

Hazel Collington and Donald Hill

Hazel and I met at the open house for the Preservation Society to show the Ellington house (now lived in by Sally Middleton his niece the artist) Hazel told me that her family friends had worked in the Arden House and Blake House. As a child she went to Christmas party (see Beale Fletcher tape). Walter Lance, yard man and chauffeur, played Santa Claus, Etta was cook. Arden house now taken down. (see enclosure) We met at her brother's house 4/28/1993 [Sally Middleton, Douglas Ellington, Beale Family, Mary Alice McDaniel, Lillian McDaniel, Walter and Etta Lance]

Side 1:

[51] She mentions members of the Beale family and shows pictures of the big snow in 1936. She fed children in the Arden schoolhouse. We compare this with the recent storm. (enclosure) [Constance Shuford, Miss Booty Beale]

[70] She was only inside the Arden house long enough to receive her Christmas present (one party for Blacks, one for whites, one for family, all received gifts) Her mother worked at Christ School and also Chapman's Inn. [Mrs. Rose Chapman]

[92] Her brother Donald Hill was a yard man at Christ School, mowing lawns. He started at 14 and worked up to building with the native rock at \$1 a day (straw brown mica schist) (see photos) He told of his job of keeping the tennis courts rolled for the Harris' daughters and the farm and dairy. Local black families also worked in the laundry for the school. When students (all male) misbehaved, they had to dig 3 x 3 of dirt and pour it all over the hill (the buildings were being constructed) Walt McDaniel cut the rock for the building. [Miss Betsy Harris, David Harris, Whetmore family (rich founders of Christ School), Walter Lance, Allen family, Webb family, McDaniel family, Boyd (no last name remembered)]

[132] Rock was dynamited and came out wet in 8 to 10 ft wide sheets which were hammered and chiseled into shape. When dry the sheets were hard and used in layers like slate. This material is unusual and not for sale. (See enclosure) [Walt McDaniel]

[158] There was an old mill on Mills Gap Road. Two grinding stones from this mill are now in the entrance of the school building. Stone from the old mill ponds (Carolina granite) was used as base for the school buildings. Chips of stone mixed with mortar was carried by the men on their shoulders over 2x 10" scaffolds to build the infirmary and fraternity house. Donald was making \$1.50 a day in 1959 and helped build 2 football fields. He rolled and marked the tennis court every day for the headmaster's daughter. [Peter McDaniel, Betsy Harris]

[216] Christ School students did most of the labor on campus and had to be "perfect" to go into the city. (We saw black students on campus when Hazel and I drove over the area.) [Collington added, 6-2001, that these students were from Africa, said to be "princes from overseas sent to keep from being killed."]

[241] The old and new buildings and their location is described. The farm is now privately owned.

[258] The younger students worked for the older boys. Once some upperclassmen stole chickens from the headmaster and were "shipped out" that night. Some of the students were boys from Biltmore Forest who couldn't be handled at home. [Bruce Brown]

[286] Christ School Road was unpaved. His mother's name is on the mail box (she died recently - he is living there). [Willie May Fletcher]

[305] For about a year the school was co-ed (around 1929 he said - see enclosure) [Coed until 1929] but "something happened" there - early classes 1920-30) [Ethel Mallory, Catherine and Rebecca Shuford, Katie Hart, Lee Hart, Charlie and Walter Shuford]

[334] A blight hit the chestnut trees.

[388] Hazel has always lived on the mountain with the exception of a year and a half when she stayed with her sister in Kansas. She did this on the advice of a woman she called "auntie" when she was under strain at home. She worked at Christ School and then for a woman who was raising dogs. She worked for \$15 a week for 1/2 day. [Elizabeth Edgerton, Don Webb]

[468] Hazel's daughter and sons attended Stephens-Lee High School (now torn down) by bus. There was no high school for Blacks in Arden. Haskal Fletcher (Hazel's stepfather from age 13) drove the school bus for 25 years. She stopped school at 8th grade as there was no transportation. [Haskal Fletcher]

[513] Not many blacks attended her school until Biltmore School closed.

[533] Bussing was difficult for the children as so much time was spent on route - up to 60 miles one way. She tells route bus followed. It was dark when they started and dark when they returned.

[578] Their stepfather was shown how to drive the school bus without even being able to read.

Side 2:

Hazel tells about her mother, her strictness and their devotion to her.

[2/14] Donald decided to go into the service as he wasn't making any money. His base pay was \$21 a month of which \$2 was needed for underclothes as the lye soap ate fabric. [David Harris, Charlie Hart]

[2/27] Donald tells about the method his grandmother used in making soap. He told his mother a lie once and his mouth was washed out (we share similar stories).

[2/70] Hazel tells of the birth of her mother's twins. Her mother told her and her sister to tell grandma she was sick and to get the doctor. They went to the store and phoned and he arrived with a little black bag. They couldn't decide whether the twins came from the bag or the cabbage patch. One twin was light skinned, the other black. There was Indian and white blood in the family. [Shufords, Lillian Hill, Willie May Fletcher, Emily and Evelyn Hill]

[2/128] It cost \$175 to hook up to a post to run a phone wire into a house.

[2/137] Donald drove the truck for Christ School without a license. He loaded a gondola with coal and would have it unloaded at school in 3 days. One day, with a load of sand and Betsy Harris with him (see Harris tape), he ran off on a soft shoulder and turned over 3 times. No one hurt. In 1939 a state trooper gave him a ticket. He gave it to Harris. [David Harris, Betsy Harris]

[2/167] He decided to enlist, but the army wouldn't take him because of varicose veins. He needed three character witnesses to join the Navy. He was told that, as a black, he would be a mess attendant. Few blacks in Navy. [Charlie Hart, Dr. Holt, "Old Man" Regan (mayor of Arden), Mr. Nettle (head of KKK), Rebecca Shuford, Katie Hart]

[2/194] In 1941 Donald spent 14 days in Breckenridge training and then to Southampton.

[2/257] He was advised not to be seen with an "English lassie" under penalty of being court-martialed or being shot. He was the Captain's steward and his job was to take care of him. The captain spent 6 months golfing in Scotland and in time he found a group to relate to. He supplied eggs, meat, coffee and bread and was "king" until shipped back to the States. He went on to Bermuda, New York, Key West and Hawaii (3 days before Pearl Harbor). He was in sick bay in Key West, Florida when Pearl Harbor was bombed. By being late 3 times (and receiving punishment) he was automatically dropped from submarine duty.

[2/408] When the chief cook was drunk, he was told to cook roast beef - a new experience - and he was so successful that, instead of being in trouble, he was given 2 blue stripes, one white for his uniform and as third class seaman made \$275.

[2/452] In "Shine Town" in Key West the bar girls tried to get his money but he tricked Lisa and got shipped out. In Norfolk, on a destroyer escort, his new commander said he had "never had a black man handle my food and not going to do it now." He learned that the ship went down and was glad he had been taken off that duty! [Jake Kelly]

[2/533] Donald then sailed in the Pacific and in 1955 he did shore duty for the first time at Vandenberg Air Force Base. In 1961 he returned and hitch hiked out. He didn't want to wait to be piped over the side in LA.

[2/572] Three years were spent in Japan and behind the firing line in Korea. For 15 days, when his ship went down off Korea he ate wild pigs, monkey and green coconuts.