

ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: Professor Robert MacDonald

INTERVIEWER: James M. Den am

PLA! E O" INTERVIEW: "lor#da \$o%t ern !olle&e

DATE O" INTERVIEW: No'ember ()* + , (,

M- James M. Den am ./M#0e12

R- Professor Robert MacDonald

R: Absol%tel3.

M: Administered 3.8% dose of black and 5% of white and 0.1% of red elodea 5r æ m%c &ra3.

R: O * 3e* r#& t. It 5as t e e4#tome of &ood and e' # l l &%ess 3o% 5o%ld sa3
loo0#n& at #t later. T ese t5o races re4resented #n t at c%lt#red comm#n#t3 lo'ed
eac ot er and 5ere endeared to eac ot er to t e e<tent t at t e t o%& t of
e'er a' #n& to lea'e ent#rel3 from t at 0#nd of ar) /Gt 0#nd 6t 1r loMgè l 9f aVd;oe&asrel ! o

And so she sent into the "lor'da m%#c m#n#str3 of the c %rc and met there er
%sband9to9be* 5 o 5as Amer#can er#ta&e* b%t #s fat er ad been a m#ss#onar3
#n R#o. \$o t e3 's#ted se'eral t#mes. I dec#ded earl3 on t at t e most bea%t#f#l
arbor #n t e 5orld #s R#o de Janeiro b%t I ne'er &ot to &ot ere. An35a3 t e3

%sed to a'n& to mo'e aro%nd. After t at* 5#t #n t e same (+ mont s act%all3* m3 mot er 5as #mmed#atel3 4re&nant a&a#n. M3 brot er* ! arles* 5as 4robabl3 t e most 5#del390no5n member of t e fam#l3. He t%rned o%t to be a no'el#st and t en a 5r#ter of World War II.

M: ! arles MacDonald* a 'er3 #ll%str#o%#s World War II #stor#an and 'eteran of D9Da3 #mself* and t en 5ent on to be a #stor#an for t e F.\$. Arm3 H#stor3 =ranc .

R: E<actl3. \$o e e'en #ncl%ded to5ards t e end a V#etnam #stor3.

M: Ho5 m#c older 5as e t an 3o%7 Ao% 5ere abo%t to tell me 5 en 3o% 5ere born l t #n0.

R: I 5as born #n (>H, and e 5o%ld a'e been abo%t (>+B.

M: O0a3. \$o e 5as abo%t s#< 3ears older t an 3o%.

R: A44ro<#matel3* 3es. M3 s#ster 5as born 5#t #n t e same (+9mont 4er#od a ead of #m. \$o t e t5o of t em 5ere l#0e t5#ns all t e 5a3 t ro%& sc ool and el4ed eac ot er a &reat deal.

T en t e ne<t oldest brot er 5as t e onl3 one 5 o* 4ra#se l od* become #nterested #n farm#n&. M3 fat er ad a creed of t at e 5as l#0e all of #s ne#& bors* fello5 farmers* 5o%ld a'e been as amed to adm#t t at an3 son of t eirs 5o%ld not &o #nto farm#n& too. W 3 m3 fat er d#dn#t t #n0 t at 5a3* 5 o 0no5s* beca%se e ad l#terall3 l t #n0 a fo%rt or f#ft 9&rade ed%cat#on. M3 &randfat er* as m3 fat er 4%t #t: T#mes 5ere ard and so I told #m e ad to 8%#t sc ool and dr#'e a 4lo5. T at#s o5 e 4%t #t.

T #s brot er* Rae* 5e called #m. H#s name 5as Ale<ander MacRae MacDonald. H#s name 5as to be a 4roblem all #s l#fe beca%se #t 5as not R9A9AJ #t 5as R9A9E. He 5as t e onl3 one t at came bac0 after World War II* and e'er3one ass%med t at m3 fat er ad tal0ed #m #nto #t. T an0 l od t at 5as not t e case.

After t at* Donald 5as t e closest to me. We 5ere Donald and =obb3 as I 5as called. We 5ere fo%r 3ears a4art. He 5as fo%r 3ears older t an me. He 5as born #n (>+? or #+). Earl3 on* 5e became #nterested #n t e same t #n&s* t e same boo0s* t e same mo'#es. We 5ere close eno%& #n a&e mo'#es 5ere albe#t a rar#t3 beca%se 3o% d#dn#t &et to &o (+ m#les at n#& t to &o to a mo'#e. If 3o% 5ent to one* #t ad to be a

a tractor. It was old mules* and we one of the mules by first name and the horses. And that was all in the barn and it be and the horse. Man's a time I remember ear and the barn of the horses. I never did find out what caused them to break or what they were trying to accomplish. That's that.

That the consciousness of the farm was so important. My father was labeled at by his colleagues for not making his order. They never told that he ordered his land and so. I'll tell that to you: When I got to the school there was a BH ! for the first time. And had to have a project. So I remember and come to my father that day and said*/Dad* we got to have a project* what could I do? He said*/Well* I think you'll be doing it in a few minutes. I let dressed. And were and to be looking at the corn. So I'll let you mark off an acre of the corn and you say you were looking at that for your project. It was an interest and that's.

M: What was the hardest order in your family? When it came to all the chores and you were the ones that were the slaves?

R: That's funny.

M: Would you say that?

R: Charles and Malcolm were both in the 5th grade but brother* Rae* funny that that

M: So ob'ly s e ad t at to5ards er7

R: Aes. \$ e ad been a 4#ano ma;or #n colle&e* "lora MacDonald !olle&e b3 t e 5a3J #t 5as named after t e ero#ne.

M: So s e ad act%all3 been to colle&e7

R: O * 3es* s e ad &rad%ated.

M: We need to &o bac0 to t at a l#tle b#t and tell %s a l#tle abo%t 3o%r mot er. W en 5as 3o%r mot er born and 5 at 0#nd of bac0&ro%nd d#d s e a'e7

R: I d#d m3 ome5or0 on t at. \$ e 5as born #n (>)H and d#ed #n (>?)* 5 #c meant s e 5as)E 5 #c 5as considered 'er3 old #n t ose da3s.

M: So s e act%all3 bro%& t t at 0#nd of #nterest #nto t e fam#l3 and ob'ly3 rela3ed t at to t e c #ldren7

R: Well* I act%all3 eard t e 4#ano be#n& 4la3ed* 5 #c #s so essent#al later on. I &ot to 0no5 man3 a 4arent 5 o 5o%ld br#n& #s or er 99 #n and sa3: I don't 0no5 5 at's t e matter* t at 3o%n& one doesn't 5ant to 4ract#ce. And I be&an to as0 #f an3one else of t e#r &enerat#on* #f t e#r mot er or t e#r fat er 4la3ed t e 4#ano. O * no.

M: It's l#0e 5ell* o5 come 5e don't 5ant to read* 5ell* I don't read m3self so 5 3 s o%ld t e3 5ant to read ma&a: #nes or boo0s.

R: W 3 s o%ldn't t e3 #n t #s case. Well* an35a3* s e al5a3s 4rofessed not to be able to teac t e 4#ano beca%se 5 en I fo%nd m3self at t e 4#ano later on* e'er3one ass%med t at s e ad been an #nfl%ence. T e onl3 t #n& of #nfl%ence s e 5as t ere 5as t at m3 fat er 5o%ld a'e er to 4la3 t e 4#ano so n#ce* t e sort of 4o4 m%sc of t at t#me* beca%se e en;03ed t at. He 5o%ld straddle t e lon& 4#ano benc and t%rn t e 4a&es for er to 4la3 t e 4#ano. So I 5o%ld &et to ear m%sc t at 5a3. It 5as not 4rofo%nd m%sc b%t #t 5as m%sc.

M: So 5ere t ese son&s t at 5ere on t e rad#o7 D#d 3o% a'e a rad#o7

R: We ad a rad#o* 3es. T at became an #m4ortant 4art of m3 l#fe beca%se 5e &ot to ear t e concert on \$%nda3 afternoon* 3o% 0no5* t e P #l armon#c* and t e L%< Rad#o T eater and all t at. I 5o%ld ear m3 mot er 4la3#n& #n c %rc on \$%nda3s and t en at ome 4ract#c#n&.

reason* I ad #nstr%ct#on b%t #t 5as 'er3 late. I 5as (+ or (H.

M: No5 d#d 3o% 4#c0 #t %4 on 3o%r o5n7

R: Ver3 m%c . I 5as 4la3#n& b3 ear.

M: \$o 3o% ad a real talent for t at and 3o% 5ere able to 4#c0 #t %47

R: Aes.

M: Were t ere an3 ot er #nstr%ments #n 3o%r fam#l37

R: Aes* 5ell* t ere ad been. M3 &randfat er@s &enerat#on* e ad 4la3ed t e

and it was called the Inland Empire.

M: The Inland Empire?

R: Right. That meant that as the cotton crop was finished and the first bales had come in, each farmer would take a certain number of the bales that he felt he could donate and then sell the one designated in November because of the crop being finished was dedicated to the Inland Empire. That meant that consequently on these bales turned on the side of the lot so that they could be made into tables.

M: Cotton bales?

R: Cotton bales, yes. So these ladies would come with food to eat and brot from home and that's where.

M: How many would that be? I mean to use them?

R: Actually a hundred or two because anybody who was from there, all that family and would be made to because the food was so good. I was so hungry that I ate food that I didn't want to eat and that's all that anyone else had made but that mother. That's each time I would go to the store before it was transferred to the city and I would notice that the tens or 5 at the late that were in so I could get to the right one.

M: Do you remember that also a time for political discussions or speeches?

R: Only one, I think, was the World War II. World War II of course began December 7, 1941. I remember that date very well and that was when we were on a little trip to the Vinton area and we stopped at a grocery store some place and my brother and my father had heard a radio broadcast. I remember him coming to the car and saying: "March 1945. Hitler's troops are moving in and the war has started. And I had no clue at all of that meant."

M: And you would have been about (+ 3 years old at that time?

R: Right, 3 years, early teens. And that the war had lasted about that time or four months longer. I would have been drafted, that's the first member of the family. My four older brothers were all in places of combat in the military.

M: And you were the youngest brother?

R: I was the youngest brother at home and against the fact that we could have and. I had a little newsletter that I decided to build that the city. The community all one way each other and were open to each other and so all the sons and, just a few daughters that were in the military were bound together by that.

to me* b%t I felt sorr3 for t at l#tle &%3 t at I 5as t en. I 5as 'er3 %n&#fted #n s4orts. I ad to stand 'er3 often at recess t#me 5 en t e3 5ere c oos#n& %4 softball teams* 5e called t em baseball* I ad to 4%t %4 5#t see#n& t at I 5as t e last one and I ad to be ta0en b3 somebod3. I 5#ll ne'er for&et ear#n&: We ad #m t e last t#me. No* 3o% d#dn't. No* 5e ad #m t e last t#me.

M: O0a3. Let's &o bac0 to #& sc ool. D#d 3o% a'e to &o 5a3 a5a3 from t e farm to &o to #& sc ool? Was #t l#0e se'eral m#les?

R: It 5as (+ m#les.

M: T5el'e m#les a da3?

R: Aes.

M: E'er3 da3 3o% ad to &o (+ m#les?

R: E'er3 da3. Ao%#d &et ome abo%t H:H, or B:, ,. \$o #t ad a lot to do 5#t 5 at I earl3 on 99

M: Ob'#o%sl3 3o% rode #n some sort of a 'e #cle.

R: It 5as a b#& 3ello5 b%s.

M: Ao% act%all3 ad a b%s?

R: T e !o%nt3 ad be&%n t at 4rocess. We came from so far a5a3 t at t e to5n#es 5o%ld r#d#c%le %s* ! o%ntr3 come to to5n. And 5e#d onl3 be #n D#llon on \$at#rda3 beca%se t e3 ad to &et t e &rocer#es and so fort . Not 'er3 man3 beca%se 5e &re5 almost e'er3t #n&* t e &arden too0 care of t at. Tomato 4atc es* 5atermelons and all t at.

M: W at 5ere t e s%b;ects #n sc ool t at 3o% reall3 en;o3ed? Were t ere an3 s%b;ects t at 3o% en;o3ed more t an ot ers?

R: I lo'ed En&l#s and En&l#s l#terat%re. I ne'er 5as #nterested #n t e com#cs or t ose t #n&s. M3 select#on of an3 mo'#es 5as 'er3 d#fferent from m3 fr#ends. "or #nstance* I ne'er 5anted to &o an35 ere to see =ett3 I rable* #t 5as al5a3s =ette Da'#s. It's #nterest#n& 5e 5ere tal0#n& abo%t t at ;%st recentl3 beca%se 3esterda3 Rob Tate d#d a t #n& on =ette Da'#s for a cl#b ere #n to5n.

M: Ao%r fa'or#te s%b;ect 5as En&l#s l#terat%re* o0a3.

R: M3 %n9fa'or#te 5as al&ebra. And t e onl3 t #n& I e'er fl%n0ed #n #& sc ool 5as al&ebra.

M: Did you have a sense of self-worth at all about 5 that you wanted to do in the future or 5 that you didn't want to do?

R: For sure. A good deal. It was for sure I was going to be a writer. I was a writer on your school paper. In those days, it was all memoirs. And to free and the illustrations. I was the one who could do that. I would always get out of school all business. I'm going to work on the newspaper. I should have not been doing because of the student order. I should have made better grades. I always told my friends that I just can't understand. "Lora and Charles and Donald were brilliant students. What happened to you?" I always said that. It was that.

M: So you were in self-worth during World War II?

R: Right.

M: World War II was because of the Hitler as you were student and English literature and philosophy?

R: Yes.

M: So you were the one to be in self-worth in your school? I mean you were World War II was going on?

R: We were very conscious of the dress code and all these things that the military forms. One of the things would be for you had some argument from the Army that you older brother or sister had. You could hear that to school. That was really good.

M: Yes.

R: I think I already mentioned to you that I had a newsletter. It was called "Our Owns." No one ever thought it was dangerous to call a man 50 years old a boy.

M: Right. What was that newsletter meant for? 50 years old was the audience for that newsletter?

R: The audience in that case was the entire community.

M: And the newsletter pertained to various members of the community?

R: Yes. I corresponded. A

R: M3 s#ster made off 5#t a &reat n%mber of all t ose t #n&s.

M: W at d#d 3o% learn from 3o%r brot ers* 5 at 0#nd of #nformat#on d#d t e3 5r#te
3o% bac0 abo%t 5 at t e#r e<4er#ences 5ere7 Do 3o% remember #f t e3 5ere
e' er able to 5r#te 3o% bac07

R: Aes* r#& t.

M: \$o 5 at 5as #t l#0e 5 en 3o% f#rst sa5 3o%r brot ers after all t at t#me7 Was
#t a sense of e< #larat#on7

R: Aes. T e e< #larat#on 5as more on m3 4art t an on t e#rs. I t #n0 t e3 5ere

R: I believe I mentioned that the one piano teacher had to come back home.
Her husband had been hurt and it was farther in the middle of her studies so
she Rebecca Hensle's she started the only meaningful training. She was

R: P 3s#call3 e 5as f#ne b%t #t 5as man3 3ears before I real#:ed o5 de4ressed e 5as. Aet 5#t #n t at t#me* e 5rote Company Commander* t e boo0. He sat 5#t t e t34e5r#ter* 5 #c 5as a l#ttle 4ortable* e 5as so d#sc#4l#ned* ad so m#c self9d#sc#4l#ne* e 5rote t at t #n& 5#t #n abo%t f#'e mont s.

M: After e &ot bac07

R: Aes.

M: W at 5as #s t #n0#n& #n terms of a career* ;o%rnal#sm7

R: R#& t.

M: Was e able to &o to colle&e on t e I I =#I l or an3t #n& l#0e t at7

R: It 5as before t e I I =#I l. Of co%rse* e 5as t e ne<t to t e oldest of t e sons. T e trad#tion of t e fam#l3 5as t e Presb3ter#an colle&e #n ! l#nton.

M: ! l#nton* P ! 7

R: Aes. I t #n0 e ta%& t one semester 5 en e &ot o%t of t e Arm3. =%t e ad ma;ored #n ;o%rnal#sm. "or 5 ate'er #t 5as 5ort #n t at small colle&e* e &ot a &ood bac0&ro%nd. We all &ot a &ood lan&%a&e bac0&ro%nd beca%se lan&%a&e 5as ta%& t merc#lessl3 as e#d 4robabl3 remember too.

M: A&a#n* some more t o%& ts on ! arles7

R: T ere 5as an #nc#dent I a'e to tell 3o% abo%t. I started to tell 3o% 5e ad o4en f#re4laces. =%t t e one not9o4en f#re4lace 5as a eater* a coal eater* and #t ad a coal 4#le #n eac 3ard of t e farms. T at 5as t e f#rst t#me 3o% &ot #nto an3t #n& ot er t an t e lo&s 5 #c 5ere c%t b3 t e ands* t e em4lo3ees. An35a3* ! arles ad &one o%t* #t 5as a ra#n3 da3* ! arles ad &one o%t and

#slands beca%se e One5 t e Isle of \$03e 5as o%r ancestral ome. T e Island of Le5s 4rod%ced O5en* Dan MacLeod* 5 o alon& 5#t er s#ster* t e MacLeod s#sters 5ere famo% s #n t e enterta#ment 5orld. T e3 san& d%os #n l ael#c.

M: ! an 3o% s4ell t e name of 3o%r ome7

R: Aes. K9I9L9L9I9 I 9R9E9A.

M: And t at#s l ael#c7

R: R#& t. T ere#s reall3 anot er mean#n& b%t l#e for&ot #t. T e f#rst t#me t at l 5as able to &o to \$cotland* l #tc #0ed 5#t a fr#end of m#ne from V#enna. l ad a s#mmer ;ob. l 4la3ed #n a bar. Let#s tal0 abo%t some of m3 ;obs* can l do t at7

M: One of t e #nc#dents 3o% recall fondl3 5as 5 en 3o% 5ere at ! a4el H#ll* a tr#4 t at 3o% too0 5#t 3o%r brot er to !%ba. Ho5 d#d t at all a44en7 Ho5 5as #t t at 3o% co%ld bot afford to &o to !%ba and 5 at 5ere t e c#rc#mstances7

R: T at 5e One5 an3t #n& abo%t #t and all 5as t an0s to Donald* 5 o d#r#n& #s Na'3 t#me* ad been stat#oned 'er3 br#efl3 t ere. He ad done a lot of learn#n& abo%t !%ba from t e beds#de. He 5as al5a3s sort of o%r se<#st #n res#dence. M3 4arents al5a3s t o%& t* and t #s #ncl%ded 5 en l 5as #n ! a4el H#ll t en* t e3 al5a3s t o%& t #t 5as 4erfectl3 safe for me and all r#& t t at =obb3 5as learn#n& t ese t #n&s beca%se e 5as &o#n& to be 5#t Donald. =%t #t 5as from Donald l learned all t e t #n&s l s o%ldn#t a'e Ono5n abo%t. We started o%t #tc #0n& and 5e somet#mes ad some a5f%l f#& ts. l remember one t#me some5 ere #n lo5er \$o%t ! arol#na* 5e 5ere on t5o d#fferent s#des of t e road and 5e s5ore to eac ot er eac 5as &o#n& to ta0e 5 ate'er r#de sto44ed.

M: And t e ot er one 5o%ldn#t7

R: In t e ot er d#rect#on. We 5ere sa'#n& o%r mone3. We ad eard t at #t 5as L> , ro%nd tr#4* !%ban A#rl#nes from Ke3 West.

M: \$o 3o% 5ere &o#n& to #tc #0e all t e 5a3 to Ke3 West7

R: We d#d.

M: Ao% #tc #0ed from D#llon* \$o%t ! arol#na all t e 5a3 to Ke3 West* "lor#da7

R: "rom ! a4el H#ll.

M: "rom ! a4el H#ll all t e 5a3 to Ke3 West. Well* t at 5o%ld a'e been more e<c#t#n& t an !%ba 4robabl3.

R: Es4ec#all3 5 en I real#:ed t at one of t em 5as a 8%#te attract# 'e 3o%n& &#rl
5 om Donald #mmed#atel3 ent#ced #nto t e bac0 seat and made me dr# 'e. I
better sto4 tell#n& 3o% t #n&s abo%t Donald.

M: \$o 5as #t al5a3s t e case t at 3o% 5o%ld be 4#c0ed %4 to&et er and 3o%
al5a3s sta3ed to&et er7

R: Aes. And b3 t e 5a3* not lon& a&o* I real#:ed t at e lo'ed t e #dea of
0ee4#n& me as nall' e as 4oss#ble. If I learned earl3 on #f I ad a fe5 lttle

