

## Eleanor Donnelly Transcript

00:00 FitzGibbon: so this is the life history of Eleanor Donnelly. So let's start with your name and date of birth.

00:10 Donnelly: Eleanor Clark Donnelly. I was born August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1928 in Binghamton New York.

00: 22 FitzGibbon: What were your parent's names?

00:24 Donnelly: Pardon me.

00: 25 FitzGibbon: Your parent's names?

00:26Donnelly: Uh. Grace Clark and Ray S. Clark.

00:30 FitzGibbon: What did they do?

00:32 Donnelly: My mother was...well after she was married she worked and then she was a housewife and a mother and my dad was a leaf tobacco salesman with an office in New York and sold to uh... the leaf tobacco for cigar makers all over the east coast.

00:55 FitzGibbon: did your dad ever mention the business being affected by the depression?

00:59 Donnelly: uh... he may have once in a while but uh I think I was too young to even think about it to tell you the truth.

01:13 FitzGibbon: Yeah. And you had one sibling?

01:15 Donnelly: I have a sister or had a sister. She's passed away now but she was uh nine years older than I. Barbara was her name.

01:25 FitzGibbon: Were you guys close?

01: 28 Donnelly: uh... well I think maybe she took care of me part of the time when I was very young... 1,2,3 years old and uh really never got to be with her and have fun with her until we were both married and had children and uh then we got together a lot. Nine years was a long time.

01:55 FitzGibbon: Yeah. And you lived here all your life?

01:57 Donnelly: I always lived in Binghamton yup, always lived in Binghamton, or surrounding areas, port Dickinson and Hillcrest and uh that's where I lived all these eighty-four years.

02:16 FitzGibbon: Where did you go to elementary school?

02:17 Donnelly: I went to elementary school in a village called port Dickinson, which was just north of the city of Binghamton and uh my sister in fact had gone to that school and we went from kindergarten right through 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the same class so we knew everyone for 10 years and really got to be good friends with everyone and then went to high school after that.

02:47 FitzGibbon: Were they big classes or small classes?

02:50 Donnelly: I think there were around 21, 22 in the classes, from kindergarten right through 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

03:01 FitzGibbon: so how old were you when the war started?

03:04 Donnelly: Let's see 13 years old, I was. So I was in the middle school, or they call it middle school now and I remember the day of pearl harbor cause I um, it was on a Sunday, and I was uh visiting a girl in my class down in port Dickinson about a quarter of a mile away or so and the phone rang and it was my dad and he said the war is starting you know and he came right down and picked me up and took me home, so that was the beginning of 41, 1941, yup.

03:50 FitzGibbon: was it common to have...for everyone to have a telephone in their house at that point?

03:55 Donnelly: pardon me?

03:56 FitzGibbon: was it common for everyone to have a telephone in their house at that point?

03:58 Donnelly: Oh yes, oh yeah, yup we had everything yup. Yup

04:12 FitzGibbon: And how did you think that the war affected your life?

04:16 Donnelly: It's hard to remember but I do remember some things that we had, ration books sugar ration books with little coupons in them and gas rationing for our cars and then of course everyone had a victory garden they called it, I mean most neighborhoods had them with all kinds of vegetables and things in them. You saved tin foil I remember that, making a big ball of tin foil and I didn't know what they did with it but we turned it in, and then cans of grease for some reason and coffee cans that we'd take down to the little meat market down in hillcrest and turn in, I have no idea what they used it for but uh, I do remember that the end of our

street was singer link aviation that made the \_\_\_ for the pilots and that was booming, that was booming, IBM was booming in Binghamton and Johnson city and Endicott. The three little towns, and Endicott Johnson shoe factory made all the boots for the army, uh right in this area. A lot was going on. A lot was going on.

05:45 FitzGibbon: Did you all take care of the victory garden or was it something that just a few people....

05:52 Donnelly: yup even in high school which would have been 44, 1944 or so, we had courses on planting a victory garden and all of that, the vegetables to plant and what to do and all that. And everyone bought war bonds, I mean there was no question you bought... I mean, the whole country supplied the money for this, for this war, ill tell you that. Something different then now.

06:24 FitzGibbon: so you would just... all the vegetables would then get shipped over to wherever the...?

06:32 Donnelly: we would all use them.

06:33 FitzGibbon: you all used them?

06:35 Donnelly: yup we would all use them.

06:41 FitzGibbon: tell me about your graduation.

06:45 Donnelly: from ninth grade?

06:46 FitzGibbon: yes

06:47 Donnelly: from ninth grade, well all the classes before us, I mean it was exciting because you got to wear a long gown, you know and you look pretty spiffy and stuff and that was the first year, in forty-three, we weren't allowed to wear uh formal gowns... something to do with the war and everyone was thinking about the war for years and so we were the first class that could not wear long gowns. Very strange. We didn't mind. We didn't mind.

07:21 FitzGibbon: so what did you wear instead?

07:22 Donnelly: huh?

07:24 FitzGibbon: what did you wear instead?

07:27 Donnelly: a regular...a dress. You know a special dress, yeah. Yeah. It was a good time. Sad time. The army trucks would go by Shenango Street up in Hillcrest where I lived and uh filled with army soldiers probably on their way to Camp Drum I imagine and uh they'd throw out little pieces of paper with their addresses on them,

where they'd be in case somebody would want to write to them so it went on for hours, all day all night, over and over and over. Yup.

08:08 FitzGibbon: did you ever pick up the pieces of paper and write to them?

08:11 Donnelly: I didn't I don't think I did. I had other people I was writing to I think. Everyone from high school went in to the service, yup.

08:24 FitzGibbon: So you had a lot of friends in the service?

08:26 Donnelly: Yeah, yup, a lot of people from high school, yup.

08:34 FitzGibbon: During the war you were a messenger right?

08:39 Donnelly: Everyone was so caught up in this war I'll tell you and they had a class at the Port Dickinson fire station and uh a lot of... I don't know how many there were, teenagers, uh we went to this meeting and it was about being a messenger in case we ever got attacked. That we could be qualified to I don't know who but the mayor or somebody I don't know who but anyway so first we had to take a red cross course and learn all about that. So I got the card for that.

09:22 FitzGibbon: what did that entail?

09:25 Donnelly: Just how to fix wounds and I mean we were preparing to be attacked ourselves I think to tell you the truth or afraid of it anyway and how to do cpr and all of that, and then we took the course on being a messenger which I don't remember much about uh except I have the book that told us what to do and how to do it and I had an arm band that I saved. Can you believe I saved that? and I was to wear that and I was a legal messenger during the war... which never came to us. On this continent I mean.

10:08 FitzGibbon: How did you end up getting involved with that, was it something that everyone...

10:14 Donnelly: I think everyone just was doing... everything. They had brothers and sisters that were in the service and people have small flags on their windows if they have a service man you know with a star or name or whatever, it was really involved.

10:36 FitzGibbon: Did your friends or your sister do this with you?

10:40 Donnelly: Did they what?

10:41 FitzGibbon: Were they messengers also, your friends?

10:43 Donnelly: Yeah yeah, other girls, yeah. Yeah they were.

10:48 FitzGibbon: Were there other jobs like this that people your age...

10:51 Donnelly: I can't remember if there were other things. I suppose there were men that had hard hats you know and looking for planes and things like that. I don't know. My aunt and uncle were, they lived in Norwidge, which is about forty miles from Binghamton. They were on a farm, and I know each one of them took turns going up a something... I don't know. They sat up there looking for foreign planes. Nothing ever came but they had that job to do. Everyone had something that they were doing. Yup.

11:40 FitzGibbon: And your family was friends with another family that lived in Germany during this time.

11:46 Donnelly: I think the name was Schulty, was their name. I remember that, and it was um a man and his wife, and I have a feeling that they had something to do with the tobacco business that my dad would have known who they were. He may have come to New York you know one time or another but for some reason they went back to Germany. I think they lived in Germany and then they would ask my father for care packages during the war and so my mother and dad would send... I have no idea I can't remember what was in it, the packages, but over to Germany, to them. And then I remember my father had a letter from their daughter saying that they just really needed anything we could send and so my father sent more packages and then we never heard from them again. They were German Jews and I have a feeling... I don't know whether they went to East Germany or were in a concentration camp but we never heard from them again. Yup.

13:03 FitzGibbon: So during that time before you lost contact with them you kept in touch with them via letters though?

13:09 Donnelly: Mhm mhm. Yup.

13:10 FitzGibbon: Did they talk about thing that were going on at that time in Germany?

13:13 Donnelly: I don't remember. I'm sure they did with my mother and father. I'm sure they did but I wasn't old enough to even, you know think about it.

13:32 FitzGibbon: What was your main way of getting information about the war during this time?

13:38 Donnelly: Of course there was no television so you know during those years it would be going to the movies and during the movie then came on the cartoons and then came the world news and that's where you would find a lot of... you could see what was happening overseas. And so that went on and then the radio of course, we listened to the radio all the time and my father had a short wave, also radio and I don't... I remember him listening to all these foreign places but see I didn't pay much

attention. I wish I had. I wish I had. Yup. And the newspaper of course which I don't ever remember reading but I probably did, but at thirteen I probably didn't.

14:41 FitzGibbon: Was it something that... the whole family would sit and listen to the radio and?

14:47 Donnelly: Mhm

14:48 FitzGibbon: Was it after dinner or was there a specific time?

14:49 Donnelly: Yup and I had one up in my bedroom I remember, a little one, plastic sort of thing and uh we'd listen to that and uh listened to the fireside chats by Franklin Delano Roosevelt who was President...

15:03 FitzGibbon: What did you think of those?

15:04 Donnelly: ...of the United States... oh it fascinated me, you know. Yup, and then it would come on the news reel on the movies and boy you could see him sitting by the fireplace... exciting, it was exciting. Yup. There's only one person that I remember did not come back from the serv... that I know, and uh his brother was in our class from kindergarten right through high school and he was an older brother of my friend and he never came, never came back. So I don't know, I often think I should ask him, he's still here, the brother, my friend, what happened to his brother but I never did.

16:04 FitzGibbon: Did you talk about the war a lot in school?

16:07 Donnelly: Not really. We just carried on like it was any other day to tell you the truth.

16:20 FitzGibbon: Do you remember hearing about the end of the war? Was it something that everyone celebrated?

16:26 Donnelly: (...inaudible) I can't remember if it was when the Japanese surrendered or which one it was but I was, I was a teenager then and I was babysitting. It must have been June, that might have been the Japanese I don't know. I can't remember but I was babysitting for a family a couple streets down in Hillcrest and oh boy the excitement when they came home from wherever they were and said, "you go on with your friends downtown, the war is over." So off we went a whole bunch of us and the main street of Binghamton was... you couldn't move in it. So many people and cheering and music and it was really something. It's like the pictures you see on t.v. with the serviceman kissing the nurse you know. That's the way it was. It was really exciting. Yup.

17:31 FitzGibbon: I'm going to pause this real quick and go close that door just in case we're getting any noise from that.

17:34 Donnelly: Yup.

(Short break)

17:40 FitzGibbon: So what was it like with all the men coming back from the war? Did you notice any major changes?

17:50 Donnelly: Oh... the war was over in forty-five, by that time... let's see. I graduated and uh from high school in forty-six so most of them were still in the service by then, you know and I didn't go to college until September and worked in between there but uh... Cause I was a January graduating class from middle school and quite a few months and they'd come home to visit with their uniforms on from the Navy and the Army and all that until I got to Courtland State Teacher's College where I went to school and then they started coming back in forty-six and forty-seven. They didn't wear their uniforms but they wore coats and certain things that they brought home from the service. No one had a car for heaven sakes, a few had car, but no one had a car. I can remember that part of it but a lot of them came back on the GI Bill. Now whether they had gone to Courtland and then got drafted I don't know but they came back and then we had enough guys for enough girls.

19:27 FitzGibbon: (laughs) Yeah. Did your family have a car?

19:31 Donnelly: A car?

19:32 FitzGibbon: Yeah

19:33 Donnelly: Oh gosh yes. My father loved cars. My father must have had a car from when he was seventeen. I know he worked since he was sixteen and he just loved cars. We always had a car. Yup right until he passed away in 1977.

19:58 FitzGibbon: Do you remember what kind of cars you had?

20:01 Donnelly: Gee Buicks and Chryslers and you know... American made, American made cars. Yup he loved his car. That's where he taught me to drive.

20:20 FitzGibbon: Tell me about high school.

20:23 Donnelly: Oh high school. I don't know. High school was a strange place for me. I liked it except I lived you know five miles away from it so we rode the school bus or not school bus, the regular transportation buses picked us up in Hillcrest and went down to the North High School and there was North High School and Central High School. Central was in the middle of Binghamton and North High School was on the east side where we went to school and the only thing was you got out there for the bus and you went to school and then you had to get the bus home at 3:30 and so your back on the bus so I very seldom stayed over for anything. I would go back for basketball games and things but I sang in a sextet, an alto in the sextet. Also at

Port Dickinson School I was in the sextet so I didn't... College was the best time, yeah, although I've been on all the committees for North High School. All the reunions, all the centerpieces, all the pictures and things and I take care of all of that. I'm getting too old for that now.

22:25 FitzGibbon: I want to go back to the rations.

22:29 Donnelly: Rationing?

22:30 FitzGibbon: Yeah. Did you ever feel like there wasn't enough....

22:33 Donnelly: Never

22:34 FitzGibbon: Of anything...

22:35 Donnelly: I don't know how my mother and dad did it but I never, we were never... needed food and things. In fact my father was supporting my grandmother and grandfather, his mother and dad. Bought them a house and taking things to them and I don't know how, he just worked hard all the time, all the time. In fact he wasn't home you know during the week, only on the weekends because he was down in New York and Hartford and all over selling his leaf tobacco for cigars. Yup. He did really well for himself. His picture had been in the Hartford paper and different places but...

23:23 FitzGibbon: That's great.

23:24 Donnelly: I have the articles.

23:25 FitzGibbon: I'd love to see them after this...

23:26 Donnelly: Too many articles... (laughs) Oh goodness. Let's see...

23:35 FitzGibbon: What was...what was your home life like?

23:37 Donnelly: My home?

23:38 FitzGibbon: Yeah

23:39 Donnelly: When I was small it was in Port Dickinson in a house that my father had built, a nice brick house on Shenango Street with a green tile roof and I could always pick it out from anywhere I was cause it had a green tile roof, and it still to this day has the tile roof. Then in 1935 and 1936 we were flooded out by the Shenango River and the Susquehanna River which meet and twice and that was enough for my dad and so he sold it and bought a house maybe a mile, in Hillcrest, another development and that's where... I lived up there til I was married. Yup.



24:32 FitzGibbon: Did you...

24:33 Donnelly: 9 Eudika Avenue. So...

24:37 FitzGibbon: Did you lose a lot of your belongings in the flood?

24:39 Donnelly: Uh... I... how old was I? In 35' and 36' I was only... let's see. I was born in 28

24:49 FitzGibbon: Seven or eight

24:50 Donnelly: Yeah. Uh yeah seven probably, seven or eight. I don't, I don't... all I remember, I remember my mother taking books and drying them out on the front porch and I know we lost the baby grand piano and oriental rugs had to be all sent out and cleaned and my father had a safe down in the cellar and just a plain cellar you know. We had coal and all that and lost his stamp albums that he had worked on most of his life, unmarked stamps, I mean you know that he put in a book so it was sad that he lost all that. So I'm sure there's other things but at that age I didn't remember. I remember going out. We went out the dining room window in a boat and... the second flood I don't remember about the first flood but 36' ... and my father, after the 35' flood bought the boat for the Port Dickinson Fire Company so if it ever happened again... and guess who had to use it! We had to use it.

26:19 FitzGibbon: How big was the boat?

26:21 Donnelly: Oh it's just like a fishing boat you know. I took my sister and myself. I have pictures of that, and my mother and I suppose the cat. We had a cat. My father, during these floods, he was on the road. He wasn't home. That was a bad thing, and when he came home what a mess you know...with all his belongings, but they got through it. We all got through it so. I remember after the flood we stayed, I stayed at a friend's house up the street and that's all I remember about that darn flood. My grandmother and grandfather were in it too so they had to move too. My father found a place for them and he was a busy person.

27:20 FitzGibbon: So you said he was only...

27:23 Donnelly: My mom was something. Even to this day I run into people that say, "your mother was such a lady, such a nice lady." And all my girlfriends at that time, "oh I wish everybody was like your mother." You know?

27:38 FitzGibbon: Tell me about her. What was she like?

27:40 Donnelly: Oh gosh. Just super, that's all. She was a girl scout leader and all... in fact during the war, and I've tried to find the picture, it was in the paper. I have it somewhere. She was rolling bandages at the Red Cross office in Binghamton. Everybody was doing something in that Second World War. It's really amazing. It

really was amazing. So it wasn't just the government it was everybody who was doing something. Yup. Oh you bring back lots of memories. (laughs)

28:27 FitzGibbon: Good (laughs)

28:28 Donnelly: It's a good thing you asked me now. (laughs)

28:28 FitzGibbon: Good (laughs) Did you feel like other people's parents were... were they the same as your mom? Helping out at the Red Cross or... everyone contributed?

28:40 Donnelly: Yea, neighbors, everybody... you baked something you took it next door. I think that's where I got it from you know just giving that's all. So...but it was... when I think back it wasn't much different then anybody growing up without a war. I don't know why, I guess it just came natural that's all. So... and by that time my sister, and I stood up for her at her wedding in 1944 and she married a local Air Force soldier I guess you call it and she was married in Port Dickinson and so I had the whole house to myself when she moved you know I can remember saying she went to... oh where did she go in Texas? Anyways wherever he was stationed and had to take the Phoebe Snow, the train by herself and it was just filled with servicemen. She didn't know what to do or what but she got there anyway and then they moved to Ohio where he was stationed and then I always tell him... He's gone now, but I always told him that I'm awfully glad that they sent him to Alaska because in many of the crossword puzzles its say, "the four letter island in Alaska," and I knew he was at Attu and Adak and one of those was the right answer and I got it for the next fifty years, I got that. I got that answer cause that's where he was. Then they came home and had their own place so... but I don't remember her as a child. Isn't that funny? Just that big time between the ages is what... you know... Anyways we got real close after that so...

30:56 FitzGibbon: That's great.

30:56 Donnelly: Raised the children and all.

31:00 FitzGibbon: You said that your wrote to people...

31:05 Donnelly: In the service?

31:06 FitzGibbon: That you knew in the service. What did you guys talk about?

31:08 Donnelly: I don't know. I should have saved all of those letters shouldn't I? I don't remember but I do... I had a boyfriend that was in the Army and he sent me pictures and things and I remember once for my birthday, it must have been 1945 or so, he sent me silk stockings. Must have been from the PX you know, and a locket which I still have in a scrapbook. I remember that.

31:41 FitzGibbon: What was his name?

31:42 Donnelly: Bob Judd, J-U-D-D. I still have his dog tags (laughs) in my scrapbook.

31:52 FitzGibbon: Did he send them to you? Did he give them to you?

31:53 Donnelly: I don't remember how I got them... I'm sure...

31:56 FitzGibbon: He came back right?

31:58 Donnelly: Yeah, but then after I went to Courtland, my first year, he came to visit me in his uniform you know and it just... I was in college now and I didn't need...a boyfriend.

32:13 FitzGibbon: A high school boyfriend.

32:13 Donnelly: No, I didn't, no. I always feel sorry about that but it wasn't the right time. So that was the end of that one.

32:24 FitzGibbon: How long did you date him for?

32:26 Donnelly: Hmm?

32:27 FitzGibbon: How long did you date him for?

32:29 Donnelly: Oh gee, through high school. Let's see...oh probably two years or so. Something like that. Yeah I think so. A whole bunch of us had a bunch of kids. Yup.

32:45 FitzGibbon: How was long was he in the service while you were dating?

32:48 Donnelly: I don't know, after he came up to Courtland to visit me I don't think I... I saw him downtown once, but I didn't keep in contact with him. So... probably broke his heart's what I did. (laughs)

33:08 FitzGibbon: So he was overseas while you two were dating?

33:11 Donnelly: I can't remember, I remember writing to him. I don't know where he was whether he was overseas... cause by that time... I think the war was over. It must have been... I must have gone with him in high school in 45' and 46' and I went to college then he came home and after that... Cause I graduated from college in 1950 so that was the end of that.

33:40 FitzGibbon: You're are heartbreaker.

33:42 Donnelly: Oh no, jeese.

33:48 FitzGibbon: So tell me about college, what made you decide...you said...

33:51 Donnelly: I wanted to be a teacher all my life. Elementary, that's what I wanted to be and even as a child I had a chalkboard in my cellar and chairs and a table and I was teaching school all the time and in fact even in high school I'd do my homework down there and write on the board and do all that crazy stuff. So I got accepted to Courtland and I went in September 1946. I graduated this high school in January so I had that time, I worked in there for an insurance company or something I don't remember what I did but...

34:34 FitzGibbon: So you graduated in January?

34:37 Donnelly: January, I had to wait til September to get into college.

34:40 FitzGibbon: And you...

34:40 Donnelly: Oh I did go back to high school to take typewriting. I figured that'd be a good idea, (laughs) which came in handy doing papers and things. So... and the first year I lived in... I wasn't even a member of a sorority. Lived in the sorority house up on the third floor and with all these other sorority sisters that I didn't know and when it came down to it I didn't join that sorority anyway. I joined Sigma Sigma Sigma and moved into their house the following year, but it was great. We walked everywhere, we didn't have... this was downtown Courtland and you had to walk way up the hill to the school everyday and it was great.

35:40 FitzGibbon: You said it's Courtland State College?

35:42 Donnelly: Courtland State Teachers, yup.

35:43 FitzGibbon: Courtland State Teachers, and were you looking at other schools or was it just that one?

35:48 Donnelly: I think I did look at Oneonta in Upstate New York and I can't remember what else I... probably just those two... I think my teacher had graduated from Oneonta and wanted me to go to Oneonta but for some reason I wanted to go to Courtland so... the best move I ever made. It was great and it was small, I mean three or four hundred, you know.

36:16 FitzGibbon: Oh wow.

36:17 Donnelly: You knew everything, the teachers, the...they had a campus school... everything right in this spot. Now it's huge, huge! Yup.

36:31 FitzGibbon: And even... so they had Greek life. You said... what was the name of your sorority?

36:37 Donnelly: The sorority?

36:37 FitzGibbon: Yeah.

36:38 Donnelly: Let's see I joined, yeah the sorority.

36:42 FitzGibbon: It was Sigma Sigma...

36:45 Donnelly: It was what?

36:46 FitzGibbon: You said it was Sigma?

36:47 Donnelly: Tri-Sigma.

36:48 FitzGibbon: Tri-Sigma?

36:49 Donnelly: Yeah.

36:49 FitzGibbon: And what did you do...?

36:51 Donnelly: That was great. The nicest girls. Oh man and there were a lot of fraternities and sororities. They had their own houses, nowadays they don't have their own houses you know and we were really close. You had to sign in. You had to sign out at night and had to be home by 11. (laughs) I mean in case your parents called and wanted to know where you were and you could just look in the book and "well she's gone up to campus" or "she's gone to the chocolate shop" or "she's gone somewhere." Yup you had to sign in, and you had to be in. Mother Hunt locked the house.

37:41 FitzGibbon: Did you ever get locked out?

37:43 Donnelly: Oh no! (laughs) No. I didn't. They were wonderful girls, jeeze. Super.

37:55 FitzGibbon: Did you do any volunteer work or have dances or..?

38:00 Donnelly: For school we had to do a lot in children's home and a lot of those things and lots of things up at school. Beta frolics and singing and dancing and all that sort of thing you know.

38:12 FitzGibbon: Did you like to dance?

38:14 Donnelly: Mhmm, yup. I liked to sing more but yup we had a wonderful wonderful time. Lots of football and lots of base... lots of everything. Track and all of that sort of thing. Then I was on you now the newspaper and yearbook and different things that's all.

38:39 FitzGibbon: So this school was purely for teachers then? Courtland State Teacher's College...

38:43 Donnelly: All for teachers.

38:45 FitzGibbon: Was it mainly...

38:45 Donnelly: Most... a lot of the girls and most of the boys were all phys ed. Students. In fact they went on to really very very well you know and then there were the GE's which were the elementary and junior high teachers. That's the way they used to do it. We had a school right there on the campus and you could, one year, the year I did my cadet teaching, I taught at the kindergarten there on campus. The second ten weeks I taught in Garden City, Long Island... second grade. That was an experience. Got to take the Phoebe Snow, the train down to New York. I don't know what I was doing on the Long Island railroad out to Mirac where I stayed with one of my sorority sisters and her family for 10 weeks so. It was wonderful, and I still got a lot of pictures and friends and usually I go to Courtland for every Alumni... I haven't in a couple of years but it's harder for me to drive but it was fun.

40:11 FitzGibbon: Were there a lot of servicemen that came back and on the GI Bill wanted to teach at your college?

40:20 Donnelly: Yup yup they all got jobs. They all... Bill, Gary all these people got jobs in New York State. Yup everybody got a job. Yup.

22:38 40:38 FitzGibbon: When did you meet your husband?

40:40 Donnelly: Oh my goodness. Let's see I was a junior or a sophomore in Courtland in the summer of 1948. I was a counselor at a... had 10 girls... handicapped children at Camps Evans at Shenango Valley State Park up by us and it was for all summer and they stayed a week and then another group came and that and then for some reason the Binghamton Press Paper wanted a story on Camp Evans and ... (Phone rings)

Pause

40:44 FitzGibbon: Okay, we left off talking about how you met your husband.

40:52 Donnelly: Uh... More like how he met me to tell you the truth.

40:57 FitzGibbon: Yeah?

40:48 Donnelly: The picture was in the paper of the girls at the camp and he... I didn't realize that he had gotten out of the Navy, a Lieutenant in the Navy and was opening his own dental practice in Hillcrest and my father told me he said, "there's a new dentist down on, down the street and there's no sense in you going downtown to the dentist anymore so go make an appointment so I did. Come to find out he had

been trying to find out who I was from the picture in the paper. So we met and that's it.

41:38 FitzGibbon: So tell me... he was a lieutenant in the Navy during World War II?

41:42 Donnelly: He was a dentist on the... the only dentist in fact on the U.S.S. Wright CVL49. It was an aircraft carrier.

41:50 FitzGibbon: Did he have any interesting stories from the War?

41:54 Donnelly: No it would have been after the War.

41:56 FitzGibbon: Oh okay.

41:59 Donnelly: Probably 46'-48', something like that. So...

42:06 FitzGibbon: Tell me a little bit about him. What was it that caught your...

42:08 Donnelly: I don't know... beautiful blue eyes, and an Irishmen, and dark hair and swept me off my feet. That's all.

42:18 FitzGibbon: That's great... and you got your teeth cleaned for free.

42:22 Donnelly: I told everyone that I married him because I couldn't pay the bill. (laughs)

42:28 FitzGibbon: (laughs)

42:30 Donnelly: Yeah, so we were married, I graduated from college on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1950 and was married the 24<sup>th</sup> of June. I have no idea how I did it with the reception and the gown and the bridesmaids and all but I did it.

42:32 FitzGibbon: How long did you date before you got married?

42:35 Donnelly: Oh gosh. I had a couple more years of college so it was like 18-19 months or so. Yup.

42:46 FitzGibbon: Tell me about your wedding.

42:48 Donnelly: Well it wasn't a great big wedding but it was just across the street from where I lived and let me see. I don't know if you want to use this or not but when I was a child in Port Dickinson I was baptized Baptist. (coughs) Pardon. Then I moved to Hillcrest and we joined the (unrecognizable name of church) Methodist Church. So I was there for I don't know how many years, 12 or 13 years and then I met my husband who was Catholic and I changed to Catholic and I've been there with him over 50 years. I am prepared for almost anything.

43:44 FitzGibbon: (laughs)

43:44 Donnelly: (laughs)

43:47 FitzGibbon: You're covered.

43:50 Donnelly: That's what I figured, well covered.

43:52 FitzGibbon: That's great.

43:52 Donnelly: Yup.

43:56 FitzGibbon: So where did you go on your honeymoon?

43:59 Donnelly: Uh we went down to Pennsylvania to a place called Split Rock Lodge and it was the nicest place in 1950. It really was and we had our own cottage and we went into the big lodge for three meals a day and went swimming where they had a lagoon and a lake, Lake Harmony and we had two weeks. Two weeks was unheard of you know? And played golf at Gargle's Golf Course and we went all over the place so it was wonderful. It really was.

44:40 FitzGibbon: Where did you live after you got married?

44:41 Donnelly: Pardon me?

44:42 FitzGibbon: Where did you live after you go married?

44:43 Donnelly: We came back and we'd already taken an apartment in Port Dickinson. I didn't go very far, see Port Dickinson and Hillcrest, back and forth, back and forth. I can remember the one bedroom apartment was really nice with half the furniture which I still have and I lived there and then he drove to work up maybe half a mile to Hillcrest everyday. Then I taught school so I must have taken the bus downtown to Binghamton to teach second grade. It worked out until the children came along then I didn't teach anymore.

45:30 FitzGibbon: Did you start teaching right after you got married?

45:33 Donnelly: Yeah, yup. Cause I'd gotten the job even before I graduated from Courtland.

45:41 FitzGibbon: Did you fill out a bunch of applications or was it something that you just...



45:46 Donnelly: I think I just... Port Dick School, I would have liked to have taught there but there were all filled up. I probably did, I don't recall right now, but I know I got the job in Binghamton... Loved those kids.

46:00 FitzGibbon: You said it was second grade?

46:02 Donnelly: Yup, yup second grade. It was great. I went back and substituted for a while in Vestil where we moved finally. We moved to Vestil New York but it was different you know. It's different teaching today then it was then.

46:24 FitzGibbon: Did you teach at all about the War? I know in second grade it's probably not a lot of history and such but was there any mention of the war because it was so recent?

46:34 Donnelly: Not second grade or anything. Mostly spelling tests and writing and reading and groups and you know, that sort of thing. It was all subjects and other things you know? Yup.

46:53 FitzGibbon: How long did you teach for before you had your first child?

46:57 Donnelly: It was only a year or so that I taught. I think sometimes my mother and dad wished that you know after sending me four years to college and wanting to be a teacher for so long... but then I had my own children to teach so that was good.

47:04 FitzGibbon: Tell me about your kids. So you had...

47:06 Donnelly: I had Debbie first.

47:09 FitzGibbon: When was that?

47:10 Donnelly: In 51'. See I didn't teach long. 51', and Peter in 52' and 55' Michael. Yup. It was great. It really was great. We bought a house in Hillcrest (coughs) and... a little ranch house, it was really nice. In fact I think the children remember that house more then they remember the house that we built in Vesil New York, (clears throat) which was a colonial house you know, and they were in high school and college by then. To this day when they come and visit me we ride (clears throat) up to Hillcrest and go down Cornell Avenue to see the house that they were raised in. (laughs) They want to know how big the tree is in the backyard, the oak tree and all that stuff (laughs). They have lots of memories of that. Yup.

48:17 FitzGibbon: So you stayed home and you just did substitute teaching?

48:21 Donnelly: Yeah I belonged to Hillcrest Garden Club and you know all the things. The kids didn't have any sidewalks, just rode bikes and I remember building... my husband built snow forts you know outside and they had a good, I hope they had a good childhood anyway. We had a good time, and you got to know

your neighbors you know switching recipes and hanging clothes outdoors and doing... Later years when we built the new house... it's different. I didn't see my neighbors very often and they didn't hang clothes. I'm the only one that had a clothes reel outside. (laughs) Oh well.

49:34 FitzGibbon: Was there even more of a sense of community when you were younger, when you were growing up during the War?

49:39 Donnelly: Yeah. Yup and being a Brownie Leader and I was, all these kids in the basement and making gifts for Father's Day and Mother's Day and all that sort of thing. I bowled in the Church League. I did a lot of things. My husband did a lot of community work, an officer in the dental society, and we had a dental auxiliary of all the wives, which was wonderful. I got to know the wives better than the husbands. Now that's gone. No one knows anyone anymore. So that was the end of that.

50:34 FitzGibbon: Were your kids involved in sports or activities growing up?

50:38 Donnelly: Let's see... They were all busy. I don't know Debbie was a cheerleader and this and that and all these things went on you know. Peter and Michael was on track. They played basketball and... but not, you know, award winners or anything. They all kept busy, yup. They were... didn't have any trouble with the children at all. Maybe because I never yelled at them... never did.

51:15 FitzGibbon: Was that something that you grew up with... did your parents yell at you or was it no yelling at you or...?

51:19 Donnelly: No I don't think so. Because my dad wasn't home you know but I knew what he liked and didn't like and I did what he liked, that's all. Yup.

51:35 FitzGibbon: Your kids... they went to college and... did all your children go to college?

51:43 Donnelly: I don't... I guess they always knew I wanted to be a teacher, that's all. In fact I found papers that my dad had written and saved for me. Four years of college at Courtland State Teacher's College, four years was, and he wrote down every penny he ever spent, and it came to four thousand something. I have it and room and board and meals at sorority house were one hundred and ten dollars a semester. Period. Then I probably got some spending money or something you know? So it all came to... I'm sure he included everything. (clears throat) Graduation and sorority pin and anything like that. He never had a credit card. My husband never had a credit card. I never had a credit card until after he passed away. How about that?

52:45 FitzGibbon: When did he pass away?

52:47 Donnelly: April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1984. Yup, colon, colon cancer. Yup.

52:57 FitzGibbon: Sorry.

52:59 Donnelly: So, I've been alone a long time. I'm glad I was that young. If you have to be alone you might as well be alone at that younger age. I was fifty-five.

53:09 FitzGibbon: Wow.

53:10 Donnelly: I wouldn't want to all of a sudden now be alone you know?

53:15 FitzGibbon: It's a big change.

53:16 Donnelly: I mean it's getting harder for me you know what's the bank balance and who do I owe for car insurance and different things you bills that come in and rent and all that. So it gets harder and harder. So prepare! All of you! (laughs)

53:39 FitzGibbon: (laughs) ... and he sold his dental business before um... he sold he dental business before he passed away?

53:52 Donnelly: Yes in 90... in 82'. He had arthritis and he just couldn't practice anymore so he sold it in 1982 and then they diagnosed colon cancer and then he lived until April of 84'. He was home. He was home most of the time. I took care of him most of the time. Yup... (unrecognizable)... you know the whole business. So...

54:20 FitzGibbon: That must have been tough on you.

54:20 Donnelly: Yup, but that's the way. I think he went to the hospital. They came and got him like at noon one day, on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and he passed away about 9:30 that night.

54:39 FitzGibbon: I'm sorry.

54:42 Donnelly: It's a good way to go.

54:47 FitzGibbon: So tell me about your grandchildren.

54:50 Donnelly: Oh boy. Let me see, Debbie, that's my daughter, she's the oldest and she has a set of twins, Alexa and Nicholas and an older grandson Michael. Peter is single, he has not married and Michael is married and has two children, Shannon and Seamus. Now how much more Irish can you get? He married a Murphy. So we got Murphy and Donelley and Shannon and Seamus. (laughs) They are, they're great. They all have been to college and graduated from college and one granddaughter Shannon lived in Penn State... well I can't say that. Her brother Seamus graduated from Ithaca and he's not a ... in law school in Dayton, Ohio. So he's trying to get through law school. Real proud of all five of them, and all three children.

56:07 FitzGibbon: That's great.

56:07 Donnelly: I'm very fortunate. I don't know if I'll ever be a great grandmother. No that'd be their children right? No. Maybe. Who knows?

56:25 FitzGibbon: I meant to ask you, when you were teaching. Did you feel like you made a decent salary? Did you notice...

56:32 Donnelly: Well I thought I did. Let's see for a year, starting teaching second grade... was \$2,100 for the year.

56:48 FitzGibbon: Sounds good for that time.

56:52 Donnelly: So at that time it was fine for beginning. You know you were on the first step and you kept going up, which I never did but I would have. (clears throat) My roommate, Dottie Crano who lives down the hill here, she taught 25 years, and she gets a nice pension from... of course her salary went up. Mine just stayed (laughs) at \$2,100. I loved it anyway. It was an experience, an adventure. My whole life was an adventure.

57:31 FitzGibbon: That's great. Is there anything else about the War that you specifically remembered?

57:37 Donnelly: Oh let me see... I can't remember other things about the War. I think we covered everything... rationing and a messenger and let me see we got home and all that. Nope, I don't...

58:09 FitzGibbon: You said you didn't remember or you didn't know what you were... you would save like foil and grease and such and turn it into...

58:18 Donnelly: I don't know what they did with that but everybody was doing it and saving it and taking it to the meat market. I have no idea. Everybody was doing something, it was... it's not like this War. In fact I remember when we got to our honeymoon on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, that must have been... on that Sunday, the next... it was Saturday. Sunday a friend of his was there on his honeymoon, he was a Navy officer and he got called back because it was the Korean War on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 1950. That started and he got called back into the service quick and so they had to leave their honeymoon. I don't know. One war onto the next.

59:22 FitzGibbon: Did you ever hear your parents talking about the War or things like that?

1:00:26 Donnelly: Not really, they never bothered us with anything, my sister or I. I don't recall. Nope. There probably were things, if she were here she probably can remember more than I would since she got married and all that during the War. She wore a dress at her wedding. I remember that. Blue velvet. Why? I don't know. With a hat to match.

1:01:04 FitzGibbon: Blue velvet wedding dress.

1:01:07 Donnelly: I wore the dress that I'd worn to graduation from Port Dick School, which would have been in 43'. See I didn't get a new outfit so...oh gosh. My sister had a boy... two boys and a girl and one boy passed away, Jim and my niece and nephew live here... David lives here and call me every week and Donnelly lives outside of New York and she calls me and she got named for me, Donnelly. So those are my sister's children. So we take... everybody take good care, keeps in touch you know.

1:02:00 FitzGibbon: Good.

1:02:00 Donnelly: I don't ask for anything anyway but they just go ahead and do things you know? (laughs) So we'll see what happens.

1:02:15 FitzGibbon: Is there anything else that you wanted to talk about?

1:02:17 Donnelly: Oh let's see. What's happened since then? Well I'm a... belong to the Daughters of the American Revolution. My daughter and I went all over to libraries in Norwidge and Binghamton and Utah, she went out there, we had to out who the Revolutionary War... I think we had three or four in the family that we've got still to do but did find Timothy Bosworth and all the grand... on my grandfather's side and my mother's father and it went on after that and we found his, where his homestead was in East Forsalia. They're just little farm towns that's all, out by Norwidge and uh there's a great- we went up through the woods, Debbie and I and found the cemetery for his whole family and his and somebody had been up there and put a flag on it the last time we went up there. My nephew wants to go up there and see it. It's amazing to be able to find the grave-site you know, these people. It was a long time ago, but I've got all the information, all the certificates and birth certificates and all that stuff. Went to the Norwidge library and historical society and it takes quite a doing cause they have to go to Washington and be approved.

1:04:06 FitzGibbon: Wow.

1:04:06 Donnelly: Then come back, then you're a member of the Tuskarora chapter of the DAR.

1:04:15 FitzGibbon: What do you do in the DAR?

1:04:17 Donnelly: There's all kinds of things, I could have shown you the... we do a lot of historical things and give scholarships, go on tours you know of old old places and have speakers come in and speak on politics and books and all kinds of things. Ours is very good, a wonderful, it's a wonderful chapter. So you know I did church work a lot when I lived in Vestil and headed a committee for church dinners for funeral dinners after the service and we cooked and everybody did that. I did

substitute teaching for Catechism Class, odds and ends things, yup. That's what seems strange up here there's a lot of things you can do but you have to drive or you have to have the energy to do it you know? (clears throat) Yup. That's my life and here I am. Sold my house, sold the cottage at Split Rock, we built a cottage there, and sold that and moved into the Highlands, a senior center for older folks. (laughs) You're really as old as you feel so... I like it, I like it here. Now the next step, what to do? When you can't see and you can't drive and you have diabetes and you had open heart surgery and you know a few little things but I am walking which... what more do you want? That's about it... and I have great neighbors, the FitzGibbons.

1:06:22 FitzGibbon: (laughs)

1:06:23 Donnelly: Across the street.

1:06:25 FitzGibbon: Well they're very fond of you.

1:06:26 Donnelly: They're so nice, they're just kind of slowing down and I am too so you know we're doing alright so far.

1:06:40 FitzGibbon: Well thank you so much.

1:06:40 Donnelly: You're very welcome. I will think of a million things after you shut this off.

1:06:45 FitzGibbon: Okay (laughs) I'm sure we got a lot of great stuff so...

1:06:50 Donnelly: Thank you FitzGibbon.

1:06:51 FitzGibbon: Thank you.