we grew up in Raleigh. All of us went to school there.

Rhonda Mawhood: And did your father continue to travel around after you moved to Raleigh?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Mm-hmm. Yes. He continued to travel around where the plastering contracting jobs were. And he, well, yes, he did that— really, when he got sick and died, he was on a contracting job.

Rhonda Mawhood: Hm.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Mm—hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: And your mother continued to work as a teacher when she had six children?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yes, she certainly did. She was a very, very strict, a loving but very, very strict parent. And she taught in Wake County and we lived across the street from the elementary school where we went to school. And we had our instructions when we got home before she did. And our instructions were to go home, to lock the doors, not let anybody in. And when she got there, we ate dinner and we washed the dishes. And then we gathered around the dining room table and did our homework.

Rhonda Mawhood: Mm-hmm. And were you one of the older children?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I was the oldest.

Rhonda Mawhood: You were the oldest?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I'm the oldest of six children.

Rhonda Mawhood: So, what was— did you have special obligations as the oldest child when your mother was at work?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, yes, I was to see to it that everybody did what they were supposed to do. I was to see to it that nobody even tried to go outside, to let in any neighborhood children in. And all of us learned to read when we were very young. And we would, until she got home, we would read or just talk about what had happened in school to each one of us that day until she got home. When she got home, she cooked dinner and we ate dinner and then we gathered around the table and did our homework.

Rhonda Mawhood: What about the children who weren't old enough yet to go to school? Did your—

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, I was— My brother and I were the babysitters. We were the two oldest and we were sort of in charge of the youngest ones.

Rhonda Mawhood: And you say that you all learned how to read at very young ages.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yeah.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did your mother teach you how to read?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yes. Yes indeed. She did. She taught us how to read and we learned to read by reading stories of the Bible. Mm—hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did you have any stories that were your favorites when you were a little girl?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, my favorite was the story of Ruth.

Rhonda Mawhood: Hm.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: It still is.

Rhonda Mawhood: Yes.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yeah.

Rhonda Mawhood: So—

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: She was a liberated, liberated woman.

Rhonda Mawhood: Mm—hmm.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yes. Our family was a religious family. We went to church, we went to Sunday school, we went to BYPU. We were Baptists. The Baptist Young People's Union. We went to—

Rhonda Mawhood: [indistinct 00:05:11] I see.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Mm-hmm. We went to Wednesday night prayer meeting. And we went to church, we went to Sunday school, we went to day church, we went to BYPU, which was in the afternoon, and we went to night church. My mother sang in the choir and we went to everything that the church had. Well, and when I was growing up, not only did we go to school, but my mother, we always knew that we were going to be somebody. We grew up knowing that.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And she sent me to a music teacher and I learned to play the piano when I was, oh, before I was 12, and I played for the Sunday school. And as I grew older, I learned to play the organ, pipe organ. And when I was in my teens, I was assistant organist for the church. So, whatever went on in church, we were there.

Rhonda Mawhood: Were there social events at church as well as more— I mean, I guess everything that goes on in the church is religious and spiritual. But do you remember picnics and things like that?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Oh, yes. Yes. In fact, on Tuesday we had a, what was called a WIC circle that it was— What did WIC mean? It was a club. It was a women's club. But what they did was they had activities for children. And that was every Tuesday. And after we went, we came home from school and mama came home. We had dinner. On Tuesdays, she would take us to church, to that WIC meeting. And that was a social activity.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: We went to Sunday school, we took part in Christmas plays, Thanksgiving plays, Easter plays, things like that. And everything that went on in the church. And the church was, as well as you say, religious, was really a social institution where you learned how to know other people. In fact, I have friends, the first name, that young lady on that list I gave you, she and I grew up in the same church in Raleigh. [indistinct 00:07:38] Durant. Mm-hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: Ms. Durant.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yeah. We grew up together in the church.

Rhonda Mawhood: And you're still friends today?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And we are still friends today. In fact, we are just like sisters. We talk to each other just about every day.

Rhonda Mawhood: And you were friends as little girls?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: As little girls. Mm-hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: Do you remember any conflicts or disagreements coming up in the church and how people might have settled those if they did arise?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, if so, our mother didn't let us know about. I'm sure she did. I do remember one thing and that had to do with our first instruction in the sex education at home. In the Baptist church, I don't know whether it's still done now or not, but I know when I was growing up, if a young woman got pregnant and had a baby out of wedlock, she was put out of the church.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And I remember one such instance that that happened. And I remember when she came back to the church, she had to come before the church and apologize and say how sorry she was and everything. And church had to vote on getting her back in. And that was the first time that, when that happened, that was the first time that our mother set the three girls down and talked to them about the facts of life. And—

Rhonda Mawhood: How old were you then?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Oh, we were— I was less than 12, I know. I'm pretty sure I was less than 12. And there were three of us. See, I was the oldest and the second oldest was a boy, third girl, fourth boy, fifth girl, sixth boy. And of the six, there are three of us who are living now, my sister and I, one sister and one brother and myself.

Rhonda Mawhood: And so your mother didn't speak with the boys about this incident?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No, my father did.

Rhonda Mawhood: I see.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Now when he came, you see, he was a good parent. And although he was very seldom at home, when he came home, he was dad. And I remember really overhearing mama tell him that the children were getting to the point now where they needed to have some serious talk about the facts of life. And he instructed the boys and mama instructed the girls.

Rhonda Mawhood: And do you remember the young woman who came back to the church and asked for forgiveness? Do you remember anyone— Was the young man treated the same way?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No. No. Nobody ever knew who he was. Well, I guess some of the adults did, but I don't believe he was a member of the church.

Rhonda Mawhood: I see.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: But I never heard of any young man being put out for fathering a child because I think, most of the time, people didn't know who the child was, who the father was.

Rhonda Mawhood: So, you said that when your father came back to the house between jobs or came back to see you, he was dad in the house.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yes, he was dad.

Rhonda Mawhood: What was it like when you knew that your father was coming home?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, dad was not as strict a disciplinarian as mama. And we were always glad to see him when he came home because we knew that we weren't going to get a whipping. We thought— I got— Because mama did not spare the rod. She did not spare the rod at all.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And I remember, in growing up, the only time that I got a whipping from my father was when I slapped my sister for something that she did. And I slapped her and he saw me do that. And he took me across his lap and spanked me. But that was the only time that he ever punished me. And I don't think he ever punished any of the rest of us.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did your parents disagree about that? About discipline?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No.

Rhonda Mawhood: The children?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No. You see, dad was not there very much. And so mama was really the disciplinarian. So, anything that required discipline happened when he wasn't there, most of the time. And, you see, that spanking that I got, he spanked me because he saw me when I slapped my sister. He saw it.

Rhonda Mawhood: How old would you have been then at the moment?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Oh, let's see. I guess I was about 10.

Rhonda Mawhood: Can I ask you a little bit more about school now?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: School? Sure.

Rhonda Mawhood: School. Did your mother teach in the elementary school?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yeah, she taught in the elementary school in the county. And we lived in the city and we lived right across the street from the elementary school that we went to.

Rhonda Mawhood: So, you didn't go to the school where your mother was teaching?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No, no.

Rhonda Mawhood: I see. Do you remember the name of the school that you went to?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Of the school? Uh—huh. Crosby Garfield School in Raleigh.

Rhonda Mawhood: Crosby Garfield.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And that school now is no longer a school. It's a community center of some kind. It's one of the schools that was closed during the desegregation times when lots of Black schools were closed. But that was one of them. But it's a community center now.

Rhonda Mawhood: And let's see—

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Now, that was the first school we went to. And we moved from the house where we were living across the street from the school, to another location which was not in that school district. And we were assigned to another school. The name of that school was Lucille Hunter School.

Rhonda Mawhood: Lucille Hunter.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Uh—huh. And it was a new school. And we were among the first students to attend that school. And I remember that I was in sixth grade then and I was in the first sixth grade class of Lucille

Hunter School.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And from there, I went to high school, to Washington High School. And Washington High School was a long way from where we lived. And it was a long, long walk every day. But I wasn't the only one walking. Everybody in the neighborhood was walking to Washington High School. Everybody who went to high school walked to Washington High School.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did you have friends who you walked with?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yes. Yes.

Rhonda Mawhood: How long would it take you to walk to school?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, let's see. School opened at 9:00 and I believe we left home probably around 7:30.

Rhonda Mawhood: Oof.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I guess. [indistinct 00:15:15] 7:38 because we ate breakfast. 'Cause mama always gave us breakfast before she went to work. And see, she drove with— She carpooled with some other ladies who taught and out in the county at the same place she did. But we always had breakfast before we left.

Rhonda Mawhood: So, did you have fun with the other children on the way to and from school?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yes. Yes we did. We had a good time. We would skip and we would have a good time. And there was a certain place that we met at the end of the day and we came back home together. And some of those people are people who are— Well, some of them are no longer living, but there are a few of them who still live in Raleigh. And on the rare times when I go to Raleigh, there are several I call up and we get together.

Rhonda Mawhood: Mm—hmm. What do you remember about your teachers?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: My teachers? Oh, I always loved school. You see, my momma was a teacher and she taught us at home. So, going to school was not our first experience with teaching, you see. And I just loved school and I love my teachers now at Crosby Garfield School, which was the first school that I went to. And I entered that school in third grade. I didn't go to first and second grade.

Rhonda Mawhood: Oh.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I would stay home. When I went to school, I knew how to read. So, let's see, my third grade teacher was Miss Dorothy Laine, and Miss Dorothy Laine is living now. She has some relatives that live around the corner. And she's living now. So, oh, she's in her nineties now. She's probably almost a hundred.

And she is the only elementary school teacher that I had that I think is still living.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Now, my fourth grade teacher was Mrs. Daisy Evans. And I know Ms. Evans is not living, but she was my fifth grade teacher. And my sixth grade teacher was, I never will forget her. Her name was Ms. Minnie Bell Clark. And she was— because Ms. Dorothy Laine was not married, but she never did get married. Ms. Lane, Ms. Daisy Evans was married and she had one son, I remember.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: But Ms. Clark was single. And during that year that she was my teacher, she became engaged and she told us about her fiance and told us that she was going to get married. And I never will forget that we made up a song about her and her husband—to—be was name. And it's just this— My memory just goes, but I remember this, I don't know why on Earth I still remember that man's name, was Adolphus Henry Ross.

Rhonda Mawhood: Adolphus Henry Ross?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Adolphus Henry Ross. And we made up that song with his name in it. We said Adolphus Henry Ross and Minnie Bell Clark planned to marry. And the song was around that, you know, but she would come in in the morning, we'd start singing, "Adolphus Henry Ross and Minnie Bell Clark." Mm-hmm.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: But when she married, she left Raleigh. So, I never saw her again, but I never forgot her. She was a good teacher. And in high school, the teachers as I remember, let's see, I have a picture of one of them. I'll show it to you.

Rhonda Mawhood: I'll remember to ask you.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Mm-hmm. Yeah. She was— Her name was Mrs. Susie Vic Perry. And she was—

Rhonda Mawhood: Mrs. Perry.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Mrs. Perry. She just died last year. She was my chemistry teacher. And she taught me a lot of things besides chemistry. She taught me to not let people pick on me. And she taught me to speak up for what I believed and what I knew. She taught me— well, she told me that I was going to—See, and I was a pretty good student. I really was. In fact, I graduated from high school as valedictorian and also college valedictorian.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: But she told me that I was going to join her sorority. Well, I didn't know anything about a sorority. I said, "What is a sorority?" And she told me and she told me about her sorority, which is Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. And that's the sorority that I joined. But when I was in college, I went to Shaw University.

Rhonda Mawhood: Shaw University.



Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Shaw University in Raleigh. But we didn't have sororities at Shaw when I was a student there. And they had fraternities but didn't have sororities. And sororities didn't come on campus until I was a senior. And my sorority didn't come on campus then.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And the other sororities, I was rushed by the other two sororities. And I told Ms. Perry that these other sororities wanted me to come to their rush. She said, "No, you don't. You are going to join Alpha Kappa Alpha." I said, "Well, Alpha Kappa Alpha is not on the cam—" "It will be. And you just wait. So, you just wait. And if it doesn't come on campus before you graduate, well, we have, in our sorority, we have alumni chapters and I will see to it that you join the Raleigh alumni chapter."

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And she did. And I joined the Raleigh alumni chapter, although I had finished college and had gone to teach at my first job. And I came back to Raleigh when she told me that they had voted to take me in. And there were two or three other young women they were going to take in. And when I came home for Thanksgiving, that was the time that they had that. But going back to high school, I didn't finish high school. Ms. Perry was my favorite teacher in high school.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And I'm trying to think of the name of Ms. Hicks. She was my Latin teacher in high school and I liked her, too. But Mr. Johnson was my English teacher. And he was a person who sort of kept me going on what I had already learned at home. That was reading, just reading widely. And he had us learn poetry and he would assign us to poems to read. And well, of course, when we came home, we always had to let mama know what our homework was. And if we had a poem to read, she would see to it that we would learn it sometimes that same night.

Rhonda Mawhood: What kinds of books and poems did your teachers assign you to read?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, shoot, hold on and see. I'm trying to think of one that came to my head. On my mind and it went right— It'll come back to me. I know when I was a senior, we had the Shakespearean plays. We had to learn passages from Shakespeare. Now, if you didn't ask me that, I could just rattle it off.

Rhonda Mawhood: Of course.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I could just rattle it off.

Rhonda Mawhood: Do you ever—

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I'll think of it.

Rhonda Mawhood: Do you ever remember reading any African American poets [indistinct 00:23:50]?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: We had African American history when I was in sixth grade. And we didn't read poetry, but we studied history and we learned about Booker T. Washington and Marian Anderson, Roland

Hayes. So, I never will forget. I lost that book and I always intended to keep it. And when we moved, it was lost. But there was a textbook that we used in sixth grade about— a Negro history textbook, starting with slavery and coming all up through whatever was happening at that particular time.

Rhonda Mawhood: And did the students have to pay for these books?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: We rented. We rented books, but I don't know how I came to be in possession of that book. But we rented our books. The first of the year, you paid your rental fee and you went to the book room and you had your little slip, and you gave the slip to the person who was in charge. And whoever was in charge would give you the books that were on that slip. But I don't remember that we rented that book. Maybe we bought it because I know that we had it at home. We lost it somehow.

Rhonda Mawhood: So, you stayed in touch with some of your high school teachers like Ms. Perry for a very long time?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Mm—hmm. Yes. Yes. I told you, she just died a couple of years ago. And I have a picture of her in there that was taken when the two of us received awards from the sorority at one of the national conventions. Both of us received an award at the same time. And ooh, I was just so, so pleased to go up on the stage with her. And she received a plaque and I received a plaque. And the picture I have shows the two of us, both with our plaques and the national president of the sorority was standing beside us. So, I'll show it to you before you leave.

Rhonda Mawhood: I'd like to see that [indistinct 00:26:07].

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Mm-hmm.

Rhonda Mawhood: I'd like to come back a little bit before we move forward to talk a little bit more about your family. And your mother was a teacher. Where was your mother educated?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, during the times that mama was a teacher, you didn't have to be a college graduate to be a teacher. You would go to a school in the summertime. And sometimes there were, at Shaw, they had on Saturday, they had Saturday classes that people who were teaching who wanted to be certified and to keep their certificates up. And that's how she got her certificate.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: She never went to college. She wanted to go to Fisk. And she did go to Fisk for one semester, but she couldn't stay there. Her folks could not— I don't know how she got there. But she did go to Fisk one semester and she wanted me to go to Fisk. But the family didn't have enough money to send me away to school. And that's why I went to school at home, at Shaw.

Rhonda Mawhood: And what did your— I guess a better way to ask you would be what you remember about your grandparents, your mother's parents or your father's [indistinct 00:27:19]?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, I never knew, none of us ever knew my father's parents except what he told us about them. We had a picture of my grandfather that was lost someplace. My father came from Alabama. And he met my mother in Farmville, North Carolina, where she was teaching when he was on one of his jobs. And she never went to Alabama. We never went to Alabama.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: But a brother of his came to North Carolina after we moved to Raleigh. And we met him. He lived in Durham, but we saw him. Every now and then, he would come over to see us. And we met— One of his sisters came to see us one time from Alabama, but we never met his parents. Now, we knew my mother's mother. In fact, my mother's mother lived to— She was nearly a hundred and she was living with us in Raleigh when she died.

Rhonda Mawhood: So, you grew up with your grandmother in the house [indistinct 00:28:28] some time?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, she wasn't there all that long. No. In fact, when she came to live with us, she was really in her latter years. And she wasn't even well, but we used to go to— She lived in Weldon and in the summertime we used to go down there to visit her.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: But we would just go— My mama, we had a little old Essex and mama would drive us to Weldon and we would stay two or three days and come back. But we weren't around her enough for her to have any lasting impact on our lives. But the fact that mama was a religious person and she grew up in the church, and, of course, that was her mother's teachings.

Rhonda Mawhood: And when you did go visit your grandmother in the summertime, I guess, in the summertime, you didn't say.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Yes, in the summertime.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did she ever tell you stories about her childhood or anything like that?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No. What I remember about those summers is the neighbor's children that we met. And we'd go fishing and we would always— If we were there for a weekend, we always went to Sunday school and church. And we would play games, we would play jack rocks and things like that. And the children's games, of jumping over— Somebody would be moving the rope and you would jump rope, you know, that.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: So, those are the kinds of things I remember doing when we went to see grandma. I don't remember— In fact, I just don't ever remember her sitting down and talking to her.

Rhonda Mawhood: What did your parents' parents do? Was your father's father a plasterer also? Or did something else?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I don't know. Let's see, never met him. Never met him. Now, his brother who came

to Durham was a plasterer. And, now, whether they got that from their father, I don't know. I never knew that.

Rhonda Mawhood: How did your parents teach you to address adults when you were a child?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Ms., Mrs., yes ma'am, no ma'am, reverend, and doctor.

Rhonda Mawhood: And were you to treat White adults and Black adults in the same way?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, we never came in contact with Whites, with White adults. I guess, the only time you'd ever come in contact with a White adult was if you happened to go into a store to buy something. But then there was never any conversation. You just said what you want and you tell them what you want and you pay them. And that was it. I never came in contact with Whites, really, until I went to graduate school.

Rhonda Mawhood: What about White children when you were a child?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, you see, we grew up in a segregated society, completely segregated society. And we lived in a segregated community. There were no Whites anywhere in the community where we lived in Raleigh. Now, if you'd go downtown and then go into Woolworth's, Kress's, Sears Roebuck to buy something, you know, would see Whites there. But as far as having any kind of social interaction, school interaction with Whites, nuh—uh. There was none.

Rhonda Mawhood: Do you remember seeing the signs? The Crow signs?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Oh, yes. You couldn't possibly miss them. You couldn't possibly miss them. The signs that said— The water signs, I remember. The ones I remember most are the ones that were downtown at the post office. And they had a water fountain, they had two water fountains and one was for White and one was Black. And I remember asking mama why that was. And she said, "Well, that's the way it is, and if you want water when you're downtown, you go to the one that says— that didn't say Black, that said colored." We were Colored then.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And, of course, there's no such thing as going the restrooms in the stores downtown. No such thing. I remember when we would go to Weldon in our Essex in the summertime, if we needed to relieve ourselves, mama would drive off on a dirt road. You would go find a place to urinate in the bushes somewhere. I don't think that I— Let me see, did I ever— No, it was when I went to the University of Michigan, when I first realized I didn't have to pay any attention to— In fact, there were no signs for you to pay up there at Michigan, for us to pay— to have to observe. But, in growing up, I grew up with everything you ever heard about segregation, the segregated everything.

Rhonda Mawhood: Did you and your brothers and sisters ever talk about that? Since you were the oldest, did you have to explain to the younger ones how— as your mother explained to you?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No, she explained it to all of us. There were certain things that, you see, we always were, at home, at night, we were around, after dinner, around the table, and we studied our lessons and we learned what she had to teach us, what she wanted to talk about that particular day. And if that subject ever came up, for instance, if we had gone to town and had to use a Colored water fountain, and if that happened to come up around the table, she would explain to everybody how that was, that Blacks and Whites were separate and they had separate facilities.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And she would want us not to do anything that would get us into any kind of trouble. He said, because I remember my brother asking one time, "What would happen to him if he went to the White fountain?" And she said, "Well," she said, "Even though you are a little boy, you might be arrested and I might have to come to jail and get you out." So, that was enough to scare him and the rest of us not to— In fact, something happened to me then, during those days that I still remember. I do not use public facilities. I do not use a public water fountain. I do not use a public toilet. I just don't.

Rhonda Mawhood: Anywhere? Or only in the south?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Not anywhere. Not anywhere. If I'm in New York, I'll come back to my hotel or wherever I'm staying, if I'm at a convention. There's just something. And I know it came out of the experiences in my childhood, that the White and Black. I just don't like them. Now that's not to say that I have never been to, because there are sometimes that, you know, you're in a situation where you better go or you better go. But that's been my habit, not to, if I don't have to.

Rhonda Mawhood: That's interesting. I'd like to ask you about your first job now because you went to Shaw University and then you came— Did you immediately come to Charlotte?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No, I didn't. No. This was my third job. One thing that my mother taught us by her example and also by precept, was to press— always stick together, help each other. And when you of age, register and vote because she always did. And we would ask her why she was voting and she would tell us why. That's the way you could help elect the people who are going to run the city. And she never missed voting.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And in Raleigh, you could vote. Black people could vote in Raleigh. And the voting place was the school across the street, where we went to school. And she always voted. Well, when I graduated from Shaw in 1936, my first job was up in the mountains, up in Rutherford County in Rutherford [indistinct 00:38:12]. And I was old enough to vote and had registered in Raleigh, but had not voted.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: So, when I went up there, it was— The year that I went up there was the year that Franklin Roosevelt was running for his second term. And I was looking forward to voting for Franklin Roosevelt because I got through college on the WPA and some of it there, the programs that he initiated. And Franklin Roosevelt, he was my idol, and I was going to vote for Franklin Roosevelt.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, when I talked about voting, the teachers in the school where I was said, "What

do you mean voting?" I said, "Well, I mean voting. I'm going to cast my vote for Franklin Roosevelt." And they said, "Not up here, you are." I said, "What?" They said, "Black people can't vote up here." I just couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it and I didn't believe it. So, I went down to, what you call, the place where you register and showed up, said, "I wanted to—" They asked me what I wanted. I said, "I want to register to vote."

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And I told them I was already registered in Raleigh. And so they told me I couldn't register up there. "Well, why?" "Well, we don't allow Colored folks to vote up here." "Why?" "We just don't." And I did not vote and, ooh, that hurt me so. And I didn't go back up there to work. I didn't. I told mama that I wanted to come closer to home to work. So, I got in touch with Shaw and told them I wanted to get a job near home. And they found me a job at Wake Forest, which was just 16 miles from home. And my second job was at Wake Forest.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And I have voted ever since. I never, never missed voting, never. I taught in Wake Forest for six years. My first job up in Rutherford County, my principal was Dr. Johnson. And oh, he hated so much for me to leave, but I did. But he left, too, that day. He got a job as a principal in Burlington. And I went to Wake Forest. I worked for Wake Forest, I taught English, I taught French. I was a part—time librarian, a part—time music teacher. That was just the way it was. That all the facilities that you had. There was not a single teacher on a faculty who didn't have multiple duties.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, Dr. Johnson got in touch with me. And I think I had been working in Wake Forest for, well, four or five years there, five years. And he wanted me to come to Burlington. And I was interested in going to Burlington because Burlington paid a supplement and Wake Forest didn't. So, I told him, "Yes, yes, I would come." But when I went to my principal to tell him that I was resigning and I was going to teach in Burlington, he would not sign the papers to release me and I could not go to Burlington.

Rhonda Mawhood: Why was that, Dr. Randolph?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, you see, it's interesting. You have to understand how this segregated system was— how it operated. The teachers never went to the [indistinct 00:42:22]. Wake Forest was in the county and the county seat was Raleigh. So, when the principal had reports and things to give to the central office, he had to come to Raleigh to bring them. But teachers never went to the central office. We didn't know anything about the central office. We knew it was the superintendent of schools, but we never saw him. He never came to Wake Forest.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: So, all the principal had to do was just not to turn the papers in, you see? And put me on his roster as continuing since I'd already been there five years. Well, I taught there one more year. But the principal, Dr. Johnson, came to see me at Christmas holidays, I think, and see, because I commuted. I was in Wake Forest during the week and I went home to Raleigh on the weekend and he told me, he said, "I still want you to come work with me and I'll tell you how to do it." He said, "Now, you wait until school closes and when you come home," he said, "You send in your resignation."

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: And he said, "There's nothing that the principal can do about it." He said, "You can resign." And he said, "You have the time to resign," he said, "Because," he said, "Just don't wait a month." He said, "If you wait a month, see, you can't get released from your contract, but you can resign." He said, "Just do it the week after you get home, send in your resignation." And that's what I did. So, that's how I got to Burlington. That was my second job.

Rhonda Mawhood: Excuse me, Dr. Randolph, you said that they paid a supplement in Burlington? Why was that now?

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, just like the reason they pay a supplement here, they pay supplements just about everywhere now in all large cities where— They pay a supplement because they want more in their schools than the state basic funding allowed. So, the supplements come out of local taxes and, see, now, we have the largest supplement in the state, but it comes out of local taxes. You see, all schools in the state are funded by the state, but cities and counties and small towns who have the— whose people want more than that, who don't mind paying the taxes, the extra taxes, well, they have the supplements.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Well, Burlington has supplements. That's the reason I— There were two reasons I wanted to go. I wanted to leave Wake Forest because I was mad because the principal wouldn't let me go the last time. And then I wanted to make some more money. So, I went to Burlington. Now, that was in the 1940s, during World War II. And when I got to Burlington, my principal had been drafted.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: No, he was not there when I got there. But I liked the school. And in fact, the place that I got a room to stay was right across the street from the school. And I was teaching. I taught English and I taught French and I was librarian. And I did the same things I was doing at Wake Forest and played for the Glee Club.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: So, I was the kind of person who would— When I see something that needs to be done, I would do it. So, if I saw some paper out on the sidewalk and there weren't any children around, this was after school, I'd go pick it up myself. And I mentored a lot of kids, the kids I taught. And so there was a fellow from Charlotte who was on that faculty, his name was Audrey Heffington.

Rhonda Mawhood: Audrey—

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Heffington.

Rhonda Mawhood: Heffington.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: Mm-hmm. Yeah. And bless his heart, he's still here, but he's very, very ill. I haven't seen him in years.

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: But he came to me, he said, "You know?" He said, "You ought to be teaching in Charlotte." I said, "Why?" So, he said, "Well, you're a good teacher." And he said, "You just need to be there."

And saying, "You know, Charlotte pays a larger supplement than Burlington," and said, "You ought to apply to teach in Charlotte."

Dr. Elizabeth Randolph: I said, "Well," I said, "You know, you can't get jobs in big cities like this unless you know somebody."