

Narrator: Rosalie Parco

Interviewer: Molly Graham

Location: Gloucester, Massachusetts

Project Name: Strengthening Community Resilience in America's Oldest Seaport

Project Description: In partnership with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, these oral history recordings capture the invaluable life experiences of long-lived members of Gloucester's working waterfront, one of the oldest fishing communities in the United States.

Principal Investigator: Caleb Gilbert and Peter Burns

Affiliation: NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office; Cape Ann Partnership for Science, Technology, and the Natural Environment

Transcript Team: Molly Graham

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Abstract: The interview with Rosalie Parco, conducted by Molly Graham on October 24, 2019, in Gloucester, Massachusetts, captures a detailed narrative of her life and family history. Rosalie discusses her family's migration from Sicily to the United States, their initial settlement in Boston, and eventual relocation to Gloucester. She provides insights into the early fishing industry in Gloucester, describing how her grandfather and father were involved in the trade. The interview highlights the strict upbringing and close-knit Italian community at the Fort. Rosalie recounts personal anecdotes, including her father's experience during World War II, the family's resilience during the Great Depression, and the transition from fishing to other business ventures such as the mink food plant. The interview also covers Rosalie's education, her involvement in local organizations, and her family's contributions to the Gloucester community. Additionally, she shares stories of family dynamics, her siblings' involvement in the family businesses, and the evolution of Gloucester's commercial landscape. The content provides a rich, personal perspective on the socio-economic changes in Gloucester over the decades, emphasizing the role of immigrant families in shaping the town's history.

Molly Graham: This begins an oral history interview with Rosalie Parco. The interview is taking place on October 24, 2019, in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The interviewer is Molly Graham. Can you tell me where and when you were born?

Rosalie Parco: I was born in Gloucester, Massachusetts, on November 4, 1926.

MG: It is almost your birthday.

RP: It's almost my birthday. I'll be ninety-three on November 4th.

MG: Tell me about how your family came to Gloucester.

RP: I was born down the Fort, where most of the Gloucester population migrated to. When they came to America, a lot of them went to Boston first from Sicily, and then came to Gloucester because they found a beautiful harbor here and they loved the country feel of it, rather than the city of Boston. They moved down the Fort near the fishing industry.

MG: Did both sides of the family come from Sicily?

RP: Both sides, yes. My mother's parents and my father's parents. My father's parents, his father came first with the two older brothers. Then his mother came when my father was almost three. He was in her arms, and she came on a big ship from Sicily into Boston Harbor, which was, I think, a little unusual. Mostly they came in through New York. Anyway, my grandfather, at the time, had already bought a little boat and was fishing with his two older sons out of Boston Harbor. So he went to meet the big cruise ship when it entered the harbor in Boston. His wife was up on the deck, holding my father. As I said, he was almost three. She was saying, "*Vedi, Vedi (Papa?)?*" "You see your father?" He remembered that. He always told me he remembered that, his father in the little boat, and he in his mother's arms.

MG: That must have been one of his earliest memories.

RP: He was almost three, I think he said. Yes, probably was a big thing, coming into a strange country on a big ship, and seeing his father in this little boat, which probably wasn't more than fifteen or sixteen feet, if that. His two older sons, they were fishing with him. That day he went to meet the ship.

MG: How old would his brothers have been at that point?

RP: They were older, and I'm not sure how much older. They had to be twelve to fourteen, or they wouldn't be fishing. One was adopted. The first one was their son, Louie. Then they adopted a young boy, Sam Vingone. So he never took the name Linquata because I don't think he was legally Linquata. He was a foster child, I think. I'm not sure. I can't give you facts there. We always thought of him as an uncle. Then, later on, after they all were there in Boston, they had a few other children. After my father, they had a daughter, Rosalie, and a son, Anthony. They had four sons and one daughter.

MG: Did your mother come over by herself?

RP: My mother was born in Boston, as far as I know. Her older brothers probably came over when they were young. She had Uncle Vito, Uncle Leo, Uncle Frank, Uncle Tony. [laughter] Her older sister was born, I think first, Antoinette, and then my aunt Rose, and then my mother was the baby.

MG: What is her maiden name?

RP: They were all Favaloros. Favaloro because my grandfather used Favaloro, but I think the feminine would have been Favalora. So you'll find both Favaloras and Favaloros in Gloucester.

MG: Do you know when it would have been that your ancestors migrated?

RP: When they came?

MG: Yes.

RP: When my mother's family came? No, I really don't remember.

MG: What year would it have been when your father was three years old?

RP: My father was born in 1899. So I know he got here when he was about three, but his family had come before that. My mother's family, I'm not sure when they came.

MG: What kind of fishing was your grandfather doing in Boston Harbor, and then in Gloucester?

RP: I really couldn't tell you. I think they always did groundfishing, but they changed with the seasons, also, depending on what fish was plentiful at the time. I'm really not sure. Sometimes they went mackerel fishing. Sometimes when the whiting was plentiful, they went for whiting. Mostly it was groundfish like haddock and cod and that type of fish. Of course, then there were those that went shellfishing, lobstering, and things like that. Mostly, they were groundfishermen.

MG: Do you know which part of Boston your father's family first settled?

RP: They settled in the North End of Boston, down near – there was a big marketplace there. I remember Salem Street was there. When we were young, we would still go into Boston and buy groceries by the case. We'd go to the wholesale store, and we'd buy canned tomatoes and all kinds of things because most people liked to buy by the carton at the time. So we'd go into Boston. Then on Salem Street, they had a fish market that carried all kinds of seafood and shellfish. They had a store that was run by a Jewish man who was very nice. My mother would take us all in there and buy us all a coat every winter or every other winter. I had an aunt that lived there. Her older sister still lived in Boston when I was young, so we would spend the day with them, do our shopping, and then come home. It was a day out.

MG: When did they move to Gloucester from Boston?

RP: From Boston? Well, none of us were born there, and they were married here. My mother was married when she was about seventeen. My father was seven years older. My mother was born in 1906. So if she got married at seventeen – I think she was engaged at sixteen and married at seventeen.

MG: Do you know how your parents met?

RP: They were almost neighbors. There were about three houses between the two houses they lived in. My father lived on one corner of Fort Square, and then my mother's house was about three buildings down. There was a little alley there, so my father had a nephew that he would use to send love notes to my mother. [laughter] Her father was very strict, so they had to sneak them. So his nephew would bring them over to her. They knew each other growing up because they were neighbors. But she picked him. [laughter] There were others interested because she had older brothers, and they would be coming in and out of the house all the time with her brothers. But my father was the best-looking one. [laughter]

MG: Tell me what you know or what they shared with you about their childhoods.

RP: Their childhoods, I really don't know a lot about it. I know parents were very strict in those days, so they weren't allowed to go dating or out with them or anything like that. They had to be chaperoned and all that. I imagine her brothers had to go with them if they did go anywhere. They were going to get married even younger, but what happened – I don't know if I should tell you this story because I don't know the details. My grandfather's boat, somebody had a vendetta against him, I guess, and put a bomb on the boat. So the money that was going for the wedding had to go for a new boat. [laughter]

MG: Do you know anything more about that?

RP: I don't know who did it. They might have been the mafia from Boston. I don't know who they were. But somebody had something against my grandfather for some reason. He was a good soul. As far as I know, he never did anything wrong. He was a sweet man. But somebody had something against him, and I don't know what. They put a bomb on the boat, and it exploded. They had to get a new boat. So my father and mother didn't get married that year. They had to wait a little longer to get enough money together again to have a wedding and get married.

MG: It sounds like both sides were fishing families.

RP: They were all fishing families, mostly down the Fort, yes. Actually, I think what happened – the Fort was mostly Irish from what my parents told me. Then, little by little, when the Italian people starting moving down there, the Irish moved out, and the place became Italian, the whole Fort section.

MG: Can you describe it a little bit more? How has it changed?

RP: It hasn't changed an awful lot, actually. Most of them were tenement houses, big houses. It's not like you could have a ten thousand square foot lot and have a house on it. They were all tenement houses down there at that time when I was young, growing up. But I don't remember living down there. I know one of the buildings down there had a grocery store. It was Peter Favazza's grocery store. I forget if it had another name. I don't know. As I said, it was a tenement house. We were probably on the second or third floor up above the grocery store. But I don't even remember those days. I think two of us were born there. My brother Mike was born first, and then I was born. Then my father decided he wanted to have a house with a yard and less trucks going by, traffic, and things like that for the fishing industry. So they bought a – oh, I have to tell you this story. One day he said to my mother, "Want to take a walk?" So she said, "Sure, let's go." So they walked from the Fort, up to Church Street. He stopped in front of this lovely home, beautiful gardens, wrought iron fence – real fancy, big white house, two stories high with an attic, and a lot of beautiful flowers. So they stopped. My father stopped there, and my father said to my mother, "Do you like this house?" She says, "Yeah, I like it. It's beautiful." He says, "I bought it." So that's how they happened to buy it. He just bought it outright. [laughter] I don't know if he put a down payment. In other words, my mother knew nothing about it, but she loved the house. It was a beautiful house. The rest of us, the other three were born there. When we moved there, it was just the two of us, my brother Mike and I. He's ninety-four now, and I'm going to be ninety-three.

MG: What are the names of your other three siblings?

RP: My brother is Michael Linquata. I'm Rosalie. Then I have a sister, Julia, who's ninety. My sister, Anita, who's eighty-nine. Then I have one other sister, who died at fifty-one with brain cancer.

MG: What memories stand out to you about your childhood?

RP: About my childhood? I had a great childhood. There were a lot of kids on Church Street. It was a little hill. We could go sliding down the hill in the wintertime. There was a cemetery behind us; we used it as a playground. Then there were houses all around it because we were on Church Street. If you went down, there was Pine Street. If you got to Washington Street, it went this way, and the cemetery was in the middle. Then Prospect Street was up here. I don't know if you're familiar with Gloucester. It was the center of town. We could walk downtown. We could walk. We went to St. Ann's School. We could walk to the high school. We were the first class, actually. My class was the first class that went into the new Gloucester High School on the river there on Centennial Avenue in Gloucester. So I had four years there. Then two years in Boston at Kathleen Dell. Then after that, I met my husband. I don't know how far you want me to go.

MG: I wanted to ask you more about your family in this area.

RP: Okay. My brother, Mike – well, my father, as I said, was fishing. Then he decided he wanted to be in business. So he bought a wharf down the Fort. When he went to the bank to get a loan, the fellow that was interviewing him says, "Well, yes, we can give you the loan. You

seem like a progressive type of person.” So they gave him the loan. He bought the wharf, and he called it the Progressive Fish Company. A little later, he went into the fuel oil business and sold shell oil to boats when they got unloaded. Their fish, they would load up – get their fuel for the next trip. So they accomplished two things at one time. Let’s see. What happened after that? He had it for many years. My brother Mike worked for him after he finished. Well, he was in the Army first during World War II. Mike was. He went in young, right from high school at eighteen, and was in the Battle of the Bulge and was taken prisoner. So he was in a prisoner of war camp for about three months, I think. And we didn’t know. All we knew was that we got a letter – a letter? It was a piece of thin, flimsy paper that was all ripped around the edges. I went out to get the mail. I was home for the weekend from Boston, where I was in school. I went out to get the mail, and I went in the kitchen. I said to my mother, “I don’t know what this is.” Then I went, “That looks like Mike’s writing.” His penmanship was so bad that I knew right away that it was from him. He said he was a prisoner of war. Right away, we all got excited. We knew he wasn’t dead. My mother said, “Call daddy.” So I called the plant. He came right home. As he drove through the fort, he knew all the people down there. Anyone on the street – he had a convertible at the time – and he was yelling, “He’s alive. He’s alive.” First thing you know, our house filled up with people, relatives, friends, who were happy to hear that he was alive. So then he did get home, but he was skinny as a rail. He had been in a – when the American soldiers released him, the Red Cross put him in Le Havre in France to build them up again because they had been living on potato soup and sleeping on a cement floor for months. They were all pretty emaciated, I guess. Then they fattened them up a little bit. So when he came home, he was still pretty skinny. Then he got his health back. He went to Suffolk University, campaigned, and got to be president of his class. He did well there. Later on, they gave him a doctorate, along with Cardinal [Richard] Cushing, and a few people from Boston that got it at the same time. Anyway, he did well. In the meantime, he wanted to go into business for himself. My father says, “Okay.” So he bought the Davis Brothers wharf, which was on Rogers Street at the time. It was kind of a broken down wharf, and not much good. So he bought it. It’s now the Gloucester House because my brother and his wife’s sister wanted to go into the restaurant business. So my father had the wharf all fixed up. He helped them build a restaurant and run it. Eventually, they owned it together, my brother and his sister-in-law. Then she wanted one of her own, so she bought one down the street a little bit, Captain Courageous, which now has another name. She passed away in the meantime, so she doesn’t own it. But she did do well herself with another restaurant, which was almost right next door. Anyway, the restaurant has proceeded to do well. My brother is now ninety-four, but he has two sons and one of their wives, Dotty, that runs the restaurant. They’ve been very successful. That was Mike’s story.

MG: Was he captured by the Germans?

RP: Yes. He was in the Battle of the Bulge. I don’t know if he said he was with [General George S.] Patton or [General Douglas] MacArthur. I can’t remember. I’ve got his whole story there in that white – see that white loose-leaf notebook?

MG: Yes.

RP: He wrote that out, his whole life story, and gave one to me and my two sisters. Family history. If you’d like to take it and read that, that might help you.

MG: How long were you not sure whether or not he was alive?

RP: At least three months. We didn't know anything for three months.

MG: That must have been so tricky.

RP: It was awful. My mother had all these friends that would come every day. My mother owned a statue of Saint Joseph, and they would do the Novena every day. She had a house-full. They prayed hard, and he lived.

MG: Did he ever talk about his experience before writing it down?

RP: He never said too much. It came out little by little over the years. When he first came home, he didn't want to say too much. Probably it was still too painful for him. But he was a medic, so when Patton – I think it was Patton – moved on, they had to go back because the Germans were coming and they had no choice, but they had to leave him – he was only about nineteen – with twenty wounded because he was the medic. Of course, they had no guns. So he was left there, but he knew the Germans were on their way, and he could hear them. So he figured the only way he was going to get help for his wounded soldiers was he found a stick or a branch or something, he took out his handkerchief and tied it on the end of it. He walked up this little hill, and there were the Germans on the other side of the hill. He just waved it, and they got them and brought them to a prisoner of war camp. That's where he spent, as I said, at least three months. When we saw that piece of paper that was worth nothing, it was so flimsy and ripped – I guess they let him mail that. I recognized his handwriting right away. I started screaming, "Mom, he's alive." Some things you can't forget.

MG: Did you have other family members that served in the military?

RP: I only had one brother, but I had cousins. They had a special graduation that year in 1944 because we would have graduated in the same class, but because there were about nine young men that were going to be eighteen before a certain date, they gave them an accelerated course. In other words, they had two English courses, two math courses – they graduated in early January, instead of June with the rest of us because they were going to be eighteen by a certain date, and they were going to be drafted. That's what happened. They had a special graduation in the auditorium at Gloucester High, brand new school. Big auditorium, all the parents were there. They got their diplomas, and they went off. They were gone. Actually, there's another story. When he was drafted, some of the Gloucester guys were there, one of them especially that was in our class, [and] was behind him in the line when they were giving him the testing for his eyes. He always wore glasses, but he was colorblind, too. When they were asking him what the colors were, he wanted to go, so Jack behind him was going, [whispers] "Red, blue." [laughter] So that way, Mike knew what colors they were showing him. He was drafted. Jack always felt bad after that. He said, "You know, if it wasn't for me, you wouldn't have even been a prisoner of war." He felt bad. But all's well that ends well. I'd just thought I'd give you the funny little story.

MG: What other family stories stand out to you? When I was here the other day, you mentioned a relative that died in a fire.

RP: When my father's parents – my father was young. They moved to Lawrence for a short period of time before they moved to Gloucester, I guess from Boston when they first came from Italy. They were working in factories, my grandparents, both of them. They left their twelve-year-old daughter, babysitting. In those days, I guess they could do that. My father wasn't quite – well, as I said, he was young. He may have been four or five, if that. I'm not even sure. The story might be in there. You may have more accurate dates there from my brother than I have. The mother, my grandmother, had told her daughter – her name was Rosalie, like mine. We were both named for grandmother. Anyway, she says, "At a certain time, light the fire in the stove." It was wood, and they probably started it with paper or something. That way, it would be warm when she got home, so she could cook the meal, supper. Well, somehow, her dress caught on fire, and she didn't know what to do. She was twelve years old. So she starts running down to the neighbor down below. When the neighbor opened the door and saw her, she panicked and closed the door. The poor thing, the little girl ran downstairs to the next neighbor, and somehow, she put the fire out. She only had that one daughter. No, she had another one afterward, but this one died with the burns. You're going to have to read that album and see what Mike said about that. My father witnessed it and didn't speak for one year. He was in shock.

MG: Any other family stories?

RP: That was the story about the fire, yes. From then on, after that happened, they moved to Gloucester. They didn't want to stay in [Lawrence]. First of all, they weren't enjoying my grandfather working in a factory; he was used to being a fisherman. So they moved to Gloucester from Lawrence.

MG: Did your grandfather get involved with your father's new business in the 1920s?

RP: No, my grandfather always was a fisherman. He never did work ashore in Gloucester after that. He didn't help my father, as far as going into business. I don't know. He may have helped and invested in the company at the time. My father probably paid him back. If he got a loan from him or something, I'm sure he paid him back. They were poor people. They weren't rich people. My father managed to make a good living because he had a good brain, and he was smart, a good businessman in other words. He was in the fish business for many years. Then he sold it to my husband. [laughter] Do you want me to keep going?

MG: Yes.

RP: You want to know how I met my husband?

MG: I do. But I also wanted to ask you if you have any memories of the Great Depression or if it impacted your family.

RP: No, that I don't remember any memories of the Depression at all. I was born in '26. The Depression was when? '29.

MG: It started in '29.

RP: I was only three years old, so I really don't remember. I remember going to school when I was five at St. Ann's because I had a nun that was called Sister Rosaline. I felt very comfortable in her class because I had the same name pretty much. That I do remember. So I spent eight years at St. Ann's School. Then I went to Gloucester High because it was going to be a brand new school, and we were going to be the first class to go in there. I didn't want to go to St. Ann's High because there were only going to be about twelve students that went that year. So there weren't big classes. There were small classes. Eventually, they closed anyway. So I went to Gloucester High.

MG: Any memories that stand out from high school?

RP: From high school? Well, I took the secretarial courses, business courses, because my father thought that'd be a good thing for me. I could work for him or something. And I didn't mind. Whatever he wanted me to do, I pretty much did.

MG: You went to secretarial school in Boston?

RP: Yes, I went to Kathleen Dell Secretarial School. Within a year or two after I graduated – it was a two-year course – they were accredited for a junior college, like Fisher [College] and Chandler [Secretarial School]. I don't know if you're familiar with all the Boston schools at the time. But there were a lot of schools in Boston, and I picked that one. I made a lot of friends there. It was up on Beacon Street in Brookline. We had a station wagon, and we lived in a dorm on The Fenway. I can't even remember the name of it now. I was there [for] two years. Anyway, there were students there from all different schools in Boston. They weren't just from the school I went to. I met a diversified group of people. They were all very nice girls. Some of them are still my friends. Half of them are gone now. We had good times there. The Fenway was across the street. We could go lay on the grass and get some sun in the spring. Not Fenway Park, but Fenway. It was a park, but it wasn't the ballpark. It was a lovely area. The school three meals a day, and they had a beach wagon. We called it a beach wagon; that's what it looked like to me. It was a beach wagon that would take us to school, those of us that were going to Beacon Street, maybe other schools. We may have stopped in a few places. I don't remember that. But whoever was there that was going to school, he would pick them up if it was on his way, in other words. That lasted two years.

MG: What was the curriculum like? What were you studying?

RP: I had typing and shorthand and English and math, all those courses. I wasn't an A student. I had mostly A's, but I did have some B's, too. I wasn't a brain by any means, but I got good grades.

MG: Had you met your husband at this point?

RP: No. They came to the dorm one day, and they wanted some girls to interview to be – what did they call them? They wanted them to go to the – oh, gosh. Now I can't think of what they're called – hostesses. The soldiers and sailors, when they were in port, they would go to USO [United Service Organizations]. They would socialize there and have a meal or dancing – whatever. They interviewed us, and I was one of the ones they picked to go dance with the soldiers, so I had a few dates, but nothing serious. Then my brother was taken prisoner of war, so I went home every weekend. That didn't last very long because I wanted to be with my parents. I know my mother was very upset. Both of them were. My father, too, because he only had the one son. So I went home [on] weekends. That was the end of my USO stint after a few weeks. That didn't last long.

MG: I meant to ask what year you graduated high school?

RP: Gloucester High in 1944. What about it?

MG: I wanted to get on the record the year you graduated from high school.

RP: Well, it was a big class.

MG: What years were you in Boston? Was it '45 and '46?

RP: I graduated from there in '46, two years later.

MG: Did you come right back to Gloucester?

RP: Yes.

MG: And start working?

RP: No. Well, my father was one of those proud Italian men that could support his family. So he says, "No, you don't have to work. You can stay home and help mama." Well, he did let me go in the office one time, but he had a woman and her niece working in the office at the time. I felt like they didn't really want me there. So I said to my father, "No, I'm not going to work here. I don't think they want me here." So I left, and then I saw an ad in the paper, they wanted someone in the office at the Bass Rocks Summer Theater on Shore Road in Gloucester. I went and interviewed and got the job. So then my father couldn't say anything; I already had the job. [laughter]

MG: Tell me more about this job.

RP: It was fun. It was a fun job in the summer. I met all these crazy actors, and it was a fun thing. Another girl that worked there, we became good friends after that.

MG: Did you meet your husband around this time?

RP: No. Let me see. When did I meet Tony? Oh, god. It was that fall, around this time of year. The Saint Peter's women's auxiliary had started a group – the women – because they had the Saint Peter's men's club in Gloucester at the time. That was on the west end of Main Street upstairs. Downstairs they had a bar. Most of the fishermen hung out there after they came in from fishing and tell all their fish stories and things like that. So then the women decided to start a women's auxiliary, Saint Peter's women's auxiliary. So I did bookkeeping for them for one year. What else? I was the secretary. I did publicity for the papers. Then I was president one year. [laughter] Then that year, I think is the year I met my husband. He came upstairs from downstairs, where the men hung out. He probably was in from fishing at the time. After we had our meeting – it was a Halloween dance. That's what it was going to be. When the music started, the guys come up and dance with the women. If some of them had husbands down there, they would come up. But the young guys would come and dance with the young girls. That's how I met my husband. I always teased him – and I won't tell you this story.

MG: Do you want me to turn the recorder off?

RP: Yes. [laughter]

[TAPE PAUSED]

RP: Anyway, we're dancing away. My cousin Sam comes along. He's dancing with his wife. Well, she wasn't his wife yet. So he comes dancing over to us in the middle of the dance floor, and he says to my husband, "You know she's my cousin." He was a little older than I. He says, "You better treat her right. Be careful what you do." [laughter] Poor Tony was just looking at him like he was scared to death. Anyway, that was that because he danced with me every dance after that. At the end, he says, "Can I take you home?" He had a little car there. I said, "Well, I have to ask my mother." Everything was, "I have to ask my mother." So she's sitting over there with a bunch of the other ladies that were more her age. They weren't dancing. They were just chitchatting over there, so I went over. I knew his name by that time. I said, "Tony wants to know if he can take me home." So she knew the family. My godmother was sitting with her, and her husband was fishing with my husband. I got a feeling my godmother had something to do with this. My godmother must have vouched for him. My mother knew the family, but not close. We weren't related or anything, but she knew of the family. She says, "Okay, you can go." So, of course, we didn't go right home. We went down the boulevard and parked. We chatted and just chatted away. Then he takes me home. We'll get to know each other a little bit at least that way. Then he says something about taking me out as we're sitting in the car in front of my house. I said, "Well, I don't know. My mother said I couldn't go out with anyone unless I was engaged." This was so old-fashioned, but that's the way it was. You have to remember my age. Italian people, very fussy about their children. He looked at me, and he said, "Well, let's get engaged." Of course, my mouth dropped open. I didn't know what to say then. [laughter] I said, "I'll have to ask my mother." [laughter] The whole thing was a whirlwind thing. Anyway, I went in. They're in bed, of course, and lights are out. I was standing in the doorway of their bedroom. I told her. She says, "Do you like him?" I said, "Well, he seems like a nice guy. I like him." She says, "All right, you can go out with him." I didn't tell her he wanted to get engaged. [laughter] So she gave me permission. Little did I know when he called me the next day that he had three or four sisters all by the phone waiting to see what I was going to say. So I

said, "Yeah, we can go out." So he took me to a dance, and we danced and got to know each other. First thing you know, we were engaged. But he was going to go fishing. Those trips were sometimes eight, ten days. So he said to his mother, "I want her to have a ring for her birthday." This, mind you, was a Halloween dance. But the dance was a little bit before Halloween. She said, "Okay." She and my older sister-in-law said they wanted to take me shopping because Tony wanted me to pick out a ring. They take me to the best jewelry store in Gloucester. She said to Mr. Blanchard, "I'd like to look at some diamonds and an engagement ring." So he pulled out a whole tray of diamonds. He said, "What size would you want?" She said, "One-carat." So he pulled out the one-carat diamonds. Now she's looking at them, and she selected one. He told us the grades and everything. I didn't know anything about that stuff. I'm barely nineteen. I wasn't quite nineteen. Anyway, she says, "Okay." She picked a good grade one carat diamond. Then he pulls out the tray with the engagement rings. I'm looking at them, and she says, "Pick one out." Well, I'm thinking there's a plain one, and then there's the ones with the diamonds on the side. I didn't want to look like a gold-digger. I knew they weren't wealthy people. I didn't want them to think I was a gold-digger, so I picked the plain one. She says, "Why don't you pick the one with the diamonds? That's nice." My sister-in-law says, "Yeah, if you like that one, take the one with the diamond." I said, "Okay." I wasn't going to argue with them. So I selected that. He put the stone in. Anyway, she picked it up when it was ready. When he came in from fishing, the ring was ready. So they come to my house for my birthday when he came in from fishing, and I was engaged. My parents were there. His parents were there, his sisters, my sisters. He had one brother, and I had one brother. That was it. I was engaged on my nineteenth birthday.

MG: When was the wedding?

RP: Then he wanted to get married right away. I said, "Gee." [laughter] He was rushing me. He said, "In a few months." I didn't know what to say. I finally said, "Well, how about June?" He says, "I'll compromise. How about May?" [laughter] All right. So we got married in May. Five months later, we were married, or six months, I guess, if you count December.

MG: Tell me about your wedding day.

RP: You want to hear about that? Let me see. Well, it was a nice day. We had May 18th. Where did we get married? We got married at St. Ann's. Where was our wedding reception? It was in East Gloucester on the ocean side. You know where Rocky Neck is? If you go past the road that goes into Rocky Neck, you go a little further, there was a big hotel there. I can't think of the – Atlantis or something. I can't remember the name of it. They had a big function room and a nice view. That's where we had our wedding reception. Then we went to – my sister Julia was my maid of honor. Some of my sisters-in-law were in the wedding. My other sister was in the wedding, some of my girlfriends. One of them sung Ave Maria at my wedding in the church. That was strange, too, because we had a new priest at St. Ann's. He was going to perform his first wedding ceremony. While my girlfriend is up in the choir loft singing the Ave Maria, he said, "She looks familiar. I think I know her." I said, "Well, she lives on a certain street in Lynn." He said, "She's my neighbor, a few doors down." That's how he knew her. That was a coincidence right there. Anyway, then we went to New York first for a week, did all the sites, saw the shows, had a good time. A cousin of mine married this girl, Sally, and they met us in

Washington, D.C., because they got married a week later. So we were four of us, and we did the sites in Washington, D.C., and had a good time. That was that. I know I have an album somewhere. It's probably upstairs in the attic.

MG: What kind of fisherman was your husband?

RP: He was groundfishing. As I said, they would change over to different species as the seasons were changing, and the fish was plentiful. That's how they worked it at the time. Then he decided he wanted to be ashore. We were getting towards having five children at that point, maybe even before that. No, I guess I already had three or four, and he didn't want to be away all that time. He said, "I'm not seeing my children grow up. I want to be ashore." So he said something to my father, and my father said, "Well, I could sell you Progressive, my fish company, if you want to buy that." Then he put a stipulation on it that he would have – in the meantime, my sister Marianne was married to my brother-in-law, Ed McCollum. He was working for companies like AVCO and Raytheon, that type of work. He wasn't happy there either. My father said that Ed had talked to him about going into business. My father said to my husband, "Look, you've got the experience in the fish business. He's had a good education. He went to college." My husband didn't. He says, "If you take Ed in, I'll give you the company for a good price." He did it. He sold it to both of them. They ran it together for many years. Ed did pass away. Then my husband passed away.

MG: Did they buy it as a fish company?

RP: From my father as a fish company. What my father did, he took the oil company, the oil business, and bought land up off of Maplewood Avenue. I don't know if you're familiar with Gloucester at all. Anyway, he bought property up there, and he put his oil business up there. He had a building with an office and the tanks up there. He stayed in the oil business. He was selling oil to the homes at that point, and the boats.

MG: Your husband's new business was called Ocean Crest.

RP: Yes.

MG: Was this 1965 when it was formed?

RP: Let me see. I can't remember what year it was. Ann was little. Yes, it had to be – she was born in '65, and she was little. It's how many years? She's fifty-five. It had to be about fifty-two years ago. Yes, 1965.

MG: You had five kids in ten years?

RP: More than ten years. [laughter] Sandy was '70, and she'll be fifty-five in February. That's sixteen years.

MG: What was it like to be a mother of five little ones?

RP: Busy. Busy. They were good kids. You know how kids can be. On the whole, they were good kids. They never gave me any problems, let's put it that way. They didn't get into trouble or anything. They were all pretty good students, too. They all went to school, but not all of them finished college because they knew they were going to work at the business anyway. They said, "Why waste time in school? We'll just go to work." They all worked for the company. I think Ann did finish. I don't know if she went for four years. I think she did. She went to school in Colorado. It may have been four years. Maybe she did finish [in] four and a half years.

MG: Tell me your kids' names.

RP: Salvatore was named for my father-in-law. Maria was named for my mother-in-law. Lenny, Leonard, was named for my father. Tony was named for my husband. So I had both grandfathers – I always said to my husband, "If we have three boys, honey, we'll name one for you." So we did. I have a Tony, Jr. Then Ann was named for my mother. So we took care of both sets of grandparents and my husband. That was tradition that you named them after the in-laws, then my parents. So they're all named for their grandparents, and Tony Jr.'s named for my husband. Down at the plant, they call him T.J. because he was junior, and not to mix them up on the loudspeaker when they had to get ahold of him with my husband because they called him Tony. So Tony was in the Navy for – I don't know how many years. He was in the service for about four years. I didn't meet him until he was twenty-six. He had been in the service four years already. He was on boats. In fact, at twenty-one, because he knew how to be captain on a ship already – you know they always have to take their turn in the pilothouse, so he knew all the machinery and everything. So when he was in the Navy, they wanted him to bring – I don't know how big the boat was, but he had to bring it from the Boston area up this way, all the way down around Florida into the Gulf, and around to San Francisco. He obviously did a good job. He got on the boat there. So he was in the Pacific during the war. He came home in one piece, thank goodness, and that's when I met him after that. He was already twenty-six. He's six years older than I.

MG: Tell me what stands out to you about raising your family, some early memories.

RP: Well, it went pretty smoothly, obviously, because I don't remember anything really drastic that happened. They were close. Sandy and Maria were only a year and a half apart. I had four of them in nine years. Then after seven years, Ann was born. That was a funny story. We were both older at that point. I'm trying to remember now how old we were. I was thirty-eight, and he was forty-four. I said, "How am I going to break it to him?" Once in a while, we'd take a trip to Boston to see a show or something. So we planned a day, and we went to Boston. We're on the highway heading for Boston. I said, "By the way, we're going to have another baby." He was looking at the road, and went – he looked me like – you know. Then he said, "I'm too old to have a baby." I said, "Obviously, you weren't." [laughter] So he was happy. That was cute because she was the baby, and the others were already seven and older. When he had just started the business not too many years before, he'd have some customers in Boston that weren't too quick to pay their bills. So he'd put her in the car with him, and she'd yak all the way to Boston. He'd bring her with him to collect the money. It was good company for him. They always had a good rapport, the two of them.

MG: You're talking about Ann.

RP: Ann, yes. Because he was fishing a lot when the older ones were born. In fact, my brother-in-law, I told you, was fishing with him when Sandy was born. As soon as he heard that I was in the hospital and had a baby, Sam, my brother-in-law, Julia's husband, said, "That was the end. We got a broker." A broker means you don't finish the trip, and you don't make any money. As soon as he heard he had a son, the boat turned right around, and off we came home. He wanted to see the baby. It was a son. So he did have three boys and two girls. It was nice. We got along fine. The kids were good, so I can't say I had any traumatic experiences with them.

MG: The story you just told about Ann and her father is really cute. She told a similar story about taking her own son along with her on sales trips for Neptune's Harvest.

RP: Oh, yes. They do a lot of trips to different states for shows for fertilizer.

MG: She said that when he was a little baby, she would take him along.

RP: Did she? I don't remember her taking him as a baby, unless she went to Denver, where she had friends. Anyway, locally she did.

MG: Well, tell me more about how Ocean Crest evolved and then how Neptune's Harvest started.

RP: Well, that all started because what they used to do when they filleted the fish – because they had a fillet department. They had the department where they unloaded the boats, and they had the department where they took the fish and took the meat off what they called the rack. Then, of course, they sold the [fillet], but they would get rid of the gurry. I don't remember how they used to do it in the beginning. Oh, they had a "Dehyde," what they called the dehydration plant down the fish pier. So all the gurry from the all the fish companies went there, but the people in East Gloucester were not happy about that because it made a very bad smell over in East Gloucester, and they were complaining, complaining until the poor guy had to close it down. Then they started bringing it out beyond the breakwater and just dumping it. But that wasn't good either, because now you're getting all that stuff in the ocean. Probably floating ashore and to the beaches, and whatever. So Tony had heard about this fertilizer. I don't know how he heard about it or where he heard about it. He talked to somebody about – anyway, he went to Norway. He found out where to go. He found out where they were making the machinery for it. He stayed until he saw how it worked and what they were doing. So then he bought the machinery, and he had it shipped here to Gloucester. The fellow that obviously he was talking to in Norway came to Gloucester and helped supervise putting the machinery up and getting it going before he went back. That's how the fertilizer business started. It started down at Ocean Crest. They still grind it there. One of my sons, Tony, is in charge of that department. They have these big huge green tanks. I don't know if you've ever been down to Ocean Crest at all. Well, they put up these three four tanks. You see them from all over Gloucester if you're looking towards the fort. They're bright green. You can't miss them. They fill them with the fertilizer, and then they bring it by truck or whatever to Neptune's. They had to buy property at an industrial park here just beyond Magnolia Avenue on the road to West Gloucester there. So

there's a big industrial complex there where there's all kinds of different businesses. They were one of the first ones there. There may have been six around that time, and now it's loaded with different businesses. They also have an empty lot next door; if they have to expand someday, they can do that. Did she show you the garden in the back?

MG: No.

RP: They have a vegetable garden in the back. You've seen the whole plant up there, Neptune's?

MG: Just a conference room.

RP: Just the first room?

MG: I'll have to do a tour another time.

RP: Yes. You'll have to take the tour. Anyway, it's a nice building. They keep it nice and clean. They have some lady that comes in and does the cleaning. I had to use the bathroom there one day recently. I said, "Ann, who keeps this place clean? It's immaculate." So she told me they have a lady; her husband works for them, too. She does the bathrooms and keeps the offices clean. But out back, she wanted to pick some vegetables that day. We went out back, and she put a chair there so I could sit while she picked some vegetables off the vines and trees and whatever. They're raised beds that they built out there. That way they can help themselves, whatever they want. Anyway, where was I going with this story? I forgot.

MG: Did you ever get involved in the business?

RP: No. As I said, I was there one day, and I told you they didn't want me. They felt like I was probably spying on them. I don't know. I had taken high school courses, all the business courses at high school, and two more years at Kathleen Dell, but no, they didn't want me there. [laughter] So I took care of all the business at home, all the bills and everything else.

MG: Did you ever work anywhere else outside the home?

RP: No. Not really.

MG: Can you say more about what it has meant to have such a successful family-involved business in Gloucester all these years?

RP: It's been great. It was nice to know that everybody is settled in a business and working at what they love. They're working hard. They all worked hard. My brother's family is working at the Gloucester House. My family is all working. My sister Julia and Anita, their husbands were fishermen, and they wanted to get out of the fishing industry. That's when my father started the mink food business. I didn't tell you that one. Yeah, so they had a plant down the Fort, too. They were taking the fish remains of whatever and making mink food out of it. They had a nice business going, too. My father had all his sons-in-law working.

MG: Tell me more about the mink food business.

RP: Well, I didn't know too much about it because my sister's husbands were running that, but I know it was down the Fort.

MG: Were the minks to make jackets from?

RP: It was my father's idea. I don't know where he got the idea, but he must have heard about it. Since they wanted to go into business for themselves, he figured, "Okay, I'll set them up in the mink food business." They ran it and did well.

MG: Was that another business that processed the seafood?

RP: Yes, that's what they used – seafood to make the mink food. Yes, it was probably the same idea – the remains of the fish to make the mink food. Probably still grinding it over there at the – I don't know what they called it. I know my sister Julia worked in the office there for quite a while. It was GMF, Gloucester Mink Food.

MG: What was the name of that business?

RP: I can't even think of the name of it. We always called it the mink food plant. I know it must have had a name. Maybe Mike has it in that album.

MG: Was the point to feed minks, and the minks would be made into coats?

RP: Well, my husband took me to Ipswich one time to visit the mink, and they were all in cages there. I don't know if he got the idea from those people or how he got the idea, but they were feeding it mink food. Maybe that's where my father got the idea. I really don't know how that got started. But they were doing something with the fish also, to make the mink food. I don't know if they were pellets. That I can't help you with. Ann could call my sister Anita and find out. Anita might know. Julia's had a stroke and can't talk very well.

MG: What happened with Ocean Crest when your husband's partner, Ed, passed away? Did someone take over his share of the business?

RP: His sons. He had three sons that worked there. Yes, they all worked there. I had three sons working there, and he had three. One of them just passed – I don't know if Ann told you – Lennie. My sister Marianne, the one that passed away young, well, her youngest son, who was fifty-three, just passed away about three weeks ago. He was dying with cancer for almost a year. He just passed away a few weeks ago. He was very close to Ann because they were only eight or nine months apart in age. So Ann was my last, but it was after seven years, and it was her last. The other two were a little older. So Marianne and I were very close because our husbands were in the fish business together. We did a lot of things together, socially and around town. So our children, the two younger ones, Lennie and Ann, were always together. So she took it really bad

when he passed away. We all did because he was only fifty-three. He had cancer and didn't make it.

MG: I am so sorry to hear that.

RP: Yes, that was just recently. Ann spent a lot of time with him. His house wasn't too far from here. She'd stop there all the time on her way here. On Friday nights, a lot of them would get together and go spend the night there with him. Not the whole night. I mean, the evening. They kept him company quite a bit. His two older brothers were good, too. You can erase all this.

MG: Do you want to take a break and have some more water?

RP: No, I've got the water. It's just that my throat is drying out.

MG: I only have a few more questions. What's been your relationship with other fishing families in Gloucester?

RP: Close, because my sister-in-law's husbands were all fishermen. My sister's husbands were until they went into the fish business. So immediate families on both sides were all fishermen. A lot of our friends' husbands were fishermen. So we had a lot in common.

MG: Can you talk about some of the changes you've seen in Gloucester in terms of the commercial fishing fleet and the waterfront?

RP: There's been a lot of changes over the years. I'm trying to remember some of them. Well, when you think about it, my father had an oil business and a fish business, and he helped with the fertilizer business. Then the mink food business and the restaurant. He helped practically everybody in the family get started in business. He's a good businessman.

MG: What other changes in Gloucester have you seen?

RP: I'm sure there's been a lot. Let me see. Those are all changes that I've already given you, all these businesses that started up.

MG: Are there fewer boats?

RP: Oh, I don't think the fleet is as big as it was, no. I'm pretty sure it's not. I don't think there are as many fish plants around as there used to be either.

MG: What about changes in terms of the climate or weather?

RP: Climate? Here in Gloucester?

MG: Yes.

RP: The climate's always the same – spring, summer, fall, winter. I can't think of anything you'd be interested in. I'm trying.

MG: It's okay. Maybe tell me about your grandkids now.

RP: Well, Ann's son is working in the business. Tony has a son and a daughter working in the business; Abey Parco is in the office at Ocean Crest. Tony has twins. Nick Parco is working at both plants. He works two days at Ocean Crest, and three at Neptune's Harvest. He's the computer guy. He's helping Ann with ads and stuff like that, too. I have a godchild working there, Maribeth, also my niece. Have you met Maribeth?

MG: I'm not sure.

RP: She's a little peanut who works behind the desk.

MG: I think I did meet her.

RP: (Mary Beth?), yes. She's my godchild. She's my husband's sister's daughter. Linda is still there. My son Tony and Linda are in the process of getting a divorce. It's been going on for a year. I don't know what's going on there. She worked in the office there, and she's still there. She's not going to leave. They're not going to fire her. We keep our exes. Ann's ex is still around town, too, Danny Molloy. Still very friendly, sociable when we see him. Linda takes me home sometimes if I call, and I need a ride home from the beauty shop up the street. I just call Neptune's and somebody comes, one of my kids or Linda will come, my ex-daughter-in-law-to-be. You can take all of this out of there; you don't need that. But she's a lovely girl. These things happen. Ann left Danny, and that's been years. She's raised Tommy practically on her own. He lives in his grandmother's house down the Fort, and he loves it because he's got the water view. He's got the ocean there. He's got Rocky Neck across the water. He and Katelin, they're getting married in July. 7/11 he said – July 11th. They're already in the process of making plans. They just had engagement pictures taken.

MG: Can you tell me more about what's unique about Gloucester? Can you describe it for someone who's never been here before?

RP: All I can say is it's beautiful. Gloucester is beautiful. We have the harbor. We have beaches. We have many restaurants. I wouldn't move from here. I wouldn't. Where else are you going to find everything we have? Especially now. The boulevard is beautiful with all the flowers down there. These ladies are doing a fantastic job. It's all volunteer work. Ann has donated all the fertilizer for those flowers down there. So I feel like we've done our part. They did that show on *Chronicle* that she was in. She did an excellent job on that. Did you see that one?

MG: I think I saw it on YouTube.

RP: Yes, it was on TV twice, actually. She has three copies of it, too. But she did a good job on it. She knows her business. The pictures that they took with the drones from the air of the

boulevard were gorgeous. All summer long, I never saw so many people in cars down the boulevard. I think that's what did it, that *Chronicle* story because it made Gloucester look just as beautiful as it is. The boulevard was beautiful, the harbor, the beaches. It just showed all the beauty of Gloucester besides the industries. So it's beautiful. The fishermen, when they went to Boston, they didn't like it there. As soon as they would take a trip, say if they came to Gloucester to unload a trip or something, they all fell in love with Gloucester. So little by little, they all moved to Gloucester. They probably still have some fishermen in the North End in Boston, but they have a harbor, and they have fish companies there, too, because I know Tony did business with them. But they're tenement houses and the narrow streets. It's a city. But here, you have the wide-open spaces, plenty of parks, plenty of places to hike and walk and mountains to climb. We just have everything here.

MG: Yes, Gloucester is beautiful.

RP: It is beautiful.

MG: Can I ask when your husband passed away?

RP: About fifteen years ago. He was eighty-three. He had cancer.

MG: How has life been for you since?

RP: We had a great life together. We did everything. He was very good to me. He humored me. He wasn't crazy about traveling, but he would please me. We've been all over. We've been to China and Japan and Hong Kong and Hawaii and Australia and New Zealand, and almost all the states. Well, half of them anyway for sure. We had a condo in Florida for many years. We just sold it when I got sick. We went to a lot of fisheries conventions all over the country, too. In fact, that's when we went to Japan and Hawaii because that's where the convention was in Hawaii. This other couple from Boston, they had a fish company too. He said to my husband, "We'd like to plan a side trip when we go to Hawaii. How would you like to come with us and go to Japan and Hong Kong?" So he came home. Now, I happened to be lying down because I don't know if I had a headache; I wasn't feeling good that day. As soon as he said, "Do you want to take a trip here, there, and everywhere" – he said, "You perked up fast." [laughter] Because I love to travel. We did a lot of travel. We went to Sicily and Italy and France and Portugal and Spain. We did the whole Riviera. We went to Israel, Madagascar, Turkey. I bought rugs [for] my bedroom in Turkey. I got this ring in Hong Kong.

MG: It's beautiful.

RP: It's jade. I always like to get something from the place I went to. I've been to Canada, Alaska. We did the Alaskan cruise in the northwest, that beautiful section of Canada. Took a bus trip right across, almost to the East Coast and back. I'm trying to think. England, Ireland, and Scotland – we did that. In fact, we went with Marianne and Ed, my brother-in-law and my sister Marianne. Her husband had cousins there. We had a great time in Ireland. They were teaching us the Irish jig and all that. We had fun. I haven't seen some of the Scandinavian countries. My husband landed in the hospital in Israel. We were on a bus trip, and he started

getting sick. He didn't feel well. His face started getting red and his eyes. He was a mass of red. So they fixed up a bed in the back of the bus, and the tour director said, "I think we'll wait until we get to Israel before we try to get a doctor," because we had been in little small places, and he wanted to make sure he got good care. So as soon as we got to Israel and the hotel, they called a doctor. He said, "This man has to be in the hospital." He had cellulitis. I figure it was when we went to Egypt, on that same trip. We rode camels, let's put it that way. All this dust that you inhale, of course, the dung dries up into the dust. Something must have gotten infected in his nose. So little by little, he was getting redder and redder. The tour bus had to leave us, believe it or not, and now I'm left in a hotel. They told me I had to leave because the rooms were booked. My tour bus had to leave. My husband's in the hospital. So every day, I must have changed three hotels. From there, I went to the King David. Then I went to another one, the Mount of Olives. I said, "Well, at least I'm in a good place here. Jesus was here praying." I could look down to where he was praying. But the first room they showed me was twice the size of this one, and three sides of it was all glass, and there was a cemetery outside. I said to them, "I'm not staying in this room." Anyway, they finally managed to get me a room. I changed three times on my own. Every day I had to get a taxi to go to the hospital. Every day I'd get a different one. I couldn't hire the same one because the Muslims didn't work on certain days, the Christians didn't work on Sunday, and the Jewish people didn't work on Saturday or something. So whoever was waiting outside for me, I'd have to find a taxi every day. Anyway, we managed. I'd go visit him in the hospital every day. Had to go in the back door. Beautiful hospital in Israel. You couldn't even go in the front door. You had to go in the back door because as soon as you went in, you had to put your purse and any bag. If you had anything with you, it had to go on a long wooden table. All these guys were sitting behind the table. As you went in, you put everything down, and they had a ruler. They didn't touch anything, but they made sure you didn't have any contraband or guns or whatever in your bags or purses. But the lobby had one big marble wall with the engraved names of all the people in this country, Jewish people, that had donated to build that hospital. It was a lovely hospital. He was in good hands. They were the ones with the curls that wore the black hats and the curls. There was a man in the next bed, elderly man. I think he thought we were nuts or something because I was taking pictures of my husband. He probably was thinking, "Why is she taking pictures of him the way he looked?" I wanted to save it for posterity. I don't even know where they are now. Anyway, he would laugh at me every time I went in the room because I always had something – I was trying to keep Tony happy. Let's put it that way. I'd cheer him up and make a joke or something. I think he thought I was nuts. He finally got healed. From there, we went to Sicily because the whole trip started because we were invited to a wedding in Sicily. This young fellow had come from Italy, and he was fishing out of Gloucester, and taking his fish out at Ocean Crest. Then he was going to go back to Italy and get married. So he invited us to the wedding. So I said to Tony, "If we're going back to Sicily" – we had already been there and met all my relatives and his relatives. I said, "Let's make a trip of it." That's when we did Egypt, and Israel, and Turkey, a little bit of Portugal and Spain and France. I lost my train of thought.

MG: The wedding in Sicily.

RP: Yes. So after he got better, we went back. We did go to Sicily because we had the tickets. I don't know if we had to change them or what. The tour director had taken me to the American Embassy, but they couldn't do anything for me. Can you believe that? They couldn't find me a

hotel room either. Anyway, when I was talking to one of the doctors at the hospital, he says, what do you mean they couldn't find you a room? He called his nurse in. He said, "Find her a room," and that's how I got the King David, the big hotel that I was – the second one. The third one, I don't know how I got that one. They were very helpful, I have to say. I didn't have a bad experience, but it was a little lonesome. I had to keep going from hotel to hotel with my baggage. It turned out okay. So we went to the wedding. Now, this guy comes in – there was a couple that had lived in Gloucester, so Tony knew them. They had moved back to Sicily. They were sitting at our table. This guy comes over, little short guy. Very important looking. They're talking to him. They introduced us. When he left, they said, "Do you know who you were just talking to?" My husband and I said, "No." "That was the head of the Italian mafia." [laughter] He seemed like a very normal human being to me. [laughter] I never thought I'd meet the head of the mafia. I guess this [inaudible], his father must have known him well to invite him to the wedding. So I've had some funny experiences.

MG: Well, it's been a treat to hear all about them. Is there anything I forgot to ask you about or other stories you want to share?

RP: There's a lot of stories, but I can't think of them all at once.

MG: Well, if you do think of more that you would like to add to the record, you can write it down and add it later.

RP: Okay. [laughter] You're going to have to delete some of this stuff.

MG: I'll send you a transcript, and you can let me know what to delete.

RP: Please. No, I've had a lot of funny experiences over the years. It's just that I can't remember them all at the moment. When you've lived as long as I've lived, you've experienced a lot.

MG: I bet.

RP: One time, in Australia, we were in a bar. We were in the hotel, and there was a bar. There was a young boy there. I don't know how we got to talking, if the TV was on over the bar or what. *Days of our Lives* comes on. It's a series that's on TV. It's been on for fifty years. My sister got me hooked on that. She comes running in my house one day to pick up her son because the nursery school beach wagon had dropped him off. She was taking a hairdressing course in Salem, so she'd have her son dropped at my house. So when she came to pick him up, she'd run in and turn on my TV because she didn't want to miss *Days of Our Lives*. So she got me hooked on it, and that was fifty years ago. Ann was little. So now I'm in Australia, a few of us chitchatting away. The TV comes on, and I said, "Oh, *Days of Our Lives*." So the bartender, a young boy – well, he must have been old enough to sell liquor. He says, "Do you know what happens?" I said, "Oh, we're ahead of this one." "Oh, well, what happened to this one? What happened?" He wanted to know all the history of the story. [laughter] I got a kick out of that because it was a young boy. I never thought he'd be interested in *Days of Our Lives*, but once you get hooked, you get hooked.

MG: [laughter] I bet. Well, unless there's anything else you can think of –

RP: Not right now. If I think of anything else, I will make a note of it and let you know.

MG: Okay, good. I'm down this way quite a bit.

RP: Okay.

MG: Well, this has really been such a treat. Thank you for spending so much time with me.

RP: Well, I've enjoyed it myself. You're bringing back a lot of memories, too.

MG: Good. Well, I'll turn the recorder off. Thank you so much for your time.

RP: You're welcome.

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Reviewed by Molly Graham 12/19/2019

Reviewed by Rosalie Parco 3/9/2019

Reviewed by Molly Graham 3/17/2019