

Mississippi Oral History Program

Simpson County Historical and Genealogical
Oral History Project

An Oral History

with

Minnie McDonald

Interviewer: Joe White

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An Oral History with Minnie McDonald, Volume 1217, Part 19

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Biography

Minnie Lee Weathersby McDonald was born to Kylie and Josephine Spells Weathersby in Hinds County in April 1943. Her father worked as a sharecropper and for the highway department. She has four brothers and two sisters. McDonald's father died in 1949; her mother remarried in 1952, which is when her family moved to Magee, MS. She went to school in Jamesville, where she met her future husband, Eddie McDonald – another interviewee. She graduated from McLaurin High School, eventually spending a few months at Piney Woods Country Life School in Rankin County. Minnie then joined Eddie in Indiana; they were later married in Chicago in February 1963. Minnie and her husband bought out a record store from Mack Broome in 1981 and converted it into a Christian bookstore.

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AN ORAL HISTORY
with
MINNIE McDONALD

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi Simpson County Project. The interview is with Minnie McDonald and is taking place on September 9, 2003. The interviewer is Joe White.

White: —White. Today is Tuesday, September the ninth, 2003. This interview is conducted under a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council as a part of the oral history project directed by the University of Southern Mississippi. Today we're interviewing Ms. Minnie Lee Weathersby McDonald at her business in Magee. I just stated your full name, so I don't think there's much reason for you to say that again. What was your birth date?

McDonald: I was born April the eighteenth, 1943.

White: I was born in 1943 also, November. That was a good year obviously. And where were you born?

McDonald: I was born in Hinds County.

White: But your family's from Simpson County. Is that right?

McDonald: Right, right.

White: Well, every once in a while, one of us has to be born out of the county, I guess. (laughter) Your family was living up there at the time?

McDonald: Right.

White: What was your father's name?

McDonald: My father was named Kylie Weathersby.

White: And he was born in D'Lo, I believe. Wasn't he?

McDonald: He was born in D'Lo.

White: And your mother's name?

McDonald: Josephine Spells Weathersby.

White: And she was born where?

McDonald: In Rankin County, up in the Florence Community.

White: Florence. What did your dad do?

McDonald: Well, my daddy was a (inaudible) sharecropper, and he also worked on the road, making a dollar and ten cents a day.

White: Worked for the highway department?

McDonald: Right.

White: A dollar and ten cents a day. That's what got y'all up to Hinds County.

McDonald: Probably so.

White: It wouldn't pull you up there today, I don't think. (laughter) What kind of work did he do on the road?

McDonald: Mama said that he was kind of like a little boss over the—

White: Crew.

McDonald: —other workers. The reason he got the ten cents. The rest of them got the dollar a day, and he got ten cent for being—I guess they call it the straw boss then.

White: Yeah. What kind of equipment did they use? Do you have any idea?

McDonald: I really don't know because I was very small, and I don't remember my daddy because he died when I was five years old.

White: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

McDonald: I got four brothers and two sisters.

White: Did your mom marry again?

McDonald: Yes, she did.

White: Who did she marry the second time?

McDonald: Hugh Payne.

White: Hugh Payne?

McDonald: And that's one of the reason why I'm down in Magee because she married in 1952. My daddy died in [19]49, and she married in 1952, and we moved down to Magee.

White: And he was from Simpson County also, then.

McDonald: Right, uh-huh.

White: Can you name your brothers and sisters?

McDonald: Yes. My oldest brother is Kylie Weathersby Jr. The second one is Hugh P. Weathersby(?). The third one is Arbie Weathersby(?). And the fourth is Howard Weathersby. My oldest sister is Docie Weathersby Buckhalter(?). My second sister is Alma Weathersby Gant(?).

White: And how many of them live in Simpson County now?

McDonald: All four.

White: I was going to say I recognize some Simpson County names there, Buckhalter. (laughter)

McDonald: Yeah. It's only five of us left. Five? Yes, only five of us left, and that's my three sisters and two brothers.

White: Your dad came from a family that had a veterinarian in it, amongst other things. Dr. Weathersby, I remember. Two Dr. Weathersbys, I believe, father and son. One of those Dr. Weathersbys was your dad's brother.

McDonald: Right.

White: Was that the older Dr. Weathersby?

McDonald: That was the older Dr. Weathersby, my daddy's brother, sure was, uh-huh.

White: How many children did they have in that family?

McDonald: I believe it was four.

White: Were they all boys?

McDonald: No, one girl and three boys.

White: What were their names? We've got two of them named. I'm going to push your memory a little bit. (laughter)

McDonald: S.P. Weathersby the second, Martine Weathersby(?), and Milton Weathersby. And the daughter was named Gerley Mae Pauline Weathersby(?).

White: And some of the Weathersbys still live up just north of D'Lo, I believe. Don't they?

McDonald: Right.

White: On the old home place there?

McDonald: Right, uh-huh. One of the boys still live there, and Milton's, one of his childrens live there. They have a house there; they still live there.

White: But your family moved back to Magee in?

McDonald: They moved to Magee in 1952.

White: I'm sorry, yeah, to Magee. I'm sorry. That's right. You weren't in Magee before then.

McDonald: When we moved, we was in Hinds County. When Mom and Dad married, that's where we was living. And Daddy went to the hospital, and so we moved back to D'Lo, in one of their old homes, there. And he died in [19]49. And then we moved to Magee in [19]52. So we moved from Hinds County to D'Lo, from D'Lo to Magee.

White: I see. In [19]52, you would have been about nine years old, something like that.

McDonald: Eight or nine. When we moved down, I was eight, and I turned nine that April. We moved out in March, and so I turned nine in April.

White: That's a big move for a child that age, I think. Isn't it?

McDonald: Big one. I thought Mendenhall was the end of the world because I had never been no further. (laughter) Sure hadn't. (laughter)

White: I remembered we moved from Pinola to Mendenhall when I was twelve, and my whole world turned upside down.

McDonald: Mine sure did.

White: But you went right on into school down here in Magee then?

McDonald: Right. I went to Jamesville, right there. Was by the Pleasant Grove Church where my stepfather attended church, so we joined church there, and went to school there.

White: And that's where you first met your husband (inaudible).

McDonald: That's where I first met him, never knowing that he would one day be my husband. But I surely did.

White: Well, he had indicated in an earlier tape that he had a little trouble talking you into being his girlfriend there, I think. (laughter)

McDonald: Well, we were so much, we were so friends. In church we were just friends that I really didn't know he had any interest in me until later years, and then—

White: But after Jamesville, did you go to school here in Magee?

McDonald: I did.

White: Where you finished school?

McDonald: When they consolidated, we went to—they named it McLaurin High School.

White: I was trying to think of the name of it a while ago. That's what it was. McLaurin High School then.

McDonald: That's what it was, right. That's where I graduated.

White: Did you go on to college after that?

McDonald: Well, I went to Piney Woods, and I stayed there for a few months, and my husband—

White: That's Piney Woods Country Life School.

McDonald: Country Life.

White: Up in Rankin County.

McDonald: Uh-huh. And I stayed there a few months, and then he sent for me from—

White: Indiana, wasn't it?

McDonald: Indiana. So I left there and went to Indiana, and that's when we got married.

White: And you got married when?

McDonald: February the sixteenth, 1963.

White: In Chicago, I believe, he had told me earlier.

McDonald: Oh, yeah. In between time, now, I went to California. I had a older sister. Sister next to me was Alma. She was in California, so I went out there to stay with her that first year. And then when I came back home, I went to Piney Woods and stayed there till after he graduated from high school. Then when he went out there, he sent for me that October.

White: How'd you get up to Piney Woods?

McDonald: My mother, see, way back when Dr. Laurence [Jones] first started, my ancestors, the Weathersby, kind of help him start—

White: That's Dr. Laurence Jones, right?

McDonald: Was in with him. Right.

White: The one who started Piney Woods School?

McDonald: Dr. Laurence Jones started it. They were some of the first students working and going and getting him to get it started.

White: I thought I remember the Weathersby family connected with the school.

McDonald: Yes, sir.

White: That's what got you interested in going to school there then?

McDonald: Well, not really. My mother was interested in me going because she thought that would be a good place for me to go, and—

White: And you thought marriage might work out a little better?

McDonald: I did. (laughter) I was not really interested in going to school, (laughter) but you had to obey Mama. So I went and stayed a few months, and that was during the summer, working my way. But after he sent for me, I forgot about school.

White: Went on and got married then, huh?

McDonald: I got married, yes, sir.

White: And I believe you had several children while you were up in Chicago, in that area, I should say.

McDonald: Yes, sir. I had my first, I had three, my first three, Renette(?), Havard Jr., and Delphine(?) when we was in Chicago. And then in 1966 we moved back, and then 1972, Leonard was born, which we call Lee.

White: Lee. Did you work outside the home?

McDonald: I worked about two years, two or three years—was it two or three years? Yeah, two or three years outside the home at MagnaTek, and then I quit because I just couldn't handle it. And I got sick rather, and then I did a little housework. But most of all, I was taking care of my stepfather. My mother had married again. I was taking care of my stepfather and my auntie and his grandfather.

White: Who had ended up moving in with y'all, I believe you'd said, when his health failed.

McDonald: Right. So I started taking care of them, and then I just asked the Lord for a part-time job, and he gave me a part-time job doing housework. So I worked two or three days a week so I could take care of them and do their running and cooking and whatever.

White: And raised a few children, right?

McDonald: And raised a few childrens. (laughter) Sure did, yes, sir.

White: Did you have a lot of fun raising children?

McDonald: Well, it was really a challenge. It was really a challenge, yes, sir. And on top of that I would add, the other job I worked. I helped my husband cut paper wood.

White: Oh, my heavens!

McDonald: Yes, sir.

White: You did some heavy work, then, didn't you?

McDonald: I did some heavy work, and I even cut some paper wood, not just helping. I cut and loaded paper wood and drove the truck.

White: Well, I did that one summer. I hope I don't ever have to do that again. (laughter)

McDonald: It's hard work, but it's rewarding. It's rewarding.

White: You have ended up owning a store here, a Christian bookstore. Can you tell me a little bit about how that started and what your ideas were?

McDonald: Well, many peoples look at it different ways. They call it being born again, being saved, and different things. But all my life, and when I was small, I was—all the children left. I'm the baby girl, the baby child. And I was reading the Bible, and Mama always kept us in church. That's one thing we had to do, was go to church. But one day, I don't know exactly where it was, but I was reading that, "Lord, if I'm going to live and get old and die and go to hell, take me now." And I really didn't understand what I was saying, except I didn't want to go to hell. So anyway, when I got grown, I grew up; I got saved in [19]79 I think it was or whatever. And I just had a love for Christian stuff. And there was nowhere to buy any. The Christian stores were just few. So I just had that desire. When I did go to Jackson or wherever and found a little, bitty stuff in little different places, I just had a desire for them. You know the little pocket cards and the little this and the little that.

White: Were you teaching Sunday school or anything then?

McDonald: I was teaching. I taught Sunday school at Pleasant Grove, and I wasn't so much just giving out any, but after I got saved, I started having Bible study in my home and revivals on my porch and all this good stuff. But then I was working at a lady's, doing day work, and I passed by, and I saw this store for sale. And I talked to her about. She said, "You can buy it." And I kind of laughed at her because I didn't have no money. So I went—

White: It was a record store at the time.

McDonald: It was a record and jewelry shop.

White: Oh, it was a jewelry shop, then, too.

McDonald: Record and jewelry shop. So I went in and talked to (inaudible). And I mean, when the Lord has something or whatever that I'm encouraged to do it, I know it. It gets me there, and it holds my attention, and it won't leave. So when my husband came in, I think it was that Friday, that week I told him about it. And we came up here and talked to them, and she told us and told us how much it was and whatever. And my mind then was like, "If I get this and never been in business, never knew anything about business or whatever." But I guess it was in my blood because I was named after my Aunt Minnie. She was Aunt Minnie Weathersby, my daddy's sister, and I was named after her. She had a business, but I never considered that or thought about that. But I wanted this business, and all I could see was a Christian bookstore, which they say, people say wouldn't work. Magee was too small. But God said it would. So we went to the banker and went to People's Bank that Monday, and

that was before Thanksgiving, and they had approved our loan, and we had changed things over and whatever. And that Friday after Thanksgiving, we moved. Then I opened that Friday morning as owning the business right here.

White: Who did you buy it from?

McDonald: Mack Broome(?) Jewelry.

White: Mack Broome?

McDonald: Mack Broome (inaudible). And I just immediately started converting it. I started visiting other bookstores, and I went to Jackson. This Christian Life Bookstore, they sold me two-hundred-and-fifty-dollars worth of material, and that include the racks. So I set them up in the bookstore. And I had some peoples to come through that was, they was ministers. And we had the blues record and the country and all in there, but peoples don't give you time, or they don't know where you going; they just see where you are. And I was trying to sell those out so I could continue to convert it to a Christian bookstore. So they came—

White: You had a little too much money on them to throw them away, didn't you?

McDonald: Right. So they wrote me and told me lightness and darkness don't go together and whatever. It really hurt my feelings, but God knew where he was leading me to. So once I got those out, I could just convert it into Christian books. Plus then my husband had bought the other jewelry store around there, and he moved the records out, and put them around there. And I had the bookstore by—

White: That way you could finish selling the records in a different location.

McDonald: Right.

White: Well, that was around on a side street.

McDonald: On the side.

White: One block away from here.

McDonald: Choctaw Street.

White: And about a block or two down. Choctaw Street, right. I remember where that store was down there. But slowly and gradually you've grown then.

McDonald: I've grown.

White: Have you still got the store around there?

McDonald: No, sir. I was renting it from Ms. Myers, Patricia Myers(?), but I was putting everything that I made back into it, and that's the way it grew. And then I moved around here, bought this building, paid for it.

White: Bit by bit. (laughter)

McDonald: Bit by bit and day by day, yes, sir. And then I moved next door. Now, I'm (inaudible). (laughter)

White: Well, you don't own the building on the other side, do you? (phone rings)

McDonald: No, sir. Just this one.

White: Is the funeral home open over there now?

McDonald: I think so, but I don't really see many peoples there.

White: I've been down a couple of Saturdays, and I hadn't seen anybody open over there. I tell you what I have noticed since you came in on Main Street in Magee. At one point Main Street looked like it was dying in Magee, and everybody was moving out on the four-lane. And you and some other people came in and started investing on Main Street in Magee, and there are a large number of small businesses here, which seem to be doing well now.

McDonald: Right.

White: And most of those came in after you opened up, I believe. Didn't they?

McDonald: Now, the Westin(?) was there. Yes, sir, most of them on this street came in after me, that's here now.

White: As some of the older businesses, like McCalpin's(?) closed up and sold out and moved out and things, some of the stores were empty for a while, but there are not many empty buildings down here at all.

McDonald: I've seen quite a few come and go.

White: Yeah. Well, it's tough for a small business to make it unless they do reinvest like you were talking about doing, putting that money back in there.

McDonald: Yes, sir, definitely.

White: How many people do you have working next door?

McDonald: It's just two of us. We work—well, I have three, really three now because I have a part-time college student that comes up on the weekend and help me and Gloria, my god-daughter, and I, uh-huh, just three of us.

White: Well, that must have been the college student who was in there this past weekend when I stopped by and visited your store then. She was about the age to be a college student. (laughter) I would think.

McDonald: As a matter of fact, that's my son's fiancé.

White: Well, she's a very nice young lady and seemed to be running a good business in there, too. I know you don't need a report on her. You know what she's like.

McDonald: Well, that's good because she—

White: She was doing a good job.

McDonald: You don't know what they doing behind your back. (laughter)

White: Well, she's running a good store for you. That's for sure. Let's talk a little bit about your family. We talked a little bit about the Weathersby family in D'Lo, and they've been a big part of that part of Simpson County for a long time. Do you remember some of the family stories about Piney Woods and the part that they played in it?

McDonald: No, not really because I'm from the younger bunch, and the older peoples, a lot of my uncles and all, I didn't even meet. They had passed before I was born. And I don't know too much about it, but Mom would tell me, and some of my other relatives would tell me that they help him clear off some of the land and build a log cabin—

White: Right when he started the school, then, huh?

McDonald: When he started, uh-huh. And then they went to school; some of them went to school under him and whatever. But I don't really know the exact—

White: I remember seeing that program the night that Dr. Jones was on "This Is Your Life" on television with Ralph Edwards. Did you ever see that program?

McDonald: I think I did. It's been quite a while, but I think I saw that.

White: It was really an amazing job that he did just coming to the middle of nowhere, almost in Simpson County. It's just across the line, the Simpson/Rankin County line is about a half a mile south, I think, of the school, and it had a lot of connections in Simpson County when it began.

McDonald: Right. I guess then they didn't know or think about the lines, just—

White: Yes. Well, I had talked with your husband earlier about school life. What was your early experiences in school? Who were some of your buddies in the first grade?

McDonald: Really, I can't hardly remember first grade because Aunt Eva—that was my Uncle Doc—we called him Uncle Doc. His name Sejanus Weathersby(?). His wife, we would walk to school with her, and I started school just before I was, I guess, probably school age because I was kind of like the babysitter for her granddaughter. And so we had privileges at school because I was kind of like the babysitter. (laughter) And we would walk to school, or if Uncle Doc wasn't off taking care of business, seeing about animals and whatever, we could ride. He would take us to school. But other than that, we would walk to school. So my first year in school, probably my first two years, I was at D'Lo, and I guess it was D'Lo School, all I could remember now. It was D'Lo School that we went to, and she was my teacher. No. Ms. Lockhart(?) was my teacher, and then after that we moved down here. So my first years was like school, babysitting. (laughter)

White: Mixed together then, weren't they?

McDonald: Mixed together, right, uh-huh.

White: Kind of hard to tell the difference then, wasn't it?

McDonald: Yeah, the difference. And I was just going to school mostly to play because it was like preprimer. You go out there and play with the kids and whatever. That's my years of walking and getting away from my house, going somewhere because you didn't go nowhere till you went to school.

White: You lived out in the country when you moved to Magee?

McDonald: Oh, yes, sir.

White: Close to Siloam(?) Community?

McDonald: Yeah, it's close. But it's called Skiffer, Skiffer Community. So it's next to Siloam.

White: And that's where you still live now, isn't it, in that same area?

McDonald: Well, I live in that same area, but we moved about—we was about a mile or two on the other side of the church, Pleasant Grove. So we moved about a mile on this side, to on this side of the church and bought land. We didn't stay on the old, we call it the old home place. We didn't stay there. For my stepfather, we moved up on this side.

White: Did y'all build a house out that way?

McDonald: Talking about my husband and I?

White: Right.

McDonald: Yes, sir.

White: When you moved back with your folks, when your mom remarried and moved to Magee and everything, did y'all rent, or did you buy a house out that way?

McDonald: No. Mama married a older man, Hugh Payne, and he had a house and forty acres of land. And so we moved there with him, and he died in [19]64, I believe it was. He passed in [19]64, but that's where we were raised there. We had our own home and land and planted our own cotton and all that because Mama had—well, my oldest brother didn't come down with her and my oldest sister because she was in Piney Woods, but the rest of us came down. And so we raised a crop there, cotton and corn and (inaudible).

White: How much farming did you do?

McDonald: Well, I did quite a bit of farming there.

White: More than you wanted to? (laughter)

McDonald: More than (laughter) more than I wanted to. But I didn't do, I guess, as much as some of the rest of them because Mama would send me home to put on the bread or whatever for dinner or get the water. And then about time I really got up where I could, I guess, really work, they start leaving home, and so we had to start cutting back on the farming. So I never did plow the mules or whatever, but I picked cotton and hoed cotton and stuff like that and tried to milk a cow, but I never was good at that. (laughter)

White: I never was either. (laughter)

McDonald: But I tried.

White: How old were you when you first started learning how to cook?

McDonald: I was about nine.

White: Was your mama a good cook?

McDonald: Mama was a excellent cook, a excellent cook.

White: What was your favorite food that she cooked?

McDonald: I guess syrup and biscuits. (laughter)

White: It's hard to beat. Hard to beat syrup and biscuits.

McDonald: Mama had a grist mill.

White: On the farm?

McDonald: When we was in D'Lo.

White: Oh, in D'Lo.

McDonald: And she planted cane, and made her own syrup, and so I mean, that's kindly what we grew up on was syrup and biscuits. But she (phone rings) sold that machine when we moved down here. She sold the machine, yeah, all of that. But that was some of my favorite, her biscuits.

White: What about her fried chicken?

McDonald: Oh, it was delicious.

White: What's your secret to fried chicken? Did you keep it?

McDonald: No because I didn't think it was—because, see, Mama lived with me for about twenty years before she passed. And she would still cook. But it was, she just put that salt and pepper and flour on there, and she just knew how long and whatever to cook it. But she cooked it, and every meal we had, just about it, she had something sweet. She would pick blueberries, what we called it huckleberries or whatever.

White: Oh, I love huckleberry pie.

McDonald: We had little peach trees at the end, in the field; wild peaches they called it. We had those. We had blackberries. Whatever Mama could can, she canned, and one year we picked about a hundred, canned about a hundred jars of blueberries, and we did some picking. So (inaudible).

White: That's a lot of blueberries.

McDonald: Yes, sir. But Mama was, I mean, she was the woman. Peoples talk about going hungry when you single or whatever. Not back then because Mama provided for these seven kids. She would work as trucks—three or four o'clock in the morning, we would come down all in Magee. Before I was even old enough, I would stay under the shade tree until the dew dried off, and she'd pick cotton, hoe cotton, whatever. And she managed her money well.

White: She worked for other people, too?

McDonald: She worked for other peoples.

White: Did she ever bring any produce into town and sell it?

McDonald: No, sir.

White: Butterbeans or anything like that? Did y'all put up butterbeans and peas?

McDonald: We didn't put up very many butterbeans because we hadn't got the knowhow, didn't know how to put them up back then. But now we put up peas. And what did Mama put up? We canned tomatoes, corn, and all types of fruit that we could get a hold of, fig trees.

White: Oh, I love figs.

McDonald: Yes.

White: Did you ever put up any green beans?

McDonald: Green beans, yes, sir.

White: They pretty hard to put up, from what I hear.

McDonald: But Mama could put them up there and keep them. Tomatoes, they was hard, but she could do it. (laughter) But most anything that you could put up in a jar, she even had started to learn how to put up canned meat and cook that.

White: Did y'all raise hogs?

McDonald: Yes, sir.

White: Butcher them?

McDonald: Hogs, cows, chickens.

White: Do you like chitterlings?

McDonald: Yes. But I don't like cooking and cleaning them. (laughter)

White: I like fried chitterlings but not boiled chitterlings.

McDonald: Not boiled. (laughter)

White: You don't like boiled chitterlings either?

McDonald: They pretty good, but I can eat them better fried. For some reason, I can eat them better fried, yes, sir.

White: Well, who did the butchering? Do you remember?

McDonald: Mama would always get somebody to come in and help her do that, to kill the hogs and hang them and whatever. And I mean, she was out there with them with her boots and everything on. And when the boys got up old enough, then she did a couple with them because she had learned. She knew how to do it. But she always would call; some of the neighbors would come and help us to kill them. And then once a year, once we moved down here, we would kill a beef once a year. And see, back then, we didn't have no way of—we didn't have the freezers. So we didn't know how to keep beef, so we killed beef, and everybody got a little piece of beef and—

White: Ate it fast.

McDonald: Ate it fast, so (laughter) it wouldn't ruin.

White: Well, did y'all have a smokehouse to put the hogs up in?

McDonald: We had a smokehouse, yes, sir.

White: Did you ever help with any of that?

McDonald: Yes, sir. We hung meat, and she would put the—whatever it is on there, she'd put on there to keep curing meat. Curing stuff.

White: All that salt stuff on the outside, huh?

McDonald: Yes. And I had to make sure that it was smoky, so the fire go out, and go check it and all that kind of stuff. I kindly helped a little bit with that until I left home.

White: Well, is any of the old house, any of the home place still out there?

McDonald: No. It got burned down. The old home got burned down, so we don't have, I don't have any of that, sure don't.

White: What did y'all heat with, fireplaces?

McDonald: Fireplaces. Once we moved to Magee, we had a double fireplace.

White: Back to back, huh?

McDonald: Back to back, sure did. And you know you heat them old—make a fire in those iron stoves, they would just about heat up a house.

White: Yeah. (laughter)

McDonald: Sure would. They'd heat it up.

White: What about cornbread? What kind of cornbread did your mama make?

McDonald: Oh! The best in the world.

White: Did she put sugar in hers, or not?

McDonald: No, sir.

White: I'm kind of running a survey here. (laughter) Most people didn't put sugar in theirs, but I run across a transplanted Yankee every once in a while that (laughter) just feels like they got to have sugar.

McDonald: Have sugar, uh-huh. She just cooked that plain cornbread, and I always said she just knew how to cook it and brown it just right. And oh, you could just eat milk and bread by itself. Yes, sir.

White: Well, that's one of the best meals in the world anyway.

McDonald: Yes, sir.

White: Well, you've done a lot of growing up in business around here in the last few years. Is this something that you ever thought you would want to do?

McDonald: As a matter of fact, no. I never have really wanted to be in public life. I guess I've always kind of been an introvert. I wanted to be in a little, cozy house in the country, raise a family, go to church. You know one of these types and come back and sit on the porch and swing and just have time for yourself and for your family.

White: Kind of hard to do that being a minister's wife, though, too, huh?

McDonald: And I never really wanted to be [one]. (laughter) I know he don't like for me to say this. (laughter) Never looked forward to being a minister's wife. And I tell peoples, I say, "I'm right where I really never wanted to be." And minister's wife, you out, up front. (End of digital file named tape one, side one. Beginning of digital file named tape one, side two.) But it really have been an experience because many peoples come through, encouraging words and helping peoples and doing things in Christian way, Christian life. And it's just a thing that it seem like you were born to do, and it feels right.

White: Well, there's still a lot of good neighbors in Simpson County then, huh?

McDonald: Definitely, definitely.

White: Simpson County was lucky enough to escape a lot of the violence of the Civil Rights Movement, but it still affected it greatly back here in the [19]60s. Did that have much influence on your lives and your family's lives back during that time?

McDonald: No, sir. To me it wasn't because, I guess maybe because we didn't get out and get in. We didn't get involved in a lot of it because when it was in the [19]60s, in [19]62 we was in Chicago, and then in [19]66 we came back, and they had opened the plant. And I think in—was it [19]72? Whenever it was, they start integrating the schools. But the plant had already been integrated, as you might say. And—

White: I think that sort of took a lot of pressure off Simpson County economically is when the plant came in and opened jobs up to black people and white people, and for the first time, there was economic opportunity here.

McDonald: And nobody was really fighting. The racial thing wasn't going on bad here. So we never really had, you might say, big, big problems. Of course they problems everywhere. Always will be, but we never had a really big, big problem with that.

White: Well, if you had it all to do over again, would you do it the same way? Life, business, and this man over here who's reading the paper while you're talking? (laughter)

McDonald: He's pretending to read the paper while I talk. (Inaudible) you asking a tedious question right there. (laughter) No. There is a lot of things that I would have done different in life because everybody probably got their mistakes. But as far as marrying him, I would do it all over again. I definitely would. I would know how to—I would do things, some things different. As far as business, I don't know what I could because with the wisdom and knowledge that I have in business, I don't know much of anything that I could do different because I did what I knew to do, by the grace of God. And therefore I wouldn't—I don't know much that I would change. I don't know much that I would change.

White: That's a good way to do things, then, by the grace of God.

McDonald: Right, right.

White: Is that the way you try to live your life?

McDonald: That's the way I live my life, by the grace of God, one day at a time.

White: That seems to be a good way to do it.

McDonald: Yes, sir.

White: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about before we finish the interview here?

McDonald: Well, I would just like to let it go down in the record that God is a good God, and you're here by the grace of God, since we're talking about this. And I just thank God for being in my life and having control over my life and letting me know that he is in control and that if you follow the path that he has set for you, that you going to have your ups and downs, but he's going to bring you out. He's going to bring you out. And so that is one of the things in my life, and if I ever, any of my future generation, or any of my future peoples or children ever hear this tape, let them know that the Bible says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all this other stuff will be added unto it." And I've tried it, and it works.

White: It does work.

McDonald: It works.

White: You can testify to that.

McDonald: I can testify to that. (laughter) And God is good.

White: I appreciate your talking with us today. Thank you very much.

(end of interview)