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Pontbriand, Fern oral history interview

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Interview with Fern Pontbriand by Andrea L'Hommedieu

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Pontbriand, Fern

Interviewer

L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date

April 12, 2002

Place

Lewiston, Maine

ID Number

MOH 338

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Biographical Note

Fern Pontbriand was born August 2, 1928 in Auburn, Maine. He attended the University of Maine at Orono, graduating in 1950 with a degree in business. He returned to Auburn to work in the family hardware store and gas station, then spent two years in the service from 1951 to 1953 as an office personnel clerk for the Corps of Engineers. He again returned to Auburn to the family business. He ran for the State Legislature in 1960 and won. In 1967, he began working at Lost Valley Ski Area in Auburn and became a partner in 1975 and then the owner in 1988. Pontbriand was also involved in various civic activities around the Lewiston and Auburn areas, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club. He passed away in 2003.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: Pontbriand family history; religion in Lewiston-Auburn; the French Language in Lewiston-Auburn; Lewiston French media in the 1940s; Louis-Philippe Gagne; the Couture family; Franco-American attitudes toward marrying other groups; University of Maine, 1946-1950; getting out of the family business; getting into the ski business; Lost Valley Ski Area history; politics growing up in New Auburn; Louis Jalbert; political make-up of Auburn; trolley transportation in Lewiston-Auburn; and Pontbriand hardware store.

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Transcript

Andrea L'Hommedieu: This is an interview with Mr. Fern Pontbriand- am I pronouncing that correctly?

Fern Pontbriand: Yup.

AL: On April the 12th, the year 2002, at the Muskie Archives at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. If you could start, I know you had a recollection you wanted to -?

FP: Yes, at the time when, how old was I, just out of college or just into, admitted into college, probably twenty, eighteen, twenty years old, I remember that it was at the time when the difference between a politician and a statesman became important to me, and I had been involved, because of my association with some friends, a girl I was dating at the time, with the party, the opposite party and, the Young Republicans. Then when I, I heard Senator Muskie speak when he ran for governor and was very impressed with him, and I don't remember how but I did change my enrollment to the Democratic Party so I could vote for him in the primaries, and I've been enrolled in that party ever since. But he, it was never a disappointment to me and I always felt that I had made the right choice. And, so throughout his political career I was very pleased to support him in every way I could. He impressed me at a young age, and the impression stayed.

AL: And that was the '54 campaign? Or was this a later campaign?

FP: No, probably '54, when he ran for governor?

AL: Yeah.

FP: Yeah, then it would have been '54, right. I graduated from Maine in 1950, and then in the service from '51 through '53, so '54 I would have been back home and getting involved. Yeah.

AL: So let me ask you to give me your date of birth and where you were born.

FP: Yeah. I was born on August 2nd, 1928, and I was born in Auburn and, or Lewiston I guess, it was in the hospital. And I just recently found a Metropolitan Life Insurance chart showing visitations by nurses attending the birth mother and the child on a two-week basis, and I don't know who, one of my nieces found this someplace and we sort of laminated it. So I was born in Auburn and have lived all my life. And, going back a bit there is an unusual background in that both my parents were born in Auburn and they were born on the same street in New Auburn where our business has been, where we've been, back in 1895. And they were born in adjacent buildings, and then they apparently got to know each other as they grew up and they were married. They were baptized in the same church, and then they were married at St. Louis church and celebrated their 50th anniversary and they were buried from the church. Which is rather unusual for French Canadian people. My mother's maiden name was Simard, and of course my father's name was Pontbriand, and they, it was unusual for French Canadian families of that era to have been born in Auburn, and both of them, yeah. So we date back in that community for a long time. And-

AL: Yeah, and your mother, were her parents born here, or did they come from Canada?

FP: No, my mother's parents were born in Canada, in St. (*name*) I think, which is in the lower part of Quebec, the lower part of Quebec. And my grandfather on my father's side, my grandfather Pontbriand, was born in Salmon Falls, New Hampshire, and so was his wife, because we found tombstones in that area and they were born in the Salmon Falls area. But originally they came, they must have come from the Thetford Mines area, which is just above Lake Megantic, because there is a small town there named Pontbriand.

And I have been involved with Lost Valley, the ski area, for quite a while and it was interesting to me one time to watch the weather, the skiing reports for Canada, and they listed Mont Pontbriand which is just a big hill, it's not something like Lost Valley, but it was listed as a ski area. I guess they have two or three lifts, rope tows or T-bars or whatever. But, and a few years, many years ago, my parents traveled through the Gaspé Peninsula. On the way back they traveled through that part of Quebec, lower Quebec, and when they drove through Pontbriand, it was on a Sunday afternoon, and my father stopped to question a resident sitting on the porch and he asked him if there were any people by the name of Pontbriand living in town. And he said, "Oh no, all these people died a long time ago and there's no more, they don't exist any more." And, so I don't know where, how the name, the town got its name but that was kind of cute to have a town named Pontbriand in Canada.

AL: So you grew up in Auburn. What was it like in the Auburn and Lewiston communities growing up? I mean, and I'm asking in terms of the community ethnically, socially, religiously, all those sorts of things, politically?

FP: Socially, religiously and everything was all wrapped up into one, because the church was so strong at that time, and we had a good sized parochial school with Sisters of, Franciscan Sisters teaching. And, all of us in the family went through all eight grades of the parochial school, which was a good background, I thought. The transition, however, from the parochial school, or the French parochial school to the public school system was a little bit of a trauma, because I had signed up for college courses and I had to take a language course. And the language course that was being offered was French, and it was offered by Miss Goldman, Libby Goldman, a beautiful person, still living today. And I didn't feel that I (*unintelligible word*), with a French course that started with the vowels a,e,i,o,u where leaving the eighth grade of the parochial school we were reading and writing French in school because we did English.

So we had a discussion, the principal of the school and I, about the situation and he sort of said, thought that I was lazy and didn't want to put the effort into it, and I just told him it was a waste of time as far as I was concerned. And he said, well, the French that I knew was Canuck French, and I argued at the time that the Canuck, it was a language of convenience for many people but that French grammar is French grammar. And the vocabulary depends on where you are and like any other language you have some patois and some slangs and some expressions that are used that are unique to the area.

Like in Lewiston-Auburn area, there's a French word for (*unintelligible word*), which is to start your car or start a lawn mower. And, through some research, we found out that the French people working in the mills, in the Bates Mill, were asked to thread the looms to start the

process, and before, they after all the threading was done and through the shuttles and the whole bit, then when they ready to start they had to call the supervisor over for him to inspect the loom to make sure it was ready, it was done properly before they started the machine, and then after inspection he would say, okay, start her up. And that's where the expression came, supposedly "start her up", (*unintelligible word*) a car, because there's no French background to the word and so that's where it came from, which is unique to the area.

But in all, the French language that we had learned in parochial school was French grammar and French language, and it may not be, it wasn't as sophisticated as Parisian French, but then our English isn't as sophisticated as the British English. So anyway, I ended up taking woodworking and I was very pleased to show, to bring to back to show the others I'd made a tie rack out of, I'd cut out elephant heads out of wood, pieces of wood and made a tie rack of four elephant heads and painted it gray and then little leather pieces for the ears and everything. I thought that was really clever, and I thought that was very, that was spent much better than learning French for (*unintelligible phrase*).

The epilogue to this is that when I did go to the university, when I applied I was lacking credits in languages. However, I had very high grades and ratings in the math that I'd taken, I had taken some advanced math courses and so that got me into college. Which also allowed me to take an written and oral assessment at the college level in French, and I was given three years in college credits for the French that I knew. So I was anxious for the spring break to come back to Mr. Veilleux, the principal, and say, hey, look what this Canuck kid did in college, college level, three years of French. So I was able to take (*French names*) and all advanced French courses at the university and not bother with the basic French courses.

So, that made an impression on me because I felt, I had never experience any ethnic difficulties in the past and that sort of, that bothered me. And I was glad that I stuck to my guns and went through with it because, and fortunately, because, I guess, because of that to some extent I've, we talk French at home quite a bit and I always took the advantage of speaking French whenever I could. So now I'm able to travel and I go to Canada, I feel very comfortable [when] I get asked, "What part of France are you from?" And, so French as a second language to me has been a big asset and I appreciated a lot.

AL: So it's something you continue to do throughout your life.

FP: Very much so, yeah. When we were younger and at home, we spoke French in the house and of course I didn't appreciate that because all my friends and playmates were always speaking English and so I didn't enjoy that. But now I'm grateful to my parents for sort of suggesting that we do speak French. And my aunts and uncles spoke French, they're all very, quite literate, they spoke English fluently and were able to get along quite well. But whenever we did get together they enjoyed using the French language, which was good.

AL: Now, did your children grow up speaking, being bilingual?

FP: I am not married. My nieces and nephews didn't however, unfortunately, and now that they're in careers of their own they regret the fact that they didn't take advantage of it. At the

time they'd say, "Yeah, I don't know what you're saying, I'm American, speak American." But now they, in fact one of them, Michael, who went to Colorado when he was seventeen to teach skiing, he started in the area and then went on to, and then realized that if he had had a second language it would have been a big advantage to him. But, and the others, too, some of them are teachers, my brother Bert's children, three or four of them are teachers and they realize that a second language would have been beneficial to them.

But I was saying to you, the big change in the Lewiston-Auburn area was the Second World War when so many young people, who were mostly men, left home and went in the service. And then- because prior to that, anyone being hired to work in a store, in a department store or any service type of a position, had to be bilingual. And at that time they had a French radio station and a French newspaper, *Le Messenger*, you know, and but that changed as soon as the war ended and the people started coming back and they didn't want the French any more, the English was more important to them. So because of lack of interest those services, the radio station and newspaper and everything eventually died and so we were integrated into a community where the French language was put aside for a while.

AL: Now, you have memories of *Le Messenger* and, I'm trying to think of the, which station.

FP: WCOU was a French station, and then you had Louis Philippe Gagne, (*unintelligible phrase*). And then later on, up until a couple years ago, I was very, very fortunate in renewing a friendship with a Mr. Alexis Cote', who at one time was in the Lewiston-Auburn area as the music director, he was organist in our church, he was music teacher for the Lewiston School System, and also the director of the (*name*) which is a group of male singers. And so about fifteen years ago I bought a piece of, I bought a condo at Old Orchard and lo and behold, Mr. Cote had a condo next to, in the next building to me. So we met quite often on the beach, *la plage*, and we'd spend two or three or four hours and they were beautiful because it was strictly French, you know, *bonjour, Ferdinand, ca va?* And, it was great, it was really refreshing for me, and he was very impatient with me because, you know, if you don't use a language on a daily basis then you sort of get a little bit rusty or you're searching for words. But he was very gracious, he'd help me along and we'd continue the conversation. If we were struggling we'd switch to English to get something out of the way, but then go right back to French.

Because I think it's a beautiful language and it flows so gracefully. There are certain expressions that you just can't, you can translate to English but they never have the same meaning or the same feelings or the same color or the same ambiance.

So he was, he died last year and for many years, even when he developed health problems and ended up in a nursing home, I would make it a point to meet with him on the first day of La Kermesse, which was the Biddeford area celebration of the French Canadian people. And so we'd go down to the city center in Biddeford where they had a block party type thing, and this was opening ceremony for the long weekend, and we'd watch the fireworks and we'd go down and bring out folding chairs and stuff. And even after he had to leave his, the condo that he occupied and went into the nursing home, I'd pick him up over there and go. Up to the last year he attended, he was made King of the Kermesse and a lady from the same nursing home was named Queen, so the two of them rode the parade route in a convertible. And so it was a fitting

finale to his experience there. He died the following, a few months later.

AL: Do you remember what sort of impact or influence Louis Philippe-Gagne had on the French population, community?

FP: Oh yeah, he was the standard-bearer, the promoter of the culture of the French people in the Lewiston-Auburn area. And he was also a very understanding type person, he wasn't aloof by any means, and he was the idol of a lot of people of all levels, you know, the blue collar worker and the mill worker as well as the more educated people in the community, teaching, the teaching profession and so forth. I was too young to really appreciate him, but I knew of him because of the (*unintelligible word*), you know, when you're a certain age the attitude or the comments or the feeling your parents have become very important to you, although you don't notice, you're not fully involved yourself in the situation, you know what it is. And I know that whenever his name was mentioned, they'd say, "Oh yes, Louis said this," and "Louis Philippe said this," so he was a strong influence.

AL: And there was a person on the, there was another French-speaking gentleman who was involved in the media, and now I'm drawing a blank so I'll skip that, I can't think.

FP: Well, there was a (*name*) Dussard, there was -

AL: He was the owner, the person I'm thinking of.

FP: Couture, Faust Couture.

AL: Faust Couture?

FP: Yeah, WCOU was Couture, C-O-U, Couture. Yeah, Faust Couture.

AL: Did you know of him at all, or was, not so much?

FP: Not so much, no. He was a very, I learned more about him later on. After he had died, I learned more of his background, and he was a very capable person.

AL: Let me go on, unless you -?

FP: Yeah. Faust Couture, his, the Couture family were very progressive and they were the first people to experience the ecumenical two-council type of attitude towards the church. And, because of his interest in promoting more involvement of the lay people in the church, I guess it was the Dominican fathers who were at St. Peter's Church at the time, resented that and he, I don't know whether he was excommunicated, ostracized, or left the church willingly, but anyway he stopped going to church. For some reason or other he stopped being Catholic and, as well as his family.

And I dated a girl, Gerri, I can't get her name, oh boy, she went to high school, she was a high school date and I remember picking her up to go to the senior banquet at Poland Springs, and she

was wearing an organdy dress, it was all flared out and, I'll think of her name in a minute. But anyway, her mother was a Couture, and when my parents found out that I was dating her, that was very bad news for them because her family was no longer in the church. That's how strong the religion was ethnic-wise and religious-wise and the whole bit, and social-wise.

AL: So you could never have dated like a Protestant girl, like me, that would have been -?

FP: No, no. My sister dated a Lithuanian guy who she eventually married, and now my sister has been an Alzheimer patient for the past four years and he's taking care of her over and above whatever a person should do, because he just won't place her in a nursing home. So he has all kinds of help at home, they're very well-off. But the irony of this is my parents would not accept him, as devout a Catholic as he was, but he was not French. So he would have to bring her home and leave her off on the corner and then she'd walk home, my parents would never (*unintelligible phrase*). And then finally when she, you know, insisted that this was the person that she wanted to marry they went with it, but reluctantly. Eventually, after the marriage and when they started having children, he was totally accepted then and they thought he was the greatest thing in the world, but it took a long time.

But my dating at the time was, and later on I dated another girl who was, quite later I dated a girl who was, in fact I dated her for a long time, who was Syrian. And, the French expression was, *ca c'est, a viens des, c'est des nations*, which, nations, you know, *c'est des nations*, which meant that it was a foreigner. I guess instead of using the word foreigner in French they would use, and of course the word for foreigner was (*word*), but they would use the word, *ca c'est des nations*, and that meant that that's not good, it's something that's not, it's not French, and maybe Catholic or not, but anyways, *c'est des nations*, and it was like a bogey man type thing, you know. But it was strong.

I think that existed, in this respect, I think that those feelings existed because there was just a strong effort to, for survival, you know, and being a minority that they banded together, or they supported each other. And anyone outside the clan of the French Canadian background was thought of as a threat. Not legitimately and for no other reason than, except that the survival instinct was so strong that it created that barrier.

AL: So where did you go to the university?

FP: When?

AL: Where?

FP: University of Maine.

AL: University of Maine, in Orono?

FP: Yeah.

AL: And what did you, what was your major?

FP: Well, I had two years of pre med and then, when I started school I didn't shave and everything, I had just turned seventeen in August and I started school in September, so shortly, this is in '46 and the war ended, and before long the campus was overloaded with, my nephew asked, which campus were you on, Uncle Fern, he couldn't believe at that time there was only one campus. But the campus was being overloaded with returning veterans. And although there probably was only three or four years difference in age, two or three years difference in age, there was a world of experience. So I was known, in my dormitory I was known as junior. I remember I had this good friend who was a football player from the Saco area, I forgot his name now, but he'd come home, he'd come back to the dorm after going downtown to Pat's Pizza and getting really smashed and I had to help him to get in bed and, "Oh, Junior, you saved my life." So they talked me into going down there, how did I, how come I had a beer? I thought that the drinking age, the drinking age must have been eighteen.

AL: Either that or you snuck it.

FP: I don't remember doing, I don't remember sneaking it, no, because -

AL: No, that would stick in your memory.

FP: Yeah, it would, yeah, it would because I remember I had, my brother had a convertible and I was allowed to borrow the car and use it, in early spring like now, you know, which is really too cool for a convertible, and I developed a headache, a migraine or sinus-type headache. And we had a doctor, the family owned the business Pontbriand Hardware and a gas station at the center in New Auburn, the social center, my father was known to everyone as Pop, and my mother was the businesswoman of the deal, that's something that was very influential in my life. And my father was a hell of a nice guy, but business wise he was not good at all, and my mother was a compensating partner, she would do that and she was a "The" businesswoman and that sort of thing. For that reason my father was liked very much, my mother was not liked because she was too strict.

I remember one time after I got out of school, two years of pre med, and then I found out that in order to get into medical school I would have to wait six or seven years because the veterans had a preference, because of their age and their military service, so we decided that I would for the next two years of college I would take business courses, which pleased my parents a lot because they wanted me to come back into the family business. Had I known then what I know now, I would have become a veterinarian because I love animals, that would have been just up my alley. But, as it happened I did graduate with a business degree and came home and worked for the family business. And after quite a few years, and not really admitting it to my mother but I had to admit it to myself, I learned more about business from her than I did in four years of college. Because her business acumen was from hands-on type thing, and she learned the economics of business and the basic principals of business in the hardware -

AL: She just learned it all from being in the shop, and-

FP: She had an eighth grade education and at that time, in her family the eighth grade was very

limited, but she learned, was taught by herself. I had, later on in life, I had some stock that I had invested with her company and the stockbroker, the local stockbroker eventually was found that he had been fooling around with the companies, with his clients' stock, and he was put away for a while. But in the meantime I wanted to get my stock out of the street form so that I would be the controller and not him, and I was getting all kinds of dealers from him. Finally I called the company in Boston, Fecter & Detweiler, and then said, unless I get the stocks back by the end of the week, I'm going to the Attorney General, and I'm going to file a formal complaint. They said, don't do that, don't that. So he called, a few days later I got a call back and they said, "Your stock has been sent to you by registered mail and you, you know, you'll have all your certificates right off."

And by the way, my father was a Sisal Rope salesman and he covered New England, and he said, he would come back home on Fridays and then we'd, Friday was the night that we all sat down to dinner together and my father would tell us of his trips. And I remember him talking about a woman that he dealt with in Maine, worked in a hardware store, the only female buyer that he dealt with, and he was always so impressed with her as a sharp businesswoman. And she changed her name, her name is Simard, "Do you remember, do you know who he was talking about." and I said, "Yeah, that was my mother."

So, I remember one time coming home after work, it was difficult for me because I worked with her in a business level in the store, and so we had disagreements, and at that time the state had just come out with the state sales tax and she was so upset with that, that we had to, you know, collect money for the state and send the money out and not be paid for it and everything. She couldn't see it. We had to buy a cash register so we could, eventually, because the cash register that we had was not, did not keep the adequate records so she was upset with that. But I remember leaving in the store one evening and going home with her, and of course we get in the house and she'd say, what do you want for supper? See, now she's my mother.

And sometimes I still was harboring some feeling about some disagreement we had and then I had to remember, that was the business, now it's my mother. So, I remember one time after I finished my meal and she was at the sink washing dishes, and I said, "Why do you have to be so hard?" And she said, I remember her turning around and taking the dishtowel and wiping her hands and sitting down at the table and she says, "If I hadn't been hard, we wouldn't have anything today. See your father's a very nice person but he's not a businessman, and I had to go into areas where I didn't belong, as a woman, and make, you know, insist on decisions and stuff and try to keep a happy medium." But she said, "It hasn't been easy and if I hadn't been hard and determined, we wouldn't have anything today." She said, "Believe me, it's not the way that I wanted it to be, but," she says, "that's the way it is." So I understood her better after that, you know. But, I don't think that's what we're supposed to be talking about.

AL: Yes, this is wonderful. And, so you came back and you worked in the business after you graduated from college. And then you went in the service?

FP: Yeah, for two years, eighteen months, whatever it was, the term in the service was two years long. Then when I left I, the, I had the warrant officer, and the officer, Mr. Walters and Ken Freeman, the two officers I worked for, I was a sergeant (*unintelligible phrase*), see I

graduated from business, from college with a business degree and naturally I was assigned to an engineer, Corps of Engineer, but I was the officer personnel clerk and in charge of all the records. So when my time for release came up, they wanted me to stay and they offered me some very good incentives, E8 level and, but the family business was very enticing. And I remember Mr. Walters, my warrant officer saying, "Well, I'll be retiring in a couple of years and I'll be looking for a job, you want a truck driver you give me a call and I'll go work for you." I had a very good relationship, I enjoyed the service because I got along, I had fun doing what I did and I was respected and (*unintelligible phrase*) and that was a fulfilling period.

So I came back from the service and I worked in the store. I remember running into some college friends, they said, how come you stayed home, you know, why didn't you go out in the world, you know, (*unintelligible phrase*). I had developed a nice relationship with a good friend of mine, George Bournakel who is an optometrist, and had come back home and his parents were Greek and they wanted him to stay here, and he did and I. So we sort of struck up a friendship and we owned a boat together for quite a few years, a sailboat down at the yacht club in Portland and we'd go sailing in the summer. And then in the winter we'd go skiing up to Canada, and so that kept me busy all those years and we developed a good relationship. I'm godfather to his first-born son, and we've maintained a good relationship ever since.

AL: And how did you spell his last name?

FP: Bournakel, B-O-U-R-N-A-K-E-L. It's K-I-S, Bournakis I guess in real Greek but (*unintelligible phrase*). Anyway, so, and yeah, oh, that's why I told my friends that questioned why I stayed here. I said, "Why shouldn't I?" I'm eighteen miles from the ocean where I go sailing whenever we can, like some evenings you get out of work early and especially on weekends and stuff. And then in the winter, I'm up skiing, I leave Friday night or Saturday morning early and I go skiing for the weekend, and I'm enjoying living, and I'm enjoying things that most of you do just on vacation, and with me it's on a weekly basis.

I got certified as a ski instructor eventually, because of my involvement in that, and then after so many, sixteen years over at the hardware store with the family, I realized that it would never work because I was in business with my brothers. My parents by that time had retired and left the three of us, and I had two older brothers, and I was the only one that had gone to college and that turned out to be a real hassle, a detriment to my relationship with them because I was a smartass that knew everything. So, on a particular day, my older brother Jerry's, our business meetings were always a disaster because we couldn't stick to business, we'd end up with personality clashes. And I wasn't married, I had a convertible and I had a boat and I had this skiing, and they had wives and other kinds of problems that I didn't have, and so, and a lot of the, at that time a lot of the companies that we dealt with offered trips to, the retailers, if you bought so many refrigerators. So whenever the trip came up for two people they would take it, but more often than that it came up for just a single person. So, rather than pay for the spouse to go, they said, well you might as well take it. I remember I went to Hawaii five times in one year.

AL: That's great.

FP: Oh yeah, and that was probably the companies, like Gibson Refrigeration, their plant

would be in Bangor because that's where their headquarters were for, the distributorship I guess. So anyway, I told Harold Hamm, I said, "If you ever have a trip to, that has one vacant seat in the plane and you want to sell it," because they'd sell the trip like for I put two hundred dollars, you know, five day trips, eight day trips for a hundred and fifty dollars, whatever they cost, was wholesale, I says, "Let me know." And then one time I came home at noontime and, you know, do I have any dirty laundry, do I have any clean laundry or is everything dirty. She says, why, and I said, I'm going to Hawaii. And she says when, I said in about two hours. So I remember getting stuff in the bag and driving up to Bangor. And I had fun, I really had fun.

The problems became, eventually the differences were very strong. My brother Jerry had a son who was in high school, and he come to work when he got out of high school at one o'clock. And there was a good employee working for us, Paul, who had been, Paul Grondin, he'd been with us for quite a while and he was very dedicated, and he had just told me that he would be in the back of the warehouse unpacking an order that had just come in and he wanted to get everything out for the weekend. So he said, unless you need me I'll be out there. So I said, fine, no problem, I'll handle the front. Bobby came in from school to work, and he liked to just stand around the cash register. So I said, Bobby, you know, Paul is out back unpacking an order that just came in, he's trying to get it out before the weekend, maybe you can go out there and help him. Bobby took off in the other direction and he came back with my brother, and my brother said, Bobby is my son, I'll tell him what to do, not you. Right then I decided that I had to leave, you know, it was a thirty second decision I could see, you know, all kinds of problems would come up, had developed some hardships.

A day or so later when I told my father, I'll never forget this, we were alone at the house and I told my father, and the first time I saw my father cry. He said, "We depended on you so much, I say, he'll never change the pecking order, Jerry will always be the oldest and Leo will be the second oldest, and I'll always be at the bottom." And, I said, "As far as getting along together," I said, "it's very important for me that we do get along, and I can't see it then through the store." I said, "What's going to happen, we're going to have one big argument where we end up not talking to each other." I said, "I don't want to have my nieces and nephews grow up without my knowing them. Brothers you get once in a lifetime, but business partners you can find anywhere. So I'd be looking for something else." In the meantime I called Mr. Wallingford who was running the Lost Valley ski area.

AL: Is that the same, I'm sorry, is that the same family that owns the apple orchards?

FP: Yeah. And I was president of the Maine Alumni Association for Androscoggin County, and I had been for quite a few times and Paul Cohen and I, he was Vice President, and we decided that the next meeting, the annual meeting, we would not be reelected and the way we were going to do it, we weren't going to drink. We're not going to have a drink before then, then they won't reelect us. They kept reelecting us. So anyway, I met Mr. Wallingford through, he was a University of Maine graduate, so I met him through that. So I heard in the grapevine that he needed some ski instructors in the winter, and winter months were kind of slow at the valley, so I asked my brothers, you can adjust my salary or pay, but I'd like to teach skiing part-time at the Valley, and they said fine, go ahead.

So I went to see Mr., I called Mr. Wallingford, he said I need someone to teach skiing but more than that I need someone to help me run the place. And I said, that sounds like quite a challenge. He said, if it's a challenge you want, get your fanny down here, we'll talk about it. Now, remember, this was on a Sunday afternoon, and they had started skiing here, but at that time Sugarloaf and other ski areas did not have snow making, so they had to wait until January when they had enough snow. And that was my place where I went to ski, I never skied at Lost Valley, and so I remember going there that Sunday afternoon, I was home reading the *New York Times* and was there in loafers and walked out. That was Sunday afternoon, December 7th, no December, yeah, December 7th in '67. Yeah, because my father had died, my father had died in January, in March prior to that, yeah, in March of '67 my dad passed away, that's another story.

But, so anyway, Mr. Wallingford said, "If you want to help me run the place, I really need some help badly, can you come in tomorrow." And I said, sure, so I called my brothers that night and said, "Gee, I'll be going in to help Mr. Wallingford." The first three years I was there were the best years of my life, because I'd go out teaching at ten o'clock in the morning, then come back in and do the office work, have lunch, and then go out teaching at one o'clock in the afternoon and then come back in, it was beautiful. But as the business grew we then had to not go out to teach in the morning, or not in the afternoon, whatever. Eventually, I got out of the teaching completely, and like many other businesses, because you like it you get involved with the administrative end of it and you don't participate. Like the golfers, you know, the avid golfer would start a golf course and he ends up without any time.

Anyway, it turned out to be a real good career move for me because it embodied everything that I wanted to do, ski, it was easy for me to become an executive because I had had the training from college and then, you know, sixteen years in the family business where I was involved with the, all the bookkeeping, the bill paying and the hiring and the payroll, everything, so I'd had that experience there. And then the skiing angle of it, as being an instructor, of being devotee of Sugarloaf for so many years, and when the decision came up I knew what the answer should be because as a skier, and then it was peppered with the economic aspect of it from the background. So I remember saying at the time to Mr. Wallingford, "Gee, you know, you're putting a lot of responsibility on me making these decisions." He said, "Well hopefully fifty percent of your decisions will be right," and he said, "That's all I can ask of you." I said, "Well I hope it's more than fifty percent."

AL: Let me stop there and flip it, 'cause-

End of Side A
Side B

AL: We are now on Side B.

FP: Okay, well, anyway it turned out to be a very good career move on my part. Ironically, I was dating, prior to this I was dating Norma, and Norma, Norma's family owned a chain of grocery stores here in Maine, she had worked as a, when she left school she went to, I don't know where her first job was but she eventually was a stewardess for Eastern Airlines. And then her family talked her into coming back to Maine and to work with the family business and that's

where I met her. And we dated for quite a while, and then she eventually went back to work for AT&T in Boston. And so I dated her while she was in Boston for about three years I guess. She talked me into going to Johnson O'Connor, which is a placement agency that does evaluation and placement of adults, and Johnson O'Connor worked with General Electric and a lot of the junior executives would be trained for General Elec-, General Motors, and then there was mainly General Motors, they would not necessarily go to Chrysler or related, they would go into complete different fields. But Johnson O'Connor was asked to develop some of a testing to find out if a junior, what would make junior executives stay with them before you entered the training. So I took that test in four weekends, Friday and Saturday, and the result was that I should be involved in the ski business. This was before Lost Valley. I probably should have been an architect, or a, involved with the ski business and, ski instructor mainly. That was so farfetched in my mind at that time, you know, that I'd find, you know, la-la land, but it would never exist.

And when Mr. Wallingford, when I talked with him and he said, yeah, I need someone to run this place. So within a short period of time, and the first couple weeks I was there, after the second week he said, "We got to do something about your hours." And I said, "Why?" He said, "Did you notice your paycheck?" I said, "Yeah, it's been very handsome." He says, "Yeah, forty hours of overtime." And I says, "Gee." He says, "You got to cut that back." And I says, "Well, hey, adjust my salary whatever way you need to, but just don't send me home, I got so much to do here and I enjoy being here." So, right off I went on salary and within a year or so he asked me to become a partner.

And, at that time my mother was undecided whether she would stay here or go to Florida for the winter. I had told her if she did go to Florida, you know, being the widow, that I would go with her and so that would screw up the plans, so I didn't accept the offer to be partner right off. I did eventually, and there the big discussion as to how much I should pay to become a partner. And on a trip to Auburn, Mass. for a ski conference, Wallingford and I had partied that night and when we went back to the room he said, "We gotta resolve this how much it's going to cost, you're going to pay to become a partner." And I said, "Yeah," he said, "Do you have some ideas." I said, "Yeah." He said, "I'll tell you what, there's a pile of papers on the night stand between the two beds, the two twin beds," he says, "I'll put down the figure that I think you should pay and then you put down the figure," and I said okay. So he took the pad and he wrote down and he turned the paper up, he says, here. I looked in the light and I could see the impression of what he had written, and actually I would have put down twenty thousand, and he had put down eighteen thousand. So I put down seventeen thousand, and he said, "Oh, you're in the ball park." I never told him that.

But it was something, I don't care what the price would have been (*unintelligible phrase*) because I would have, it was something I loved so much. And the ski area was just, the ski area was a lodge and then eventually I built up the banquet business and the (*unintelligible word*). As I say, it was a good career move for me, it really fulfilled me. For thirty-five years, I couldn't wait to get up in the morning and go to work, you know. And after that I got burnt out, I had some bad seasons.

But now I'm very lucky, I have a good team. At one time, my accountant and I, because of the

bad years, I mean my having to put money into it to keep it going, and my lack of, my loss of interest in it we considered the possibility of just locking the door and saying, hey, you know, just do that. But fortunately these people came up and said that they would be interested in trying it out. So I tried it out the first year without any formal arrangement, and then after the first year it worked out good so we drew up a contract, they have a five year contract with me now, and they're getting paid and they're getting the stock options every year, at the end of five years they would own forty-eight percent of the business and, if they want to buy me out. And in the meantime, I'm getting a good salary and a car and insurance and all this.

And the lucky part of it is I had a good attorney and a good accountant, and they said, well gee, all this stuff that you're going to get, they said, hey wait a minute, you've got his thirty-five years of business behind him, and he's handing it to you to run and you're going to get well paid, and then at the end of five years you will own half the business. Where else can you get a deal like that? And they said, oh well, okay. So I just hope that we have good seasons, because that, you know, there's a flow of money coming in. But I'm very, very lucky. I've got some good people and they're honest, and the dialogue is good, so hey, what more can you ask for. So, that's up to date.

AL: Now, you spent some time in the state legislature, is that true?

FP: Yeah, in fact when I mentioned my brother Bert that I was coming up here today, yeah, -

AL: Oh, let me go back a little earlier, before I ask that question. Was politics a topic of discussion at home when you were growing up, or when did you first have, feel you had strong opinions?

FP: Yeah. Yeah, it was something that was discussed. My family, were all Democrats, but my brother Leo is a Republican and my aunts and uncles, they were all Republicans, because of some family involvement in the Republican Party. And so it was always, whenever politics came up, they would bring in the Republican aspect of whatever the topic was. So it wasn't a violent type of reaction. I've been some, I've talked to some people about, you know, the Democratic Party and just mentioning Franklin Delano Roosevelt, you know, (*unintelligible phrase*). But we didn't have that type of violent or strong affiliations; more recognition of what had been done and appreciation of a statesman, of the statesmanship of the politician rather than blind obedience to a political party.

No, I got involved with it through the back door. I was involved with the Child and Family Agency, which is a social agency here in town that had been established by Father Drouin who was pastor of the Dominican Church, St. Peter's Church. And the Child and Family Agency developed into what is now the Tri County Mental Health Association. And when I came back from the service, I was approached by Georgette Lepage who had been the French teacher in the Lewiston school system for many years and, the Lepage family, Country Kitchen Bread, okay, and they were all from New Auburn. And I remember she said, I think it was after a church function or church social, she said, "What are you doing with your spare time?" you know, with your life, or whatever. And I said, "What do you mean?" She said, well, she said, "You've got to get involved." And I said, "Why?" And she said, "There are too many good things that need

to be done, and there are not enough good people that are getting involved, and you're going to be one so I want to submit your name to be on the board of the Catholic Agency."

In the meantime I got involved, I was asked to be, I was on the board of directors for the Chamber of Commerce, I was asked to become a member of Rotary Club and all these things, and then I was asked to be on the board of directors at the Auburn Savings and Loans, and all these things happened within a couple years. And then as a member of the board on the Child and Family Agency, there was a conference, there was a White House conference on children and youth in 1950, and I was named as a delegate to attend the conference. And that's where I met Jean Sampson. And Jean said, "What are you doing with your life?" I said, "Wait a minute, I had that from Georgette a couple years ago." And so she talked me into becoming a candidate for the House of Representatives in my district in Auburn. And I remember that we had to do a lot of footwork in getting signatures because we were late and we had a very small bit of time to get the signatures into the state to go on the ballot. And I remember we had to scurry around town and get all these signatures; we did that, there was no problem. And I went through the election and I had fun doing it, and I was elected.

AL: What year was that?

FP: Nineteen sixty- or fifty. I think it was. What year did Kennedy run for president?

AL: Sixty.

FP: Yes, it was '60, then.

AL: You would have been thirty-two? That make sense?

FP: Yeah. What happened in '50 that? I don't know. But anyway, it was '60, it was '60 because on that, on that ballot in Maine, for that election year, there was Frank Coffin running for Governor and Donovan running for, who would he be, I know that Lucia Cormier was running against Margaret Chase Smith.

AL: For the Senate, and so maybe they were running for Congress.

FP: Donovan running for Congress, probably. And, so anyway, the whole Democratic slate was wiped out in Maine, because of Kennedy and Donovan and Coffin and Cormier. We figured they were all Catholics, I guess. And that was the first presidential, Catholic presidential candidate. And so, and everybody got wiped out except me, and I won the election for that seat in Auburn.

And then they demanded a recount and so the recount was in, I remember it was in Augusta and it was on, it was the period between Christmas and New Years and there was, the afternoon we were there there was a dreadful snowstorm. We went out for lunch and when we came back from lunch, the ballot boxes that had been sealed with string and so forth by the state police had been opened. And the Republican people that were there had started counting the ballots without any Democratic representation in there, and I was very upset over that. And so eventually Louis

Jalbert, who was very strong in the Democratic Party, and Louis Jalbert was a distant cousin, but his reputation is now less than desirable because, he was a very good politician and stuff, and a statesman, too, (*unintelligible word*), but his time, in his age and his time he did things, he was effective in accomplishing things but he was a wheeler and dealer, you know. And so, I never saw eye-to-eye on his, on the way he did things but he kept telling me, you got to do this, you got to do that. And I, no, I won't do that, because I don't want to.

So anyway, it ended up that there was a trade-off with a contended election and result in Durham where there was a Republican, that if I gave up, if I gave the seat the Republican candidate here in Auburn, they would give [Andrew Sr.] Karkos, who was the Democratic contender in Durham-Livermore Falls area, they would give him the seat, so it was a trade-off. However, they found that there was two hundred ballots counted, two hundred extra ballots counted for Ward 2 in Auburn than had been cast. So then along with Jean and others I remember me going home that night and I lay down and talked back and forth in my bed ripped the pillow apart, because it was so unfair, you know. But we finally got Leon Cale who was the clerk, the city clerk in Auburn, to resign, be impeached because the ballots didn't add up, what he certified as the results were not accurate.

So at that time I decided I was going, that I, the politics that I was exposed to at that time involved too much compromising, and I couldn't see that. It meant too much, and I know, I was disappointed on my part and on the part of a lot of other people that supported me, but at that time I just couldn't see it. I guess I was bruised and I just couldn't recover from it and I couldn't accept the fact that that's the way, that's life, you know, you have to, your ultimate goals had to be the ones that you aspired to, and in the meantime you had to put up with that. And of course I was thirty-two, I was still young, I was still a young, and I had been protected and, you know, and sheltered, the family business and the whole bit, and I had a pretty good life and so I didn't have the fighting instinct to hang in there. In retrospect maybe I should have, I don't know. So that was the end of my political career. I remember, I still have at home the copies of the local paper saying the first Democrat in thirty-five years elected to office. And-

AL: From Auburn?

FP: From Auburn, yeah, from that area. Because that was a big blow to the Republicans, to the Yankee Republicans, here a French Democrat, and a Catholic. That didn't go over too well. It's surprising how strong ethnic feelings still exist, even today. And then the two hospitals fighting as much as they do, and when you look into the base, the real core of it it's still, a lot of it is ethnic. It's too bad that (*unintelligible word*) there for a long time. But, it's been, I don't think I would have enjoyed the flavor of living anywhere else as much as I have in the Lewiston-Auburn area. Culturally we're a little bit behind, but I think in the past ten or fifteen or twenty years a lot has been done in that area, and a lot of people have given a lot of their time and money to sponsor events, cultural events in town, and it's really gone a long way.

AL: Are there other prominent figures that you remember from this area that we haven't mentioned, that stick out in your mind?

FP: Yeah. Georgette Lepage, as I said before, a very strong influence. Also Arthur Legendre,

who is the manager of the First Auburn Trust office in New Auburn. And he became my financial partner in that, the branch is right across the street from the hardware store, and I'd go over in the morning to pick up the deposit bag, from the night deposit the night before, and I'd sit in front of his office and always had the *Wall Street Journal*, so I got in the habit of looking through it. But he was a, he was the first president of the Parish Council that we had in my parish at St. Louis, and so he's a very strong person in the community in Auburn.

Auburn is a little bit unique in that here you have Lewiston that is very, very French, and then you have Auburn that is very, very English and very, and then you have New Auburn that is sort of in between. So the French people in New Auburn were sort of a different type of, because of the geography and the background I guess. My brothers knew, my brothers grew up in a neighborhood where their neighbors were Jewish, and they knew Uncle Izzy and all of the Jewish people. Because of the minorities you were similar, the French and the Jewish people, they sort of, they were very friendly and so they knew all these Jewish people as uncle and Aunt Bessie and so forth. And today, I mean, you know, the Shapiros have a very strong influence in the New Auburn area, they had a clothing store. As far as real strong figures, other than Arthur Legendre and Regis Lepage, Country Kitchen baker, you know.

AL: Do you have other recollections or things I haven't asked you about that you think are important to add today?

FP: I was friends with Madeleine Giguere, I don't know if you've interviewed her.

AL: I'm actually trying to find her.

FP: You're trying to find her, oh yeah? Because she was a very strong influence in the whole community. And her father [Dr. Eustache Giguere] was such a dear person, he was a doctor, and he was short and not a very attractive person, I mean sort of a Toulouse Lutrec type of face and dentures that were not too straight, but he was a sweet hearted guy and the nicest person. I remember going to him once and he would say, I had a cold, and he would, "Ferdinand, I can give you some antibiotics and you will be better from your cold in seven days, or you can just drink a lot of fluid and be rid of your cold in a week, it's your choice, it's your decision."

And they had a cottage at Thompson Pond where we had place, it was in a different part of the lake, but we used to go visit there quite often and they were so gracious. Mrs. Giguere was a very beautiful lady, she was Jerome's aunt, and a Caillier, she was a Caillier, C-A-I-L-L-I-E-R, Caillier, and a very influential family in the area. And her name was Dinora, D-I-N-O-R-A, Dinora and a very gracious person and always very well groomed. And I remember going to this funeral home when she passed away, and meeting Mr., the doctor at the doorway, and he grabbed my arm and he, "Come Ferdinand, come, come see my Dinora." And he brought me to the casket and he says, "Isn't she beautiful, eh, *étais belle, eh, est belle ma Dinora.*" Yeah, the family, the Giguere family and the Caillier family were very influential in Lewiston-Auburn, and I appreciated my relationship with them, knowing them and being involved with them. I mean, as close as I was. Then, let me see, there was -

AL: Did you know Paul Couture?

FP: Yeah, I knew Paul.

AL: What was he like?

FP: He was very violent, a very, very fiery type person. I remember, at the hardware store we had a telephone booth right outside the door, one of those aluminum things, you know, with the glass and everything. And I remember he being in there and having a phone conversation with someone, I don't know what the topic was, but he was banging on the wall so the whole thing was rattling, you know, and screaming out loud on making such a strong point. There were some colorful people, geez. Roger Dube.

AL: Oh, I've heard the name.

FP: Yeah, he was very, he was a, he was quite a politician and he was a good-looking person, and he had an airplane, and he came from the Canada area, you know, Oxford Street, in that area, the St. Mary's Church parish. And so, if you had anything to offer, a certain amount of intelligence and a certain amount of flair, it wasn't difficult to become the hero of the neighborhood, you know, or of the time. And Roger was one of those who, because of his appearance, his good appearance, and a lot of the guys, he was one of them that, he blossomed when he left here and went in the service. Okay?

Because prior to that, there was not much future, the French attitude that what I did was good enough for me so it's good enough for you, you know, working in the mill or working in the shoe shop, it's good enough for you. And so the thought of going to school, further than high school, even high school was questionable at the time, you know, I started working when I was in the eighth grade or, so that's what was expected of the kids. So it made it pretty discouraging at the time for anyone who aspired to better things. And then, television wasn't around, so the exposure was very limited. I mean, outside influence almost didn't exist. We had the radio station and the movies probably, was probably the biggest influence, but other than that, you know, you just were limited to what you saw around here and what was available here. But then the military service changed all that, you know, here they were exposed to big cities and different lifestyles and traveling.

I remember this friend of mine came home from the service, and his family lived on Blake Street probably, and his father worked in the mill, so he walked down to the mill and he walked back, and the grocery store was just a block away, and the church was a block this way. And, so when he came back from the service and he told his parents he wanted to buy a car, they said, why do you want a car? Where are you going to put it, there's no driveway, there's no, the block was five stories high and there was just parking on the street. Well, I'll park on the street, or I'll find, or you could go rent a garage from someone else, you know, half-way down the block or in the next block or something. But they couldn't see why he needed a car, because everything was right there. And of course prior to this, up to that time they had the, so the trolley system was very adequate, you know, it went to Portland and it went to Lake Auburn and all, so the trolley system was adequate for all that. So anyway, so this is the change that happened right after the war, you know, when Bert came home he wanted a car, he wanted to travel, he wanted to be able

to go here and there when he wanted to. And so all that changed the community and the relationship.

I was lucky because I went to university and I, my mother had a car that she bought for herself but she didn't use it, so I knew the freedom of transportation and going places. But that was important in the community, and to the development, and it also brought outside influence into the area, you know, and hey I can (*unintelligible word*). Yeah, one of the musicals, I went down to the big city and I came home and, this is what I saw, and dancing girls and all that and everything. So, and of course then after that there was television and (*unintelligible phrase*).

I'm the youngest one in the family. My oldest brother, Bert, is eighty-six, there's fourteen years difference between us, and so he's still around and I take him out quite often, I took him to the health club this morning, which he didn't like to do and he stayed away for a couple of weeks. And I talked him into coming back to it because it helps, he shuffles a lot when he doesn't exercise. So, but I can see, in talking with him, he went into the service, and in fact he got married just before leaving in the service. He joined the Coast Guard thinking that he'd be assigned to Portland or Kennebunkport or the area. Eighteen months in the South Pacific on a landing craft.

But, I can see the difference in our attitudes, or our outlook, and, you know, within the same, my three brothers and my sister all grew up together, see. My two brothers graduated from high school in 1935, and my sister and other brother graduated in 1938, so they all sort of grew up together, you know, within a few years of each other. Then a long time after, there was seven years difference between my youngest, my closest brother and myself, it was seven years later I came along. And of course a lot of things that I did, that I was allowed to do, how come you're doing that, we weren't allowed to do that, you know, that type of. So for a long time there was an uncomfortable relation or feeling that was a.

And my closest brother, you know, he lost his position of being the baby of the family to me, so that, eventually we became very good friends, I mean we were very close. He died a couple years ago, but he was my closest friend. I come home and, he'd say, this is your brother Leo, if you do not call me within twenty minutes you will self-destruct. Bye. And foolish things like that. We argued the most, and yet we were the closest. Never had a problem, I had a drinking problem and whenever I'd get in trouble, he was the first one I'd call, and he was very sympathetic and very understanding and helped me, eventually he helped me to realize the what was going on so now I have twenty-three years sobriety.

AL: That's great.

FP: Yeah, because I wouldn't be alive today. And I was in a situation where booze is, hey, I was selling booze all the time and selling wedding receptions and reunions, oh yeah, we have the best booze. And when I stopped drinking I thought it would be a horrible thing, but it took care of itself and it seems to be no problem. (*Unintelligible phrase*).

But other than that I can't think of any other influential, oh yeah, and the family always thought very highly of, you know, the people, the French Canadian people that had a difficult cultural

background were very unique in the community, and Mrs. Legendre, Aurore Legendre, had a good voice and a cultured voice and trained voice, and she used to be asked to sing at gatherings, operatic type of renditions, and so she was known as the opera person in the community. Alphonse Cote was, he recorded for RCA records, and he lived in New Auburn right across from the hardware store -

AL: What was his first name?

FP: Alphonse, Alphonse Cote, yeah. And I remember he, we had a recording at home, *Le Ciel a Visitè la Terre*, Heaven Visited Earth, and it was about the nativity and I remember it was on an RCA disk and all scratched because of the grooves, and (*sings*), We had to be quiet because it was Alphonse. And then he, they had operas, operettas, at the church and I guess some of them were very culturally advanced.

And then the church took over, and the church was very domineering and it might... When my sister got married she couldn't have, they couldn't sing the *Ave Maria* by Gounod because Gounod had some problem with the church. Gounod wrote some beautiful church music, and Masses and everything, and because there was some difference of opinion on some topic he was banned from the church. And at that time the church decided that none of his music would be played in church.

I look back on it now and, like, you weren't supposed to receive communion if you had a drink of water after midnight, which is a church rule, church law. And my mother was so insistent on this being observed that when there was a wedding in the family she would put paper bags over the faucets, in the kitchen, in the bathroom, wherever there was a faucet and tied the paper bag with a rubber band so that you wouldn't accidentally get a drink of water. Because, God forbid that you go to the wedding the next day and four of the kids go to communion and the fifth one doesn't, or one of them doesn't, you know. (*Unintelligible phrase*). So that, having one drink, even a sip of water. If you had to take medication, you weren't allowed to.

And I look back on it now and I think of how strong an influence the church had, you know, on the What bothers me, Andrea, is that people were not allowed to use common sense, you know, as a I give communion every week at the nursing home here, d'Youville Pavilion, and I walked in the other day and this beautiful little lady was sitting in a chair, and she had to finger nail polish and the beads and the whole bit. And she always has her rosary through the side there, and when I walked in this particular day, last week, she was, it was snack time in the afternoon and she was eating a vanilla pudding out of a little container, you know. And then she said, oh, and I said, okay, do you want me to come back or do you want to receive now, and she said, well, and she put the pudding down. I said, you can receive now, you know, and she said, oh, well okay. So I gave her communion, I went through the routine, you know, this is the body of Christ and so forth and everything, then I gave it, and afterwards she went through meditation and then she looked up and she said, "Thank you. By the way, Jesus loves vanilla pudding."

And that's refreshing to me, because knowing the things that we had to put up with, like eating meat on Friday, you know. It's fine if you want to do it as a sacrifice or want to do it as some sort of, but to be told that you cannot do it, you cannot have a drink of water. And I was saying

the reason for this abstinence before communion because at one time it got out of hand and people would be receiving communion, after, having too much wine, so they said, okay you can not... then we'll establish this... But if it had been explained like that, you know, for that reason then they would have said, "Well, okay, use common sense," you know, but it wasn't. So anyway, those are the things that we had to put up with, which became a strong influence and at times a, over and above common sense, I mean treating an individual as an individual, you know. And, but I guess there's some cults and sects or whatever they have, we need that to make themselves proper.

I have some very good friends I developed, Mr. and Mrs. Tufts that I knew over a period of thirty, thirty-five years. He was on the board of directors at the bank with me, and I was chairman of the board for twenty-two years at Auburn Savings and Loan. But George and Annie were very good friends and we'd go on conventions together, and they were very close to me. When my parents died they came to the services, and then on the anniversary of my mother's death, which was January 7th, Minnie called me at work that morning, she said, "George and I had planned to go to the eight o'clock Mass for your mother but when we got out, when we looked out the snow plow had come by and they hadn't cleaned the garage so we couldn't get the car out, so we didn't chance going out." But, she said, "I want you to know that George and I remembered your mother in our prayers this morning, in our morning prayers and that you should remember, too, all those nice things she did for you and all the sacrifices she made for you, and everything." Now here is, a Republican, Baptist, Yankee, and has such, you know, such strong feelings for me that she'd say that.

Another time in July I talked to George on a Friday afternoon and says, "You're coming over for supper tonight." And I said, "Yes, I can make it." And he says, "Good, come on over." So I went there, when I got there, Minnie said, "Oh," she says, "It's," she'd been baking bread all day, she made bread, and she said, "When I heard that, when George told me you were coming," she said, "I had to hurry, finish my bread and then get changed and go down to the store and get some fish." And I said, "Minnie, you didn't have to get fish," I said, "I can eat meat on Friday." And she said, "If your mother was living, you wouldn't." And that always struck me as, how there's such strong ethnic feeling among some people and yet with other relationships it's a strong bonding that transcends all that. I respected their services, I went to their services when their daughters got married or on occasions, and we respected each other's, you know. So it's a beautiful community in that there are some very strong bonds on both sides, but there's still some strong ethnic background.

AL: Great, thank you so much.

FP: Okay.

End of Interview