

# UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL

## Memórias – Preserving the Stories of Lowell's Portuguese Community

### Oral History Interview with Francis J. “Jack” Picanso, March 3, 2017

#### **Biographical Note:**

Francis J. “Jack” Picanso was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1936; son of Rita R. (Stillings) and Anthony Picanso, who were also born in Lowell; the fraternal grandfather, Manuel C. Picanso (1868-1937) immigrated from the Azores (most likely the island of Graciosa), settling in Lowell in 1887; Manuel Picanso was one of the founders of Lowell’s first Portuguese Catholic church (on Gorham and Congress streets) and subsequently helped found Saint Anthony Catholic Church on Central Street; he worked in the Appleton Cotton Mills as weaver and later in the skilled position of loom fixer; Manuel Picanso also purchased a house—most Portuguese immigrants at this time rented in tenements—near Lincoln Square in Lowell in a part of the city where few Portuguese lived; Jack Picanso attended parochial schools in Lowell, graduating from Keith Academy in 1953; he then matriculated at Boston College, graduating with a bachelor of arts in Greek; Picanso returned to Lowell, taught at Keith Academy, followed by two public schools in Lowell, the Varnum elementary and the Daley middle schools; after teaching math at the Daley, Picanso was appointed assistant to the principal at the Daley and also served as president of the employee’s bargaining unit of Lowell’s school administrators.

#### **Scope and Contents:**

Interview conducted by local historian Mehmed Ali; focuses on the Picanso family history, notably Manuel C. Picanso, a prominent member of Lowell’s Portuguese community in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; also includes information on the small businesses operated by Picanso relatives, as well as marriage and family life with non-Portuguese spouses in pre-WWII and post-war Lowell; part of the interview also focuses on parochial school education in 1940s in Lowell, and Jack Picanso’s career as a teacher and administrator in Lowell’s public schools, beginning in the late 1950s.

**INFORMANTS: FRANCIS J. “JACK” PICANSO  
HELEN PICANSO**

**INTERVIEWER: MEHMED ALI**

**J=JACK**

**A=ALI**

**H=HELEN**

A: Okay, this is interview with Jack Picanso on March 3, 2017. And Jack thanks again for sitting with us today.

J: You’re welcome. I’m glad to do it.

A: So Jack tell us where and when were you born?

J: I was born in Lowell on Crescent Street, 1936, March 11. It was the day of the flood on the Merrimack River. The 1936 Flood reached its crest. And I was born at home and lived in this area all of my life.

A: Now if the flood hadn't happened would you have been born in a hospital?

J: No.

A: No, okay. Tell us about your parents. Where did they come from?

J: My parents, my mother's (--) My father's name was Anthony Picanso. He was one of nine children born to Manuel and Maria Picanso who lived at 20 Short Street in Lowell. He was one of nine children. Sad to say there aren't many grandchildren. Most of my aunts and uncles had, they were married but they didn't have any children. My father was probably the most Americanized of all the nine children.

A: And why is that Jack?

J: Well he, I think it had to do with the fact that he played baseball, played a lot of sports, enjoyed baseball particularly. And his friends were of all nationalities, particularly Jewish from the Howard Street area, Portuguese and Irish. He played centerfield. Enjoyed baseball quite a bit; played centerfield for many years in the old CYO-league. (A: Okay) And he played for St. Anthony's. He played for the Lincoln Street Associates. He played for another group, the PAC. I'm not familiar with what that stood for, but I know that he really enjoyed it. He enjoyed school, but it was sad to say he enjoyed school a lot but, and he went to the sixth grade at the Lincoln School, but then he had to leave because obviously it was during the time of the depression. He had to leave and he always regretted that, but he had to leave to support the family.

My grandfather, Manuel Picanso, died the year I was born. I never knew him. My grandmother, my vovó, Maria, I knew well. I was her favorite grandchild. And I wish I had spent more time learning the language and the culture. They were very reticent and they didn't speak much about themselves, you know. And I suppose it had to do with language. It also had to do with other considerations that I'm not aware of, but I wish I had known more about them, you know, because she was wonderful. She was a sweetheart. So wasn't (--) I was blessed with wonderful parents and grandparents on both sides. I really believe that.

A: So your Portuguese grandparents, they were immigrants?

J: Yes, yes, my, as I (--) My grandfather came over in the 1800s, late 1800s, and which was I suppose unusual, and she came later. When they got married I don't know. They came from the Azores. And what was unusual in that regard I suppose at the time, my grandfather owned his own house on Short Street, on 20 Short Street. He was an owner, not a renter.

A: Yah.

J: And it's recorded in the census that we have, the copy of the census that we have, that we were able to get from the library, my wife was able to get from the library. And they had nine children. And as I said, um, I don't know if you want me to mention their names.

A: Yah.

J: Yah, the oldest was my Aunt Mary, or Mamie and she married a Bermudian citizen by the name of George DeSilva, and she became a citizen of Bermuda as well as a citizen of the United States and lived there for the majority of her life, had four children.

A: Was he white, or?

J: Yes he was.

A: Okay.

J: My Uncle George was, yah, and he was the, in the maintenance side of it. He was the head of the maintenance side of a hospital. I suppose at that time they called it a hospital for the mentally challenged, or, but, and it still exists. I think it's Saint Brendon's. And in fact there's a picture of my Uncle George, my uncle in the foyer which we have seen to this day.

The other boys, and I'll go down, my Uncle Manuel and then my Uncle Bill. Manuel served in World War I. Bill served in World War II in Battle of the Bulge. There were two other brothers, Arthur and Frank, that left for California and were not heard, nothing, I don't think anything was heard about them from the time they left, which is sad because they (--). And I, we talked about before, they, I think they left, I'm guessing that they probably left because depression was starting and the availability of work etc, wasn't prevalent around here. So they left for the gold field of California. But anyway, those were the boys.

The girls, as I said, Aunt Mamie was the oldest. Then there was Aunt Louise, she married Frank Danas and they lived in Fairhaven, and they were my god (--)

H: [Unclear]. Edith.

J: I'm sorry, my Aunt Edith. Thank you. My Aunt Edith (--)

H: Married Danas.

J: Married Frank Danas, yah. Thank you. And they lived in Fairhaven. They were my godparents.

A: Okay.

J: You know, and they had no children. My Aunt Louise married (H: Mello) Mello, a fellow, Mr. Mello. I forget his first name at the time right now, but anyway they had no children. (A:

Hm) My Uncle Manuel married my Aunt Gertrude, they had no children. My Aunt Anna married John Irvin. They had two children, John and JoAnn. I'm trying to think. I think I got everybody. Yah.

A: What did your grandparents do for work? Again, I'm sticking with the Portuguese side for now.

J: Right. My, from the census he worked in the mill.

A: Okay.

J: Manuel worked in evidently. I don't know of anything else that he did. And I assumed that he did that. And my grandmother Maria stayed at home.

A: Yah, sure, with nine kids.

J: With nine kids, yah, she didn't have time for (--)

A: Now I'm sorry. Your father's name?

J: Anthony.

A: Anthony. So he's not on the census. Oh here he is.

J: He is yah. The only one that is not on that census is my Uncle Bill who would be the youngest of the children, the nine children.

A: But he was too young to be working yet on this census.

H: He hadn't been born on that.

J: My, as I said, my father Anthony had four children. My brother Arthur was in the Navy for thirty years. My sister Rita is still alive and I'm the third one. And then my brother Eugene, Butch, who lives in New York. He's still alive now. So we had, you know, I had three siblings and that's I think the most that we had in that family.

A: What did your father do for work?

J: My father (--)

A: So you said he left school at pretty young age right?

J: Yah, and he went to, I guess he was working whatever job he could get at the time. When I was born my maternal grandparent owned a laundry out in Billerica. (A: Okay) And he was working out there along with my mother. And that's where I use to spend my time. One of the things as an aside, one of the things, I always had this great fear of water and I never knew why,

but I think it was because my mother must have instilled it. We were right by the Concord River in North Billerica.

A: Okay.

J: And I was allowed to roam but I never went near the water. And to this day you know, I don't have that fear, but I mean I often wondered what took place. But anyway, my maternal grandfather sold the laundry after, in [19]47, obviously because of the, you know, after World War II there were new, I mean home washing machines and dryers came into use.

A: Sure.

J: And so laundries weren't really in vogue.

A: What was the name of the laundry? Do you remember?

J: The B & L Laundry.

A: The B & L?

J: Billerica and Lowell Laundry.

A: Really? That's a funny one, huh.

J: Right, yah, and we lived (--) They lived on Crescent Street in Lowell. And they used to drive the trucks in. So then my father, after the laundry, and my mother worked out there. And after the laundry closed my father went to work at St. Peter's Orphanage and he became the custodian there. And it was also part, St. Peter's was under the care of St. Margaret's Parish. So that the pastor of St. Margaret's also oversaw the running of St. Peter's Orphanage. So he worked not only at, mainly at St. Peter's, but he also helped out at St. Margaret's, the school at St. Margaret's and also the church.

A: And that was in [19]47?

J: That was in [19]40, yah, [19]47, [19]48.

A: So you were already you know, an older child and (--)

J: I was yah, ten or eleven. Yah, ten or eleven.

A: So did you ever go to the orphanage and work with your dad?

J: Yes.

A: Tell us about that experience.

J: I used to go and help him clean. I also, when I was twelve years old I used to help cut the grass. I was (-- They had a sit-down mower, big mower, and I learned to run that at the age of twelve, thirteen. And so because of that I used to cut the grass there, St. Margaret's School, sometimes at the church. Then when I was sixteen I ended up cutting grass at St. Patrick's Cemetery.

A: Oh okay!

J: Even when I was at Keith Academy. I went from (-- St. Peter's Orphanage I remember vividly, because there were, my father was friendly. Obviously it was staffed by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky, (A: Okay) the orphanage was. And they laid (-- They came there in the early 1900s. And then when St. Margaret's School was started they staffed, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky staffed St. Margaret's School. So that when I went to St. Margaret's in the second grade those were the nuns that I had.

A: And those sisters would have been Irish?

J: No, they were of all nationalities.

A: They were. Okay.

J: Yup, some, you know, they were of all nationalities.

A: How about the youngsters at the orphanage ethnicity-wise?

J: I think there were all ethnic groups in Lowell. A lot of them, what had happened, the ones that I later learned had been there, had been there because one of their parents had died. And in several instances that I became aware of later, people that I knew and never had any idea that they had been there, they were put there because their mother had died and the father needed, I mean there were more than one sibling in the family, so the father obviously had to have some help. So he had to put them there. And I'm sure there were others there who had no parents whatsoever and for whatever reason.

H: Didn't some of them go home on weekends?

J: They could have.

H: I think they did.

J: They could have you know.

A: I think that, yah, that's the same as the Franco-American Orphanage.

J: Orphanage, right.

A: Many of the kids were there permanently. But many, their, usually their mother's had passed away and their fathers were busy working during the week and then, you know, but they would come home on the weekends. Um, so any Portuguese kids at the orphanage?

J: Not that I (--) I'm sure there were, but not that I was aware of.

A: Okay.

J: And that probably, I don't know, I'm guessing it probably had to do with the language too. You know, although I don't know. I don't know. I just remember that was you know, getting towards the end of the (--) I forget. I don't even know how many children at that time my father started were in the orphanage, but I mean there were still, there was quite a staff of nuns. And so much so they had to build an addition on to that building that is now Lowell Catholic. That addition on that you can see attached to the main building was built for, as rooms for the nuns that were living there.

A: Okay

J: And then that closed and he, I think it was the early (--) When did it close? 19? I think it closed in the [19]50s. I'm not sure, maybe the [19]60s. But anyway it closed and it was vacant and it was used for various purposes, school purposes, educational purposes.

A: So what did your father do when it closed up?

J: Then he went to (--) He just transitioned over to St. Margaret's School.

A: I see. I see.

J: And he was the custodian for thirty years with St. Margaret's.

A: Okay. Now did the orphanage have its own schooling, or did the kids from the orphanage go to St. Margaret's?

J: No, they had its own schooling.

A: It did? Okay.

J: Yah, they were not part of, there was to my knowledge, and I was part of the second graduating class at St. Margaret's, they, no, they, to my knowledge they were never there, unless, unless they had been there temporarily and you know, the parent, they went back to live with their parents.

H: The Portuguese weren't up here. They stayed in, near St. Anthony's Church.

J: But I mean, yah, yah.

A: So the, so St. Margaret's School was started kind of later than some of the other schools around in the city, some of the Catholic schools.

H: [19]41.

J: I think it was [19]41 it was started. (A: Okay) Yes to answer your question.

A: Tell us about the Highlands at that time.

J: To me, and I (-- I thought it was a wonderful place. We (-- Even to this day the friends that I had in childhood are special to me, and we had a wonderful time. We didn't have very much, but we had everything. That's what I always say, you know. We had, we were constantly playing. One of my best memories was playing not only after school but during school. We used to get out for lunchtime and we'd go home, rush home, grab a quick sandwich and then come back and play at, well the then Highland Park, now Callery Park.

A: Okay.

J: And some of the other fields now that are occupied by houses.

A: Yeah, tell us where those were.

J: Well on, in back of Lowell Catholic, that Etta Road and Frank Terrace was Roarkie's Pasture. It was by a man by the name of Roarke and he has apple trees in it. On Emery Street there was, there was a couple of vacant plots that we used to play. We played in the back of the Washington School, that area. We played up on West Forest Street, there were vacant plots of land up by where you live and we used to play up there. So my friends, friends came from the whole like Highlands area, much more from say Parker Street towards Chelmsford Street.

A: What was the demographics of the folks living here at that time?

J: I would say in this area there were Irish, Jewish. There weren't many Italian families; some Portuguese families, mainly Irish and French.

A: Not too many French up in this area right?

J: No. No, not too many. They call, you know, a lot of this area was the lace-curtain Irish they called them. [All chuckle]

A: Yah. To distinguish them from what other parts of the city?

J: The poor Irish down in, that were left down in the Acre.

H: Or the flats.

J: The flats, yah.



A: Yah, yah, or the Grove.

J: Or the Grove, yah.

A: Although was the Grove considered a little bit?

H: No, no, I don't think so. No.

A: No.

J: No. No, we and you know, the Portuguese sort of stayed around. And I can understand why the Saint Anthony's Church, you know.

A: Now there was a couple, you know, aside of the South End area around Saint Anthony's, there was a couple of other like little colonies around. One of them was down at the mills down on Tremont Street off of Moody. Did you know anybody that lived down there?

J: No, I didn't. I always thought that was mainly French, but I didn't realize it was also Portuguese, yah.

A: It was mainly French, but there was a little pocket [few words unclear-both speaking at once].

J: I supposed it had to do with working in the mills.

A: Yah, I think that's (-- I'm guessing this, but I think that's where the first Portuguese landed when they first came over in the 1890s or so. And then what about this other area which is I think distinct from Back Central, you know, South End, the Lincoln Street area?

J: Yah, there were, that's where my grandparents lived. There were, especially on Short Street, there was, well the Silva's who owned the painting business, the Silva Brothers Painting business, and he owned a lot. He became a realtor. And his son is in the realtor business.

A: Was that the Silva that lived on Middlesex Street that owned the little horses?

J: Yes, that's right.

A: Yah, what was his name? Was it Johnny?

J: Johnny, yah, I think, but his family came from the corner of Short and Chelmsford Street. I mean that, that's where their family owned. To my knowledge that's where their family owned. And most of the, most of the people that lived on Short Street were of Portuguese descent.

A: Really?

J: You know that, that I knew. Of course later they moved away from there.

A: Sure, sure, sure.

J: And the only one that lived across the street was (--) I'll tell you one of my fond memories was, I don't know if you ever heard about Manny Diaz, he was an entertainer?

A: Sure did.

J: Manny wasn't Port (--) Diaz weren't, to my (--) I was always told they weren't Portuguese, but they were Spanish. But my grandmother was his godmother.

A: Really? (J: Yah) Really?

J: Yah.

A: Yah, tell us about Manny.

J: Manny was an entertainer. And one of his, I guess mainly, and I only saw him a couple of times, he, I want to put it nicely, he portrayed a woman, you know.

A: He was known as the "Blonde Bombshell."

J: Right, yah. And one of my (--) Since I was my grandmother's favorite grandchild, one of the customs, Portuguese customs was to have the (--) Excuse me, where it began, but they have a crown and scepter, the Holy Ghost, and they used to have two or three of them and a house would have it for a period of time. And my grandmother always, grandmother and her family had it generally the week before Pentecost, which meant that in the parade, in the parade that they had, the Portuguese parade, of course they'd have to have somebody carrying the crown and scepter, and also the Portuguese flag. So because Manny was the godson, and I was the favorite grandson, we always rode together for two or three years, you know. I was kind of embarrassed. Manny would, we'd be in an open car and Manny would be waving to everybody, and I was just a little kid trying to hide. [Laughing]

A: And why? Because of Manny's flamboyance?

J: No, no, Just (--) Well I suppose. Yah, I suppose, to be nice. But anyways that was, and I did it for my grandmother, out of love for my grandmother, but.

A: And now what's your grandmother's name?

J: Maria.

A: Maria?

J: Picanso.

A: And what was her maiden name, do you know?

J: DeSilva.

A: Okay. All right. Good. So how was Manny received by the Portuguese Community?

J: Oh they, very well. Very well. He was always well thought of. He really was. Yah, he was, he was always a lot of fun at any parties that they had.

A: You have any interesting stories about him?

J: Not really. I, you know, I didn't know. I was only a young kid and he was an adult. My life was up here in the Highlands.

A: Now when you were doing this procession was it usual for an adult to be carrying one of those crowns, or?

J: I don't know. I don't know. I just know that (--) Yah, I can't remember.

A: Because I thought, other people had told me it was just children that did that.

J: Oh maybe it was.

A: But I could be wrong.

J: Maybe he did the flag and I did the (--)

A: But knowing Manny he might want to bend the traditions a little bit, so. [Laughs.]

J: I can't remember that. I know I did. I carried.

A: So did you ever go see him perform?

J: Ah, no, because I was (--)

H: Where did he perform?

J: At different clubs.

A: Well I mean you guys would have been too young. There was a club down on Cabot Street called the Molin Rouge. And then he was at Happy Helen's for years. Remember that place?

J: At Happy Helen's on the Boulevard, yah. I remember that he was out there.

A: Yah, before my time, but Happy Helen's was I think the place that he worked the most.

J: Yah, one of the, and one of the reasons why too, also, my father, and I suppose I had the same thing. We never had a taste for alcohol. We had nothing against alcohol, but we never had, you know, in fact I just gave up, not giving up, but I'm more or less giving up diet Coke and I'm taking beer up now. [All laugh] You know a beer. But my father didn't smoke. He didn't have a taste for alcohol. It wasn't anything against it, you know, so we didn't go to you know, any, we didn't go to any barrooms, not that you know, he had anything against it.

A: Sure, sure.

J: My father used to hang around, even when he was, you know, before TV and everything, in Lincoln Square, with the group at Lincoln Square, because they were all his old friends, you know.

A: Okay.

J: And I can remember, you know, in the evening he'd go down there.

A: Where would they go hangout?

J: Down at Lincoln Square, you know, in front of the store there. And there was also a drugstore that would have been on the corner where the monument is now. I forget the name of the drugstore. They, I think they were part-owners of, out on the Boulevard where Happy Helen's was.

A: Oh, were they Portuguese?

J: No, no, no.

A: No, okay. So where Lincoln Memorial is there were stores?

J: There used to be a drugstore there. They hung out there. They also hung out across the street. And there was also, where the Irish, the Gaelic Pub was, was Marty's for Parties.

A: Sure, right. Right.

J: So they used to, that was their area where they grew up and they were all friends.

A: Were there any Portuguese businesses around Lincoln Square?

J: I don't recall any Portuguese. No, I, not that I recall. I think, no, that I can remember.

A: Okay.

J: They were of all nationalities. We really, we were up in this area. So I didn't hang around there.

A: Now your father really didn't drink at all. Was that unusual for that time period?

J: I suppose it was yah. In fact it was. It was just, you know, it wasn't anything against alcohol use, but he was just I think like me, he didn't have a taste for it, you know.

A: Now the Portuguese people are kind of famous in Lowell for having their (J: wine) wine. And but did folks drink beer and wine, your father's friends or other family members?

J: I would think mostly beer. I don't remember my, in my grandmother's house now having a lot of wine around there for whatever reason, I don't know, but I never remember them making wine or having much wine around there.

A: Okay.

J: And maybe that's where my father, you know, grew out of it.

A: Yah, yah. How did your parents meet?

J: It's kind of (--) I don't know. It's kind, and this is kind of I don't know, yah.

A: Yah, if it's a sensitive subject you can skip over.

J: Yah, I just wouldn't want it published. It's kind of sensitive to me. Obviously they met and they loved each other, and like a child was conceived. And my mother had to go to Boston. She lived with a family in Boston. And they married, and they never celebrated their anniversary.

A: Okay.

J: And that was sad because they were wonderful parents. [Emotional] They gave us everything they had.

A: Yah, good. Do you want to take a break for just a second?

J: Yah, no. It's okay. I just, it's a sensitive subject with me because I mean they were wonderful parents, they really were. And you know, who cares?

A: Yah. Was there (--) Now your mother wasn't Portuguese.

J: No, she was Irish and Yankee, English, Yankee.

A: Did both sides of the mutual families accept this arrangement with [unclear]?

J: Yes, my maternal grandfather was a wonderful man. He really was. He was what you picture as (--) In fact, see that?

H: Way in there.

J: Way in there?

A: Oh wow, okay.

J: He was a (--) Why don't you get it Helen, show him.

A: I can go and look.

J: He was (--)

A: You can stay there and keep talking.

J: Yah, he was the typical picture of an old Yankee. And, but that's from the Crescent Rink Roller Hockey.

A: Oh wow!

J: In the early 1900s. And the Crescent Rink is down on Hurd Street. That was where the old Elks Building was down on Hurd Street.

A: Yah, they had something called roller polo I think?

J: Yah.

H: That must be it.

A: Is that it?

J: That must be it, yah.

A: Okay.

J: And he, he married, which is unusual, my father, he married an Irish woman who (--)

A: Your grandfather.

J: My grandfather whose family came from Birmingham, England.

A: Okay.

J: You know, I'm sure they went to, they left Ireland to work. Because I know Birmingham was one of the places in England where there was some work available to the Irish. And so that's where she was born.

A: Okay.

J: My maternal grandmother was born in Birmingham, and she was Annie V. Delmore, Annie Victoria Delmore. And she, and she came with her family you know, and she married Eugene I. Stillings who was (--) But he was a wonderful man. He was a man that I admired greatly. He stood by his word. If he gave his word, even when it was to his disadvantage, he followed through. He brought up, I'm sure at the time you know, because he married a catholic and he was not, he brought up all of his children as catholic. He made sure they went to church. He ran the laundry. He was just a wonderful man.

A: Yah. Was there any interconnectedness between you know, each sets of grandparents?

J: Not that I was aware of, but there wasn't any ill feeling between the two, yah.

A: Right, right. I was more curious, you know, did like you know, during Christmas would they see each other or anything like that.

J: I don't remember that.

H: I don't think your grand (--)

J: They didn't speak English.

H: Maria wouldn't (--) Yah, she wouldn't have been comfortable. I don't, and who had transportation you know, in those days?

A: Yah , yah.

H: Some people.

J: They did. Yah, but anyway.

A: Now where did your mother's parents live?

J: On Crescent Street.

A: On Crescent, you said that. Okay. So everybody was around the Highlands.

J: Within from more or less from the Highlands.

A: So you went to Saint Margaret's?

J: Then I went to Keith Academy.

A: Tell us about Keith Academy.

J: I had (--) Keith Academy was a great experience for me.

A: Yah.

J: I can't say that I was thrilled to have all the Brothers, but there were many Brothers who became my friends. And because obviously I worked, my father worked for, at St. Margaret's Parish, but then Father Haida, Monsignor Raymond Haida became Pastor. He became, he was always a close friend of my father's and my mother's. Even when he was stationed at, when he was stationed at St. Margaret's as a parish priest, he ah, my father was close to him and he was close to my father, and he was close to me. So he became more or less the representative of the, Archdiocese Representative. He used to Keith Academy also. So that there were times when my father used to go down and did necessary work at Keith Academy if it needed it. They had their own staff, I mean janitorial staff down there, but you know, if they needed something else my father would go down with him. He drove. Monsignor Haida didn't drive. He never learned to drive. He had people chauffeuring him around. One of them was my father.

A: Oh okay.

J: So you know, I had that relationship there. When I was at Keith's, you know, and I, four years I, I was more or less the first one in my family that I'm aware of, both sides you know, that went to college.

A: Yah, wow.

H: Except for these old, old people.

J: You know, that I don't know, but anyway, in any case, I enjoyed the Brothers there. It was a good situation for me. I was, you know, I was young, naïve. I wish I had (--) I wish I was a little bit older. I was very young. I mean I graduated. I had just turned seventeen when I graduated from high school.

H: No kidding, okay.

J: And socially I would have, I ended up all right.

A: You ended up great.

J: But socially I you know, I wish I was a little bit older, but that's no regrets.

A: Yah, yah. Um, my guess it there wasn't many Portuguese people at Keith?

J: No. No, not that I remember, no. Maybe one or two at the most others.

A: Okay.



J: But because I had that relationship I was expected to go to Keith's you know, and I was happy to go there. And not only did I end up going there, I ended up teaching there too for a year.

A: Oh you did.

J: Yah, after I graduated from college, yah. So I still have a great relationship with the Zaverian Brothers. I'm very, talk about that later, very happy to bring them on at Lowell Catholic.

A: Oh, you were responsible for helping them?

J: Well I wasn't responsible, but I was part of that group that brought them in, yah. Yah.

A: Oh terrific. So you graduated in 1954?

J: In 1953.

A: 53 okay.

J: Yah, and I didn't know what I was going to do. I did very well in high school and I was you know, I never thought that I would go to college, but the opportunity. Thanks to Monsignor Haida, you know, he came, I should go to Boston to apply for Boston College. So I did and at the time I went to Boston I was accepted to Boston College. It was \$550.00. (A: Laughs) And I used the, I used the clergy discount. I had, there was such a thing as the clergy discount. So what I did was, well I gave my money to Monsignor Haida and he would pay it. I think they got a \$50.00 discount. A lot of people thought that he was paying my way, you know, through Boston College, but not such as the case. That was the arrangement, which I was glad. My parents were glad too. \$50.00 was a lot of money in those days.

H: We paid \$50.00 a semester at ULowell.

A: Wow.

H: That's where we [unclear] with ULowell. It was \$50.00 a semester.

J: And I (--) But in going to Boston College and again, no regrets, I was (--) There were five cars that went in daily from Lowell to Boston College. It was \$5.00 a week (A: Okay) for transportation. And (--)

A: And who ran the cars? Did the college run the cars?

J: No, no, they were just students.

A: Just people yah.

J: Students, and one of them was my wife's cousin.

A: Ah! Is this how you guys met?

J: No, no, no. I met through friends.

H: [Comment unclear]

A: So who were some of the famous people driving down from Lowell?

J: Well Fred Cox. Fred later became the Carroll County Attorney, like the District Attorney in Carroll County in New Hampshire, and he was known as "Lock'm up Cox."

A: Oooh! Is this your cousin?

H: Right, yah.

A: Okay.

J: Yah, he was part of the Cox.

H: Very close to them, Cox's yah.

J: He's the Cox Fuel Company. His father, you know, he (--) One of the things I remember going down (--) We also, there was my first year going down and there was another senior with us. The Furtado, Frannie Furtado whose family lived on Chelmsford Street. Who became a Captain in the Navy; he went in the Navy after. Frannie and (--) He, his Brother Tommy became a priest and then left the priesthood. And they were part of you know, they were one of the few Portuguese that I was aware of that went, were going to Boston College. He was before me.

A: What did he end up doing for work?

J: He ended up in the Navy, a career person in the Navy.

A: Oh that's right, you said that.

J: The other person that went with me, went with us that first year, was a fellow by the name of Eddie Thomas who came from the Highlands. And Eddie ended up to be a general in the Army.

A: No kidding, wow.

J: I haven't (--) He was a good friend. I haven't heard from him for years. I don't even know if he's still alive. Then we went with, the next year we went with a fellow by the name of (--) Oh God, I forget. It will come to me in a minute. But one of ours who went was, one of the riders in the next year was Archie Sullivan, who was one of the Sullivan Brothers. Archie was the youngest of the family. That would be one of Joe, Joseph Sullivan's sons.

A: Okay, yah. Big Joe Sullivan.

J: Then that (--) That's right. Then the next year I went back to Fred Cox. He was in the law school. So, the next two years I rode with him. But it was an era you know, there were a lot of returning veterans from World War II that were taking advantage of the (A: GI Bill?) the GI Bill. And but I missed the (--) We didn't (--) We'd go in every day. One of the things I remember my freshman year at BC was, they were both, Fred and Frannie were seniors and of course they had (--)

H: They weren't in any hurry to go home.

J: They weren't in any, you know, they were going to have their good times. So I'd be, I'd spend most of my time sitting around campus doing my work and waiting for them. And it ended up to be you know, sometimes eight, nine o'clock at night. So it wasn't unusual, I would never do it today, or recommend it today, but I, at that first the, yah 128 had just been completed. So I thumbed home.

A: Did you?

J: Many, many times I thumbed home and I can't ever remember thumbing home from Boston that took more than an hour and thirty minutes. That's because people, I'd have my BC Jacket on and my books, you know, covered with BC. I would never suggest it today, because if (--)

A: Yah, nobody. I never see anyone. I did it in the [19]70s and [19]80s when I was a teenager and things, but you know.

J: Yah, it just won't happen today. It wouldn't be allowed on 128. Obviously there was not heavy traffic on 128 at the time, but I always remember that. And I never, never had any trouble getting home. But I was, I do miss not having that life around the BC Community, but you know, it's, I got no regrets. Life turned out very well.

A: So what did you take up at BC?

J: I took up, I was an AB Greek non-honors. I was in the Arts and Sciences Departments and I took up languages. I thought at time I might be headed for the priesthood, but then I did a (--) That thought went away quickly. And then I didn't know what I was going to do. So I ended up, after graduating I went back to graduate school there for a time. I didn't complete there. I completed at Salem State. But I ended up in education.

A: Okay. And when you first graduated you worked at Keith?

J: When I first graduated I didn't know what I was going to do. So I ended up substituting at the old Butler School. The next year I was hired at Keith Academy and I taught for a year there. And then following that (--) That was the time when it was mandatory military service. So I knew I was going to be drafted and so I went down and I signed up for the Reserves, which at that time meant that you served six months active duty, and then you had to commit for at least,

I think, I forget how many years, x number of years after. I ended up eight years in the Reserves you know, after that.

A: Okay.

J: I'm not considered a veteran because the Reserves at that time, I think it's different now, weren't considered veterans and rightfully so.

A: Yah, but I, you know, I think if you did any active, I think you're considered a veteran especially you did active duty even if it's six months. So.

J: Right, yah, but I mean for the status of (--) But anyway, so then what happened was I knew I was going to, when I was teaching at Keith I knew that I was going to be drafted. I knew that I had to commit to military service. So I took, at that time, Lowell, they called the Lowell Teachers' Exam. So you took an exam and then they established a list and you know, they took the names of the people from the list. So I, you know, somebody mentioned it and I said, well, even though I wasn't, I had to go, I was in the process of being certified as a teacher. So I took, somebody said, well you know, probably the fastest moving list if the English list. So I took the junior high English test and I, you know, I wasn't an English major, but the questions. There were three questions that, one, we had spent a lot of time at Keith Academy. One was on Francis Tompkin, Thompson, now Frank is a minor English poet, (A: Okay) but the largest collection of Francis Thompson poetry is at BC. (A: Ah) So you know, there were three questions on the English exam that I knew from just, you know, education. So I topped the English exam.

A: You did? Good for you.

J: So I was appointed. So I was appointed and when I was appointed then I went in the Reserves, because the city had to pay for my retirement purposes. So I got credit for that year.

A: Oh wow.

J: And so when I came back out and I taught in Lowell.

A: Where did you take the exam? Do you remember?

J: Good question. No I don't.

A: Okay.

J: Yah, I don't.

A: And at that time were there many Portuguese teachers?

J: No. No, I think maybe at the most, I can't remember anybody.

H: Joe Camara

J: Who?

H: Joe Camara.

J: Oh yes, Joe Camara.

A: Okay.

J: That you already interviewed, yah.

A: And he's, he's about, what is he about ten years older than you?

J: Ah, Joe, no, he's about eight years older than me.

A: Okay.

J: Yah, yah. That's right, Joe. There weren't many more though.

A: Yah. So you did your military time and then you came back to the city. Where did you teach first?

J: I taught at the Varnum School for ten years.

A: Okay.

J: Over in Centralville. (A: Yup) And then I went to, I was selected as one of the team leaders for the National Teacher Corps. The National Teacher Corps was a program that came into Lowell, and at the time they, what they were trying to do is to get students from some of the more prestigious schools interested in urban education. So it provided them an opportunity and it was connected with BC.

A: Okay.

J: We were adjunct professors at BC.

A: No kidding.

J: It was School of Education and it afforded them an opportunity to get a Master's Degree and at the same time be exposed to an urban educational setting. So we were in various, I was assigned to the Butler School, the old Butler School with a group. In addition to that I took on, there were three teachers from Puerto Rico who were part of the program, came up as part of the program and they needed, they were afforded the opportunity to get a Master's Degree at the same time. Great program, I don't know how many ended up teaching. I don't think too many ended up teaching in urban settings, but at least the concept was good and they were, it worked out well. I was proud to be part of the program.

A: Yah. What year did you start teaching?

J: I started teaching in 1958 as a substitute teacher in Lowell. Then the next year I taught, [19]59 I taught at Keith.

A: Now this program, who do you think was responsible in Lowell for promoting it, from like the administration side?

J: Oh, Patrick Mogan.

A: Okay, I was going to guess that, but. Now, but he wasn't the superintendent at that time.

J: No he wasn't. No.

A: So he was already doing stuff like this.

J: Right. He was, I don't know his exact title was, but I think he had to do with (--). He was already, he was doing the (--). I forget what his specific title was at the time. (A: Okay) I, who I admired greatly.

A: Yah, yah, good guy, good friend.

J: Yah, a lot of people, a lot of people that he was out there, but I, I (--)

A: He was out there, but that's all right, and he could talk boy, but he had great vision.

J: He did. He did.

A: And you know, guys, good guys helped him execute, like Peter Stamas.

H: Oh that's another one.

J: That's right, yah, yah. Absolutely, and I admired him greatly and still to this day.

A: So who was the superintendent when you first started?

J: Vincent McCartin.

A: Tell us about him.

J: He was a good man. I didn't know him that much you know, but what's funny, when I went in the service for six months, and when I come out of course my job was there, but in the meantime he called me in and he asked me if I would do him a favor. I says, you kidding me? They had hired a person for my job for the year and he wanted, on the basis that that person

would spend the full year, would he mind if I worked, did something else for him down at the superintendent's office, which was located at the basement of city hall.

A: It was?

J: Oh yes!

A: It wasn't at 89 Appleton?

J: Oh no, it was at the basement at city hall. (A: Oh) In fact, in fact I can remember, I think I was being interviewed in the safe down there. [All laugh]

A: Okay.

J: Oh yah, it was in the basement of city hall.

A: How many rooms did they have?

J: Oh, not too many. (A: Okay) Not too many.

A: Interesting, huh!

J: Yah, just on the corner. And he was, you know, he was, I liked him a lot. You know you couldn't help but like Mr. McCartin you know. So you know, I said, makes no difference as long as I get paid. And I really didn't look at it that way. I had a job, that's the main thing.

A: Sure. What did you end up doing?

J: Oh, some work for him down there, you know, and I used to report down there along with another person and we did whatever we were told to do, which was fine. You know, and (--)

A: Now was Pat Mogan working at city hall at that stage?

J: I can't remember. I don't think he was.

A: I know he was at the Molloy.

H: Who? Was he after McCartin?

J: Hm?

H: Was he the superintendent after?

J: Yah.

A: I knew he was at the Molloy and then he opened the Riley [elementary school], but, and then he went to work for the administration at some point (J: Right) in the [19]60s I think.

J: So then I was at the, as I said, I was at the Varnum [elementary] school for ten years and I taught with some, actually there were only three, four men at the time. We were all you know, in fact we more or less, you know there was only one teachers' room and that was for the women you know. But there, you know, it's (--) So we ended up, the one thing, one of the main thing and I loved the Varnum, I still have fond memories of the Varnum. Somebody left \$5,000 in their will for the repair of the bell on top. Well there's no way you're going to repair the bell. I mean it was just, they'd have to spend a lot more than \$5,000. So they gave it to us along with the industrial arts teacher who was my close friend Gil Price, wonderful, wonderful person, we built a room for ourselves at the Varnum for the men teachers, male teachers.

A: Why couldn't you go sit with the women?

J: We could, but we weren't, you know, we really weren't invited in there. So, but it (--)

A: And how many, how many women teachers roughly?

J: Oh well there were four male teachers and the rest, probably twelve women teachers. Yah, we were outnumbered.

A: Okay.

J: I guess going by the paper it still is today, but that's all right. I enjoyed them. They were good people.

Helen: They were all elderly.

J: Yah.

A: Oh really?

J: It's funny and funny. It's funny when I (--) One of my good friends, I'm a member of Long Meadow [Country Club] and I play golf with him, he starts talking about his teachers he had at the Varnum School. And well I, you know, those are all the people that I knew. I was there, and I was probably the mildest of the four guys that were there. So I became their favorite. [Laughs] I knew enough to keep my mouth shut and not offend anyone of them. But it's funny and he's always amazed that I knew them you know. And I said I knew them, I knew them well.

A: Most of the teachers Irish at that point?

J: Ah yah, yah.

A: And did you feel completely accepted?



J: Oh absolutely, yah. (A: Okay) No, no, there was no qualms whatsoever. No question I was, as I said, I was probably the mildest of the four guys that were there, and they were glad to have me. I was very respectful of them, you know, and I didn't, I can't say the same. I won't mention any names. I can't say for some of the others. They were constant battling them.

A: What were the battles about?

J: Just the fact that, you know, that men were coming into it and there had been a feminine, female domain you know, at the Varnum School.

A: Oh really? So before that time period there weren't many male teachers?

J: No, oh no.

A: Okay. Were the principals primary females when you first started?

J: No, no. Mr. King had just retired; a long time principal. I didn't know him. And then Donald Shanahan took over.

A: All right. So the principals would be mainly men around the city?

J: Right.

A: But then (--)

J: But then they had, they weren't assistant principals. Each one of them had a teacher secretary, a certified, a qualified teacher. And in many instances it was that person who ran the building. (A: Okay) And the one, the person there, there were Alice Donohoes. One was in that capacity at the Varnum, and the other one was at that capacity at the Butler.

A: Oh same name.

J: And they were small Alice and big Alice. [All laugh] But small Alice ran that school like she was amazing.

A: Small Alice was at the Varnum?

J: Was at the Varnum, yah. And Big Alice was at the Butler, and she ran the school for Mr. DeLong who was quite a (--). I don't know if you ever heard of Charles DeLong, he was (--)

A: Charles DeLong, yah, did his brother run the Poor Farm?

J: Yes, you're right!

A: Arthur DeLong?

J: Right, the Farris Memorial Hospital. That was one of our playgrounds.

A: Oh it was? Yah, tell us about that for a couple of minutes.

J: Oh sure. The Farris Memorial Hospital was located off Chelmsford Street right where, and when I stand now in the Lowe's parking lot I think of it all the time, part of the parking lot towards, closest to downtown Lowell, the Lowell side, not the Chelmsford side, was sort of a forefront. And in back was this big building, which was the Farris Memorial Hospital known as the Poor Farm. And basically when we, when I was young there were a lot of, and it's funny, you know, I think back, I think there were a lot of veterans in there that come out of war. And I, you know, they talk about post traumatic syndrome you know, and I think a lot of them had there. There was a lot of, I can always remember they would be allowed to roam freely during the day. And it wasn't unusual for us to, where Mahoney's, you know, on Plain Street, well that was the Plain Street dump. And then there was Hale's Brook where the housing project is now, that was also one of our playgrounds.

A: Okay.

J: There were no homes there. And that was like the back way up to the hospital, to the Poor Farm.

A: Was there a road there, or just a pathway?

J: Yes, there was a dirt road. Yah, it would be, it was a dirt road more like a pathway, yah, but a car could go, or a truck could go on it. And it wouldn't be unusual for us in the morning when we were playing there to find some of them that had been you know, drunk the night before in there, sleeping there.

A: Sleeping on the pathway?

J: Yah, or you know, they had collapsed there during, especially during the summer. You know, and we used to go in and the facilities there weren't very good, you know. I don't think the state, or whoever was supposed to, or the city, or whoever, I don't know who was in control of it, but they didn't spend much money on it you know. But there were a lot of situations like that that I recall. I can recall they also had cows in the back there. One of the great things, we used to play. In fact I'll tell you one of my fond, my great memories. Where the Chelmsford Street Housing Project is, now we were playing baseball and which we used to play, you know, constantly, and we were playing there. And then all of a sudden all the sirens, whistles in the city starting going off, it was VJ Day.

A: Oh wow!

J: And I can always remember people just dropping gloves going downtown. I didn't. I went (-) But I always remember that. And I can remember the Harvard Brewery was across the street, and they had the whistles, but the sirens all through the city. We used to (--) That was one of our playgrounds and then of course it became the, they built the housing project there. But we used

to go from there we played baseball, and then we'd go down to the brook and swim. And it wasn't unusual to get cow hairs on our (--) [Laughs]

A: Yah, and there were some famous swimming holes around that area?

J: Oh yah.

H: The brook, yah.

A: How about the Eck?

J: The Eck was up a little bit further. The Eck was up closer to the hospital.

A: [Skip in recording] of the patients.

H: Just that it was a little scary for a kid.

J: Yah it was. It was.

H: And it was very plain and just wasn't all that exciting, but it did teach me to become aware of what was out there in the world and how to deal with it and so forth.

J: Yah, it was, it was sad. I mean and they just weren't treating, you know, these people weren't being treated properly. And I know, I'm not criticizing, it's just they weren't aware of what (--) You know, they used to say they were shell shocked, but yah.

A: From World War II.

J: From World War II, yah, and I'm sure there were some World War I veterans there too at the same time.

A: Okay.

H: It was a huge building, huge!

J: Yah.

H: I mean maybe it wasn't, now that I think about it maybe it wasn't that big. Does anyone have a picture of it?

A: Yah, we have pictures and it was a sizeable property.

J: And of course then they knocked that down and you know, what you see. In fact basically they're going to put up right now, what is it? That multi-floor apartment that's going up.

H: We used to play up on Parker's Pasture, and they had Cowboy Rock and everything. And then in the wintertime we would have our skates and we'd run across Route 3 and skate on the other side in the overflow.

J: They called that the overflow.

H: Which was just a swamp that, I don't know where it was (--)

A: And where would you access the overflow?

H: Just straight across Route 3. Like where (--)

J: Almost where the (--)

A: But from which street on this side of the highway?

H: No, you ran through the fields.

J: Through the woods. Parker's Pasture was where the Daley School is.

H: The fields, where there are still field now.

A: Okay.

J: That was called (-- I can remember, you know, Parker's Barn. Do you know where Parker, have you ever heard? You know where the Morey School is? (A: Yah) You know where that apartment complex across from the Morey School? You'll see it when you go down.

H: Condos, yah.

A: Yes!

J: You know where the doctor, dentist office is?

A: Yes, (J: Okay) right next door to that.

J: Next door to that Parker's Barn was there.

A: Okay, not the house?

H: The house [unclear].

J: The house and the barn.

A: Okay.

J: And I can remember, vaguely remember as a young kid, they used to walk the cows up Pine Street to Parker's Pasture.

A: So they all know that even though the house was there the land, the [unclear].

J: The land was up where the Daley School was, and that area there was you know, I can remember and this sounds crazy, I can remember my older brother Arthur's group, they used to play war up there. They used to play war with BB guns. [All laugh] And you know, I'm saying to myself, they were firing BB guns at each other, and they were blessed because they never lost an eye or anything.

A: Let me take you back, I'm a little interested in this, the kind of female leadership if you will at the schools. Was that at you think most of the kind of schools in the city?

J: I would think. They were headed by males.

A: Almost all.

J: The principals, all of them, but they had strong female contingent you know.

A: Okay, and at that time most of those women were unmarried?

H: Oh yah.

J: Yah, I understand to my (--) I guess and I've been told you know, if they became pregnant, if they were married and became pregnant they had to leave, which you know.

A: Right, right. So after the Varnum where did you go?

J: After the Varnum I went to the National Teacher Corps. The National Teacher Corps, well I was I have to say, I was encouraged to go because my friend Dan Leahy, who you know, was friend from boy, (A: No kidding) was head of, he was the (--) I get confused now. I think he was Title I Director at the time. I think that's what became Chapter, the Title I Director when Patrick Mogan brought in the, you know, Federal Programs he became Title (--) He, for a period of time he was Title I Director. And so he brought the National Teacher Corps in and then he left during the year, and Don Gagnon, who became the Principal of the Robinson, was in charge.

And then (--) So I was there for a year, more like about a year and a half. And then when I was, when they were finished with that I was due to come back to the, at that time the Robinson School was opening.

A: Brand new?

J: Brand new, and another boyhood friend who was a little bit older, also a BC Grad, Joe Logan who was Principal at the Daley School asked me if I'd be interested in a job at the Daley, teaching math at the Daley School. (A: Okay) And because Mike Mroz who was teaching,

whose job it was, he left to go down to Central Administration. He later became Superintendent of Schools.

A: Yah, yah.

J: So he asked me if I'd be interested in the job and I, I said absolutely. So I went to the Daley and I taught math.

A: So why, why did you move from English to math?

H: They needed a math teacher.

J: When I (-- I never taught English. I never taught English.

A: Oh you didn't?

J: No, I taught math. See I was, I became certified in math.

A: Okay, even though you had placed number one?

J: Even though I had placed, yah, in the English list, but only because of those questions that you know, the written questions I just had knowledge about. I'm sure someone, in the case of Francis Thompson, most of them are saying, who, who is he? But I had some knowledge of it. So anyway I went up there and I taught. I was a math teacher up there until, that would have been 1969, 1970. So again, the assistant principal at the Daley was Helen O'Loughlin. I don't know if it's a name you've heard about. She was another strong female leader, similar to what I described in the other schools.

A: Sure.

J: And Joe was strong too, but Helen was a strong presence out there if you knew her. And she became sick. And so he asked me if I'd be interested in taking her place. And this was in 1975. She became (--

H: No, wasn't it long before that when Tina Maria was born?

J: I thought she was (-- Well maybe that's when I was elected, but anyway she was, she got sick. There was a Christmas Party. Earl Sharfman was then the [Lowell school] superintendent. She became sick and she was out for a period of time. So I filled in for her, and then she came back and she was not able to do it. She was one of the, she was up there in age too. And so then she had to retire. So then I was elected and became the assistant at the Daley for many years.

H: Till he retired.

J: I also for thirteen years was the president of the Unit B Lowell Administrative Association, which is the bargaining unit for the administrators.

A: Oh okay.

J: And I had the opportunity to become, I suppose become principal. I just didn't really care to. I was enjoying what I was doing and I didn't want to. Maybe I wouldn't have been elected principal. I don't know, but I wasn't really interested in it you know.

A: How was union negotiations back then, or bargaining I should say?

J: Well I was fortunate to have as our lawyer a fellow by the name of Mark Kaplan, Attorney Mark Kaplan, and I just learned so much from. And he was outstanding. We were, at one time we were represented by the SEIU. (A: Okay) Well when we were allowed collective bargaining in Massachusetts and I wasn't, I don't think I was, I was still teaching at the time, but the administrators were part of the, what's the (--)

H: Union A [unclear].

J: No, I know, but what's the (--)

H: For the teachers union?

J: Mass Teachers MTA.

A: Okay, yah.

J: And the MTA was representing both administrators and teachers (A: at that time) at that time. And you can't, you know, and it ended up to be, you know, the majority of their people that they represented were the teachers obviously. So they had to, you know, and there was a lot of animosity ended up. So we separated from that and then the SEIU took over the administrators and again, I didn't think we were, I personally, and a lot of others, the vast majority, about 90 some odd percent didn't think we were being represented properly by the SEIU. And so we voted to divest ourselves of the union, and which is a very difficult thing. Frank Georges, who was the principal and Beverly Coughlin bore the brunt of, you know, terrific pressure put on by the union and rightfully so. You know, it's the way they work.

So then we became an entity onto ourselves and Mark Kaplan, Attorney Mark Kaplan was the person who was our bargaining agent. And so it made my job so easy, because he was outstanding and respectful of everybody, tremendously, I don't think there was anybody in that area had more expertise than he did. And the people on the other side recognized that too. He was always a gentleman. He always went into every situation well prepared. When you go into it and you know that person is more prepared and more knowledgeable than you are, you respect him. And that's, that's what it was you know. So it made it very easy in that respect.

A: Okay. Good. Well Jack, any final thoughts about living, growing up, working in Lowell?

J: Yes, you know, I'm always amazed at, and I think and I could be to my knowledge I'm the first in my family to go to college. And I can't say it without saying I've been married to a wonderful marvelous woman for fifty-one years.

A: Wow, good for you guys.

H: Fifty-two.

J: And we had, fifty-two, yah. And we have five wonderful daughters who have brought great honor and pride to us, and I mean that sincerely. And then we have twelve marvelous grandchildren. And I like to think that we set the tone for them. Education is important. All our daughters have, and I have to brag a little, we didn't, obviously my wife Helen had to leave after our children were born and she was out for sixteen years. She was a teacher before and went back to teaching. I do want to say that, you know, in Lowell we went from the Daley School we went in a short period of time, and I'm talking about one to two years, we went from four percent minority, less than four percent to over fifty percent minority. And it was done and that was true of the whole system. It was done I think in a remarkable fashion. There was very little turmoil and that's due to the tone set by the administration and the teachers. It would not be allowed. If we knew about it obviously yah, I mean, even on my part to say or think you know, there weren't some remarks made or whatever, but it wouldn't be allowed in the schools. If we knew anything about it we addressed it immediately. We were very fortunate to have, and I don't think the people are aware of it. When the children from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia came in we were fortunate to have a group of women, young mothers who had been out of teaching and I include my wife Helen in that.

H: You're going to make me cry.

J: Who

H: Knew children having raised families.

J: Having raised family, there was a whole cadre of them, of these women and in similar situation they were brought back as ESL teachers.

A: Okay.

J: And it was just amazing what has taken place. Now I'm not (--) Obviously there were difficulties, but they were minimal compared to other communities. And I don't think Lowell gets enough, and I don't think the Lowell School Department gets enough credit for it.

I'm very thankful to be, you know, a part of the Lowell School System. I spent forty-two years there and three of our children went through the Lowell School System. Two, the last two, were eligible to, no eligible, but they were on their own merit earned scholarships at Phillips Academy.

A: Um, terrific.



J: And we, I never, you know, I think having been the first, I think we also have five children, they all graduated from college, they all, not all of them, but they have, some of them have advanced degrees.

A: Great.

J: We never thought, I never thought as coming out of that situation. I have a child that went to Harvard. I have a child that went to, we had a child that was at Harvard and in Georgetown at the same time.

A: Wow.

J: And I didn't think that, you know, obviously we're not wealthy, but they earned it and they deserve it. And I wish for all of them, they were all, they all did well, but the most important thing, they're good people and they are wonderful mothers.

A: That's terrific. Well Jack, thanks very much for all of your stories today.

J: Oh you're welcome.

A: Wonderful.

J: I hope that (--)

**Interview ends**  
**jw**