

Lincoln Place Oral History Project
Dept. of Historical Studies, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Biographical Information and Family History

Current Information

Full Name: DONJUAN NAZARETH
Last First Middle

Maiden Name: _____

Current Address: _____

Telephone Number: (home) _____ (work) _____

Best time/way to reach: PHONE

Family History

Years/dates lived in Lincoln Place: 1924-1950

Address(es) in Lincoln Place: CHESTNUT - ST.

921 PACIFIC - AVE 944 NIEDRINGHAUS AVE

Date and Place of Birth: 1924 GRANITE-CITY, IL

Current Marital Status:

single []

married []

divorced []

widowed [☒]

Spouse's name and place of birth: EDITH LAYMAN - ST. LOUIS, MO.

Mother's name and place of birth (if known): ERZRUM

Father's name and place of birth (if known): KASPER - MOOSH

Children's names: JOHN - PATRICIA

Biography of Nazareth Donjoian

by William D. Wasson

Naz, as he is better known by, was born November 22, 1924. He was born at home, as was the custom at the time for many people. He had three sisters; one older and two younger sister. Both his mother (Armenouhi) and father (Kasper) immigrated to this country from Armenia. His father came to this country first and settled in Granite City. A friend of his returned to Armenia for a wife and Naz's father had him pick a woman to come to America for him to marry. So his father never met his future wife until she arrived in Granite City.

His mother had been married previously and had four children. All four children died in Armenia of natural causes, Naz believes. He also believes that her husband was killed in the Armenian massacre. In any event, she came to America with the intent of marrying Kasper. However, Kasper was not happy her when she first arrived, for unknown reasons. However, after several other bachelors expressed the desire to marry her if Kasper chose not to, Kasper reconsidered. He felt if others expressed an interest in her, maybe she was worth marrying after all!!

His father was a chef and ran a tavern and boarding house for many years. Naz also owned and ran a tavern for a number of years. While in high school, Naz got a job at the U.S. Army depot just down the street and worked there for part of his senior year. After graduation, he worked there a short period of time at the depot before being drafted. He entered the U.S. Army in June 1943 and was assigned to the U.S. Army Air Corps. He received training as a airplane and engine mechanic and spent a total of 32 months in the military. The war ended before he was shipped overseas and upon discharge he returned to Granite City.

He had return rights to his former job at the depot. After being home for two weeks and listening to his dad constantly asking him when he was going to get a job, Naz returned to work at the depot. He held a number of jobs and over the years suffered a number of Reduction In Force (RIF) realignments of personnel. However, after each RIF he was fortunate enough to move up in pay grade and after forty two years of combined military and civilian service, retired as a GS-12.

He lived at home until marriage. Not wanting to be labeled a bachelor, he married two days before his thirty sixth birthday, to a girl from St. Louis he had met on a blind date. His wife was raised in an orphanage, and they adopted two children because they could not have children of their own. They adopted a boy, John Paul and a girl, Patricia Ann. His wife died before ever seeing any of her grandchildren. His children live in the Greater St. Louis area and he is able to see his grandchildren regularly.

Naz attends the Armenian church regularly and assists at his church functions. He is also involved in other community activities.

BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

Name: Nazareth (No Middle Name) Donjoian

Note: Armenian men do not have middle names. Their first names are of religious origin.

Date of Birth: Nov. 22, 1924

Place of Birth: At home, Granite City, IL.

Current Address: [REDACTED]

Father's Name: Kasper (No Middle Name) Donjoian

Date of Birth: Does not have date available. Father died at age 73.

Place of Birth: Moosh, Armenia

Mother's Maiden Name: Armenouhi (No Middle Name)Egitkanian

Date of Birth: Does not have date available. Mother died at age 51. He was in the service at the time of her death. Was able to get leave and return home for the funeral.

Place of Birth: Erzurum, Turkey

Name: Satanick Bogosian (Sister)

Date of Birth: 1922

Place of Birth: Granite City, IL

Name: Violet Donjoian (Sister)

Date of Birth: 1926

Place of Birth: Granite City, IL

Name: Audrey Wienandy (sister)

Date of Birth: 1928

Place of Birth: Granite City, IL

Biographical History: Continued

OTHER: Drafted in the U.S. Army Air Corps June 18, 1943. Served 32 months, discharged Feb. 1946 (not sure of date).

Sister lived next door to him until she moved and his niece moved in.

Retired from U.S. Civil Service with 42 years. Has been retired for 15 years.

Wife deceased on Sept 31, 1997.

Two children: John Paul (son) and Patricia Ann (son)

Father: Kasper Donjoian

Grandfather: Kachig Donjoian

Great grandfather: Manoug Donjoian

Great, great grandfather: Ovanes Donjoian

Great, great, great grandfather; Markar Donjoian

Markar's big brother's name was "Donjo"--that is where the last name was started.