

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANCIS J. MCGINLEY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Paul Shi: This begins an interview with Mr. Francis J. McGinley on August 11, 2010, in Toms River, New Jersey, with Paul Shi and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Thank you very much Mr. McGinley for having us here this morning and to begin could you state for the record where and when you were born?

Francis J. McGinley: I was born in 1928, in fact I was born on Thanksgiving Day of that year. ... I grew up in East Harlem, New York City and it was right at the heat of the Depression which came the following year--Wall Street--in 1929. ... I don't really trace back any memory until maybe I was about four, five, or six years of age. I could remember we lived in an apartment in East Harlem where steam heat was just put in. This was a new revelation because up to then it was all, throw it into the furnace and just hope that you could keep warm. ... In the kitchen I remember a six burner stove where you had to lift it up, you didn't have jets to turn it on, you had to have coal to heat to keep it warm. The stove itself weighed about two tons sitting in the kitchen and it was big. In fact if it was a little bit bigger I think we could have put our plates right then and on it. [laughter] But we used that to give us heat at night when we went to bed. That was the main heat that we had in the apartment. ... When the steam heat came, boy that was a revolution because then we got up at six o'clock and everyone was banging for the heat because the janitor, he was sound asleep, he didn't bother getting up. To him, "Hey it's up to you to keep warm, not me," but then again he liked to go out the night before and have a few drinks. [laughter]

SH: Let us back up a bit and begin talking about your family history. Let us start with your father. What about his family and where was he from?

FM: My father was born in Ireland, in County Fermanagh in the northern part of Ireland and so my mother used to call him, "Nothing but a Johnny Bull subject," and she was from the southern part of Ireland. So, I had the orange and the green fighting at the very beginning.

SH: Were they both Catholic?

FM: Yes, both Catholics and my mother came over here and she was here first, and she ended up staying with cousins of hers in Philadelphia, but then she came to New York City and the two of them met I don't know where, I never asked them, they never told me, so I didn't bother getting any information on it. ... I remember my father was working with the New York Central Railroad and my mother she was an attendant at Wards Island mental institution. ... I remember my father worked all the way through the Depression. He was working for five cents an hour with the New York Central Railroad and it wasn't easy work, but it was a job, and my mother, she was making more money than he was, she was making I think fifteen cents an hour at the start, but in those days you got by. You had to get by--there was no other way.

SH: Were there other family members of either your father or your mother in this country?

FM: ... I'm the last survivor of that whole group. All of the members of my father and mother's family outside of the grandchildren, they're all dead. So, it feels a little eerie, you know, because I knew them all growing up. All of them in my father's family, three of his five brothers got to

the United States, one died during World War II. ... I remember my father he received a fractured skull when he was working with the railroad in 1935 and it was kind of rough because they didn't pay in those days, and so he wasn't getting his five cents an hour, but he damned them anyway. You know you do things that you don't see today. I remember when I was about six and a young girl who lived next door to me, she and I used to go out early in the day, especially on the weekends and see ... how many packages of cigarettes--empty packs--that we could find so that we could take the aluminum foil that was wrapped around the cigarettes. We would roll them into balls, and then we would bring them up. We lived on 118th Street, there was a place on 121st where the guy collected it, he'd weigh it, and give you a few pennies for it and ... hey, not too bad. ... One day we got fifteen cents between the two of us and in those days fifteen cents was a lot of money, and we didn't tell our parents because they would have taken it away from us. ... I can remember those vividly, I can see them again. They were good times and in Harlem, it was an area, a lot of them called it "Little Italy." ... We had a multitude of different religions and different variations of people living there. Park Avenue was the dividing point. On one side of Park Avenue, everyone was black. On the other side everyone was white, but this is the way it was in those days, segregation was big, but we still got along together. Where we got along together we could go in to their neighborhoods because we played stickball against them, they played stickball against us. We were friends. Every so often there was a dispute, but people could walk the streets at night, not what you can do now in New York City, you can't walk any street at night. ... We grew up through the hard times and we lived through it and I remember one day, ... May the 6th, 1937, a blimp flew over, we were playing stickball and this big thing comes over, it was a big blimp, and it just goes over our apartments and it was very low, and all we could hear is "tat-tat-tat-tat" as the motors went by. It was the *Hindenburg*, making its last move before it headed down to Lakehurst. So, I did see this, not much of it, just the bottom part, and it cast a big shadow over the stickball game, and we all looked at up at it and we said, "Wow, look at that," and it was very silent, all you heard was the "tat-tat-tat-tat" as it went by and that was an experience. [Editor's Note: On May 6, 1937, the Nazi airship *Hindenburg* crashed in Lakehurst, New Jersey killing thirty-six people.] When I went to school my father and mother always had somebody at the house for me. ... My sister was four years older than I was. ... She had no interest in me because I was, "You're young," and besides that she went out with girls, and we didn't want to see girls, we didn't even care for them. We were more interested in playing ball. I went to St. Paul's parochial school on 118th Street, the church was on 117th Street. ... The church still stands from what I understand today. They were back to back so you could walk from one to the other. So, if it rained you didn't have to walk around the street to get to the church, you just went underneath, and we loved that part.

SH: Had your sister gone to parochial school?

FM: Oh, yes, she was in St. Paul's and she was four years ahead of me, but in those days you didn't have mixed classes, girls were on one side, boys were on the other side, don't cross the middle because if you had a nun there, you were dead. They would think nothing of taking the yardstick and put your hands out, you'd go back where you were supposed to go, and that meant boys or girls, and we got through, we had a good time, and I'd say we had a darn good education.

SH: Did you come home for lunch or did you eat there?

FM: I just ran across the street, I lived on 118th Street. ... Actually, if you walked out of the school door and just crossed the street you're in my house. I lived right on the corner of 118th and Park. The only thing that was noisy there was that you had the trains going by from the New York Central and when they went by the whole house just shook. You got used to it after a while and my father worked all his life until he died on the railroad on 116th Street which was only two blocks away so he had it made there for a while, but I do remember going to school and that was when I first started to love art. ... There was a teacher in the first grade, her name was Miss (Dalgin?) and she said a very strange thing in the first grade, "You paint nicely. Paint and enjoy it, don't let anyone change the way you're painting because if they do, you won't enjoy it. So, always remember that ... and I will help you along as much as I can." She was also besides being a first grade teacher, she used to go out once a week to all the classes throughout the school and help them with their art, and when I was in the 8th grade she had myself and two other students enter into a contest in New York City for all the graduates of parochial and elementary schools and public schools so that all the children had an opportunity to go into this contest. Now it was held in ... the end of 1941, the beginning of '42. All the paintings had to be in by May, and then they would decide who the winners would be. Well, the three of us got into it and I did a painting at that time. December 7th, of course, was Pearl Harbor, and I decided at that time to do a painting and I said, "Gee, what can I do." Wake Island happened to come along, April, and I decided to do a painting of Wake Island with the Marines. The painting was submitted and the other two kids, they also put their paintings in, and lo and behold the three of us won first, second and third, but we didn't know it until we were graduating. Archbishop, or Cardinal Spellman at that time presented the graduation certificates to all of us, diplomas, but then he also made a big announcement. He says, "I have one thing to say, I have three awards from the City of New York. There was an art competition," and he says, "these three students came out one, two, three," and he just rattled off the names, (Eva Marie?), I can't remember her last name, and Bob (Sant?) and myself, and he gave us these certificates from the Natural History Museum of New York City. To this day they still have the painting. They kept the paintings, they wouldn't give them back to us. I'm trying to get in touch with them, but I can't get anyone to answer the phone. They dropped me off after I said, "I'd like to speak with someone to get information about the painting, I'd love to put it in the book I'm doing." So, I'm going to continue to see if I can get through to them, I'd love to have that because that was my first painting that I put into any show, and then when I went into high school I thought, "Well, this would be great." I took art.

SH: Now did you consider parochial high school?

FM: I had made Cardinal Hayes and I had made Fordham Prep, ... but we could not afford the twenty dollars a month that it was for the tuition, it was just too high. Times had not changed at that point back in the early '40s. It was a question of people surviving, like the rent that we were paying then was twenty dollars a month. You can't get anything in New York City today for that or anywhere I don't think, but these were hard times, and so I went along and I went to Commerce High which is no longer in existence in New York City. ... It did have a good background of personnel that went to it, Lou Gehrig for one, he went to the school, and quite a few others. We had attendees from the city, I remember in our group we had a relation of the Bill O'Dwyer who became mayor, we had one of his family in there. So it had a good history, but I remember going back to what was told to me by Miss (Dalgin?) in the first grade. When I

hit the art class and I was introduced to the teacher ... he says, "Everyone of you, I want you to see how good you paint," and he's going around and he says, "No, I don't like what you're doing," he says, "I want you to do it the way I'm painting," and I says, "No, I want to paint my way." He says, "I'm not going to argue with you," he says, "Go down to the principal and ... change to something else, I don't want you in this class." ... I walked out and I was grabbed by the back of the neck, and I looked around and it was a guy, stood about 6'6," he was bald headed with white hair on the side and he says, "So you think you can paint?" ... "Yes." He says, "Oh, do you have anything to show me?" ... "I have some work at home." He says, "I want you to bring it in to me and come up to my class, I'm in room 304." "Okay," so I brought my work in the next morning and he looked at it, he says, "What do you do with the weekends?" I says, "Oh, I play baseball and so forth." He says, "Well, I'm going to tell you something," he says, "I'd like you to come down to my house and I'll help you paint the way you want to paint." So, I went down there, and I had an education. ... I couldn't get anywhere as far as being taught. He couldn't teach me because he taught the seniors. I eventually got to him, but no one knew that I was going down to his house, he says, "Keep it quiet," which I did and that was the start of my art, but when I got out of high school, the war just was ending. I had just reached the age of seventeen in November, but the war ended in August, so I was not given a free entry pass to join the Army or anything at that point, and my father was very elated because he had found a way for us, things were a little bit better now in '45 and '46, and my father used to love to go up to a movie house that we had ... called the RKO Proctors, and every Tuesday and Wednesday night they had what they call, not amateur night, but entertainment night, and we got to see one night Tom Mix and his horse. We even had Bob Hope that we saw, and my father would love to sit up there with the whole bunch of us and all my friends, and we would watch them up there, and so we saw some terrific acts which you wouldn't see today for the price that you paid, and in fact when you went to the movies, we got in free if we would on the weekends give out the pamphlets to the people to come to the movies. Then, when we got to the movies, they'd give you an envelope, and you could get from a penny to a half a dollar. This was an incentive and things were getting a little bit better as we moved along. Then, of course the war ended. My mother, she became ill, and I remember she was in the hospital at Wards Island and she came down with an illness called tic douloureux. I don't know if you ever heard of it, it's considered the worst pain in the world and she had that and it knocked her for a loop in the side of her face. Anytime she got it, she was just bent over with pain. They put her into Lenox Hill Hospital where they finally were going to get to operate on it. They said the only thing is she would have been paralyzed in her face, and on the whole left side because that's where the pain was, but the night before the operation, the pain disappeared. As my mother says, "the act of God," and I'm not going to argue, no one will argue that, but she never had it back again. I remember, I was drafted in 1950, and had the privilege of meeting Dwight D. Eisenhower on July the 4th, 1950 at Valley Forge National Jamboree for Boy Scouts. ... He said to me when I was up there, I was in charge of getting the stage ready for the Boy Scouts since I was working with the National Service, and he says, "How are you doing, young man?" ... I turned around, I says, "Not too good." He says, "Why, what's the matter?" I say, "I just got a letter from a guy by the name of Harry S. Truman that I got to report for duty, go down and take a physical." He says, "That's alright," he says, "I've served a little time too," but that was my first introduction to someone that I had met, that really became President of the United States, I mean hey, later on ... he became President, and I found out who he was that day on the 4th of July, I said "Wow," and I did a painting which I'm putting in my book, a sketch of Eisenhower from one of the photographs that

they had done of him, and it's just a quickie, but it will be in my book, and then, when I did get into the service I was lucky, I defended the West Coast against invasion. They had other plans.

...

SH: Before we get to that stage, I would like to go back and ask a few questions about your growing up. As a young man you said times were tough and you explained some of the circumstances. Did you have any other siblings?

FM: No, that was all. ... Just the two of us.

SH: Your mother, did she always work?

FM: As far as I can remember she always worked.

SH: How did she get to Wards Island?

FM: Well, what it was, she would walk up to 125th Street, and she would then take the bus over to Wards Island. ... She worked the four to twelve shift, and she would come home at midnight, and she was home by one o'clock, and she would come home the same way, but she always walked from 125th Street to 118th Street, and in those days you could walk the streets at any hour of the day. Drugs were not prevalent. They were around probably, but they weren't what it is today.

SH: What were her duties at Wards Island?

FM: She was an attendant and took care of a lot of the patients, and when she was ill, for a while, she had a bed over there, and she said she had constant visitors, constantly from the ones she took care of.

SH: Your father, what were his duties on the railroad?

FM: He was a trackman, and his duty was to make sure the tracks were clear and the trains were coming the right way. He was given a list of how the trains would be running that day, and he would know where to position himself and warn the fellows to get off the tracks. In fact, later on when he did die, a train came up on the wrong track, and he was looking the wrong way and came out of the tunnel at 103rd Street, but these were things that happened, but he worked as a trackman all along the Hudson River, and then 116th Street for many, many years.

PS: Did you ever get the chance to travel outside of the city?

FM: Oh, yes, well actually the New York Central left Grand Central Station, that was its home base, and it went up along the Hudson River and we had some good swimming holes up along the Hudson River, so we used to go up all through the summer. We had passes. In those days they gave the family passes, so we used to hop on it and go up to a place just outside of Tarrytown called Philipse Manor and we'd go swimming up there. We went up to Harmon, rode all the way up. I have traveled up as far as Albany on the railroad and came back, and I used to

enjoy the train, and it was just at the turn off when they used to have steam going through the city but then it turned to the electric, and that was a godsend because try a tunnel with steam, it just didn't work, but it was an interesting ride. Trains were good, and when the electric came in, oh that changed the whole format. The only thing is you had to watch out for a lot of people. When it was first laid, you had to watch out for the third rail. A lot of people got electrocuted without realizing what they were doing, they were stepping on it, and it was funny because the third rail generally had a cover over it, but the people always stepped their foot inside--now why I don't know--and they would hit the rail.

SH: Really?

FM: Well, you know what it is--you don't know with kids, even adults.

SH: As a young person, did you have chores?

FM: Yes, take the dog out, empty the cat "do," the dog "do." ... The dog was pretty good, it was just the cat that would, and the cat had--it was funny--he had his own place underneath the kitchen tub, and you had to put a drape around it because the cat was very sensitive, and then running to the store and emptying garbage, and things of that nature.

SH: You had said that some of your father's brothers came to this country. Did your mother have family come as well?

FM: No, she only had a sister and she lived and died in Ireland. I never met her.

SH: Your mother was from County Sligo?

FM: ... She was born in, as she says, "One foot in Sligo and one foot in Mayo." She was born in a town called Charlestown, but she said Sligo was the County. So that's what she got.

SH: Did they ever go back to visit Ireland?

FM: No. No, there were reasons, I won't go into it. ... Where my father came there was an awful lot of trouble and then the Black and Tans came in, and that added even more trouble. ... They were happy here, they came to America, they made their home here. ... Many of the immigrants who came over and I will say this, they were all legal that came over at that time, and they didn't have money, none of us did. I remember my father used to always love to have his shirts starched up tight, and it was a Chinese laundry because they were great in those days with the laundry, and my father would bring them down there and the two of them would have a drink here and a drink there, but he would always take care of my father's shirts, and my father would never give them to me to take down, he wanted to make sure it got down there in a safe way and not be put into the mud going down if were playing ball on the way and this is what we went through. ...

SH: Was your family involved in any Irish organizations?

FM: Not really, although on St. Patrick's Day in those days, I remember my mother used to take us down to some of the balls, the Irish balls and my father when he was alive he would go the same way--he'd love that. The only thing is he'd get lost, and he was very close to his brother Andy, and he'd go over there a lot, and the two of them used to drive his wife nuts, so I mean it was close, not that we had much to do with his family--Andy's family--for the simple reason is that they were all about ten years older than I was, and as a result, some of them were married when I was going into high school. So, although I knew them and I met them, we had nothing really in common growing up, and which was fine, this happened of course. ... He had his other brother, Eddie, he died, I remember he was my Uncle Ed, he died in the 1930s, in the mid-'30s so I really didn't get to know him, but his family and my family, we were very close and we got along together, and which made it good so there was an attachment of families, but it was more of attachment of the two of us because we were closer in age, where Andy was the oldest of all the brothers. ... I always remember he was a gruff individual, very stern and so forth, but here again, it worked.

SH: Did your family send money back to the family in Ireland?

FM: Oh, yes, that they did, because in Ireland it was rough, very rough living in those days, and she sent the tidbits and my father would send it over there, and of course when my father's mother and father both passed away that ceased because all the brothers were gone. They only had five brothers in that family, no girls, just like Eddie Cantor had five girls.

SH: Were you involved in any kind of organized sports? You talked about the Boy Scouts.

FM: Yes, well I was a member of the Boy Scouts starting out, and I achieved first class scout, but I also played baseball in high school, and played a little semi-pro after I got out of high school, and then, I used to coach. ... Before I even started coaching baseball, I became a scoutmaster, so I had an association with the Boy Scouts, I guess from 1939 all the way through and when I went into the service, and then when I came back out of the service, I was a little active for a very short period of time. ... I played ball right up until I went into the service.

SH: One question that I do want to ask was, what was the reaction in your family when you heard that Hitler had invaded Poland?

FM: ... I'm writing a segment that I have in the book. I remember I was doing my homework and it was about six o'clock at night, Sunday night, and my father was sitting at the table along with my cousin John. My cousin John was a merchant seaman captain, and he was planning to take me on a trip into the Caribbean that next summer when I was off from school. When the word came over the radio, Gabriel Heatter was talking and he said that Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese and went on to give the information about it--and my father spilt the beer all over the floor. It just fell out of his hand and John, my cousin, he just listened to that. He was shocked. Then, my father says, "God save us all," and he was really broken up and the beer was all over the place, but that was alright, he cleaned that up, we all cleaned it up, but that was the introduction that I got to the start of World War II, and then, of course when I was in ... regular school, I was graduating, that's when I did the painting of Wake Island.

SH: To go back and talk about the beginning of the war in Europe, were there any discussions about the family that was still in Ireland?

FM: No, ... the only one who was still alive during that period of time was my mother's sister and she was at the farm. ... In high school, in grade school at that time, there was talk about it, but really we knew we were at war, and right off the bat, good friend of mine Tommy (Murtha?), his brother Jimmy was already going into the service and my next door neighbor living on the same downstairs from me, (Fabrissio?), he got his call, he was going, he went on December the 8th to join the Marines. So, the effect was quite heavy. Right off the bat everyone was signing up, and I was amazed later on when I found out, when I was ... getting some information for the book, that fifteen million men and women were under arms at the time of World War II. That's how many men and women we had signed in the service.

SH: To back up to high school, it was divided between women and men?

FM: No, not at the beginning. ... In 1942 it was all boys, '43, it was all boys, in '44 the word came that they were going to take all the girls out of Harren and move them up to Commerce. We went on strike, but it didn't last, the mayor says, "No, that's the way it's going to be and that's the way it will be." Then, they brought the girls in, and it wasn't too bad, but a lot of the guys, they didn't know what, what are you going to do, you know, he says, "We got to watch our language, you can't curse in front of the girls." Well, we found out they could do better than we could. ... I loved baseball, I ran a little track in it, but the doctor found a flutter in my heart and says, "No, you don't do it any more, ... you got a little extra beat," so that was it, he says, "You can't run," but I still played baseball, it didn't bother me there, and then, in the last year I was elected senior vice president of the class and not that I did anything, I didn't even know I was being put up for it, but they put me up, they thought I'd get swamped, but I won. ... I enjoyed my four years in school, we had a lot of fun, we played baseball in Central Park which was easy, we could walk right to it from 66th Street and I enjoyed New York.

SH: Did you always live in the same house in the same area?

FM: In New York City, yes, until I went into service in 1950, six months later I found out that my family had moved to the Bronx, I guess they figured they'd get away from me. My sister got married and she and her husband eventually bought a house up there, and we got an apartment, a two family house they got, so we were living downstairs and they were living upstairs, and when I came home I thought, "Wow, I have my own bedroom." Up to that time I was sleeping on the couch in order to get by, but hey listen, hey everybody was getting upgraded, and it was just like when I was in the service, it was barracks to begin with, and we were like a bunch of gypsies, we were here today, gone tomorrow to another camp, but it was nice. I got to see an awful lot of the United States.

SH: Were you keeping track of how the war progressed in high school?

FM: Yes. What it was, we were very much into it. The defense department had instructed our school and the art teacher who helped me along, his name was Raymond Carter, he was doing for the defense department classes in camouflage and in making up islands of the Pacific and as a

result we learned how to do camouflage with pieces of string and everything else, and later on the defense department would send in reps to take pictures of seeing what we did, how we did, how it was compared to ground. We had to put together on a big, big table, an actual scene of the battle that would be going on, and where the camouflage, where you had your cannons and everything hidden, and this they came to get. We were not the only school that was doing that. ... The other part, we used to get cardboard, and cut it out and put it on as an island. They would give us the specs. In fact, I remember we were given one we didn't really know what it was, but it was Guadalcanal, the exact measurements of Guadalcanal, and that's what we had, so we cut the cardboard out. Then, when we had all the cardboard glued as it went up topography wise, we then put plaster of Paris on the whole thing, made it a little rough, then we put on it trees, painted it green, and we put on soap. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

FM: After we had the plaster of Paris and everything put on to it, we then had a duplicate of what the island actually looked like. Now, this was done actually in the heydays when Guadalcanal was the number one island, we were there fighting the Japs, and it was an island that nobody really wanted, but it was key to have. So, more fighting was done in Guadalcanal than should have been done, but it was done. When we would take it over the Japanese would then send in to take over. ...

SH: How aware are you of that in high school?

FM: ... The teacher kept telling us what was going on in the battles and that we weren't just doing this for fun. This was done for the government, and we were taking part in it, and you should feel honored that you were selected to do this, and that's the way we looked at it. So, as a result our history teacher, I remember them having to say, we want you when you read the newspaper, cut out all of the articles to do with the war, anything that has to do with the war, whether it be in Europe, the Pacific, or even in the United States. ... We had to get all of that, they forgot, during that period of time to give you history of bygones, they wanted the history of what was happening today, that you knew what was going on, and we did, and that's how we kept abreast of what was going on and, of course, word came back that (Fabriasio?), he got killed at the Solomon Islands, it wasn't Guadalcanal, but one of the others, and then, also (Jimmy Murtha?), he got killed over in France in 1944, so that was hard to take from a point, but this is the way it was. ...

SH: How did rationing affect your family?

FM: ... We had the rationing stamps and they're little red buttons ... but we were lucky because my mother used to bring home the food that was left over for the day, she was allowed to take so much, they allowed the attendants and so forth to take what the patients didn't eat so we always had a little bit of something coming in, mostly eggs. So we got by, but rationing was pretty rough on certain things. I remember during the early '40s it was hard to come across butter. That seemed to be one of the big staples that was not easy to get your hands on, but other than that, we survived.

SH: What about politics?

FM: Oh, there was only one way to go--you were either Democrat or you were dead.

SH: Oh, really?

FM: That's right, it was a strong, strong Democratic area. You got to remember, the unions were powerful in those days trying to come out of the doldrums, and the railroad, you had to be a union man, and the same with a lot of the others. So, as a result, they told you who you had to vote for.

SH: Really?

FM: Yes.

SH: Was your father involved in the union?

FM: No, he was not, no. He wasn't allowed to vote, he didn't become a citizen until '46, so he was lucky.

SH: What about your mother, were her politics the same as your father?

FM: You know what, most of them voted because that's the way they were told because we had people living on the block, they were the ones who were involved into politics and they told everybody else, "Look, you see how good I'm treating you, bring you turkeys at Christmas and at Thanksgiving?" and it was always the Democrats. You never even heard the word Republican.

SH: Did your mother become a citizen as well?

FM: ... My mother was a citizen well before my father. ... That's why she always said, if he got a step out of trouble, she'd send him back to Johnny Bull.

SH: Did they speak Gaelic?

FM: No. My mother could speak it, but she felt we're here in America. She didn't want to speak because my father couldn't understand Gaelic.

SH: Were your mother and father involved in the church?

FM: Oh, yes, they would be at church and my mother worked when she could with the Rosary Society, and my father if they were giving out a free beer or something, he might go over there that night.

SH: Was your mother involved in any kind of activities for the war?

FM: No, she didn't have time for that because they had enough problems with the people in the hospital at that time because they were taking also others who were coming back. They didn't have enough beds in hospitals, so they had an area even in Wards Island where they would put a few of the wounded soldiers and so forth, and a lot of people don't even realize that this happened. So, they were kept busy, you know, doing what they had to do.

SH: Were there other things you were involved in during high school?

FM: Oh, yes. I was involved in the yearbook because being in the art group and we had a bunch, we used to do cartooning and so forth for the book, and see when the yearbook was made for the graduation and so forth, they would take pictures of all the sports teams and everything else. So if you were involved in a sports team you were going to be involved in one way or another because they would send the so-called "reporters" and the paper out and interview you and so forth. So, yes, there were quite a few others too. They had the Newman Club, I remember that, and a few other groups that they had, and we played intramural sports throughout the school also.

SH: You talked about the integration of girls, how did the curriculum change for you?

FM: The only thing is we had to put up with the girls in the class, but it worked after a while. It was just that it was the ones who were freshmen, they weren't bothered, but it was the upper two years that we had remaining. ... You had no choice, because see what they were doing they were getting ready, they wanted to close Harren High School. ... It was an aviation school, and they were wheedling down, they weren't taking any new classes, just finishing what they had with the boys, so they sent all the girls up to us.

SH: Had Harren be coed at that point?

FM: ... Yes, that was coed.

SH: It was becoming strictly an aviation school?

FM: Yes, for the time being that it was to remain. ... I think that it only lasted a little while after that.

SH: How big was your high school?

FM: Not that big. ... We were right in the middle of New York City in between apartments, in fact, it's the grounds right now at the Lincoln Center. As you go under the underpass coming out on 67th Street, I believe it is on to the Westside, you will see Commerce still standing there, they still have the entrance. The last time I was up there and I went through--it's still there, but the Lincoln Center was up.

SH: Did you travel around New York City as a kid?

FM: ... Oh, yes. In Boy Scouting we would leave at East Harlem and truck up to 125th Street, walk across 125th Street, and we would walk up to the George Washington Bridge and across that go another eleven miles walking up to Alpine. We would leave about six in the morning and we'd get up there maybe four in the afternoon, five o'clock. ... That's the way we went. First off, most of the kids didn't have money in those days to pay for the busses or anything else. ... In those days you had the trolley, and the trolley didn't want to put up a bunch of kids going all the way up to the end, so they wouldn't put us on, a whole Boy Scout troop. ... Nobody owned cars, not even the scoutmasters, they had to do the walking too. So, we walked around, and then, of course, we played baseball up at St. Ann's in the Bronx, played up at Van Cortland, Pelham Bay, we played all over, and then, as time went on, we used to travel down to where Seward High School was on the Eastside because we used to play sports down there. So, we got around the city of New York, and we did a lot of walking.

SH: What about the military presence in New York City, what did you see?

FM: Not much, because up in our neighborhood, they didn't come. When the soldiers, sailors and so forth were home--except those who lived in the neighborhood--they all went to Times Square. So we were completely out of it, and as a result we didn't have anything really to do with that. So, life went on just the way it normally was except for those who were in the service. There were a lot of stars that were in the windows, and an awful lot of gold ones when you walked through the neighborhood. ... We did have quite a few visits from ballplayers, they would come down, because in those days baseball players didn't make the money that they're making now. Some of them, if they made--which was big money in those days, two or three thousand dollars a year--that was an awful lot.

SH: For a season?

FM: For a season, that's what they got, so these are the things that we can remember, not the big times like when Babe Ruth got eighty thousand dollars, the world nearly ended at that time. Today that's not even a week's salary for the ones in the minors.

SH: What about some of the events that happened during that time besides the war, do you remember anything?

FM: Going to the movies, and you could go in if you're early to get there you might play bingo, you might play right after that some of the other games that were run, where they'd give out gifts to all the kids that were in there, and everybody wanted to get that, and the movie was a great place, but there were no such organizations as the Boys Club, just the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts, those were the two biggest, and that's where most people went to. There was a YMCA, but not in our area, the nearest one was down on 92nd Street and we didn't go there, it was too far. ...

SH: You talked about being down in Valley Forge, was that the first of the jamborees that you attended?

FM: Yes, that was the first one, and today I think is one of the biggest that they ever had. ... It was a monster, and they came from all over the country.

SH: You talked about being in high school and being tutored by what became your senior art teacher.

FM: Right.

SH: What were your plans after school, did you assume you would be going into the military?

FM: If I ever showed you my book, I said I was going to go to St. John's University, never quite made it, but I ended up, well, I didn't think I was going to be an artist, as my wife can attest, my mother didn't think, she says I did "nice little work," but I went to work in a bank, and I eventually was doing art work in the bank in the advertising department. So, I was doing small stuff underneath the artist that was there, so I was still doing the artwork, but now I was a bank employee and I stayed in banking.

SH: You did that right after graduation?

FM: Right after graduation.

SH: Before you graduate in '46, did you think that you would be going into the military?

FM: Oh, yes, we felt that we'd go because the war was still on, and I was going to be seventeen that November, and if you were seventeen you were drafted.

SH: Did you want to go into the Army or the Air Corps?

FM: I didn't care, I didn't care, none of us cared, but what it was as soon as the war was over, Japanese surrendered, that was it, the draft stopped, and there was the influx of so many coming home at that time.

SH: You talked about cutting out things from the newspaper about the war. Do you remember D-Day?

FM: The biggest one actually was the, where they gave the most, of course, was VJ Day on August the 14th, 1945, that was the biggest, when the Japanese surrendered.

SH: You would not have been in school then?

FM: ... I would have been drafted though still, I would have been seventeen in November. When you hit seventeen you got your greetings, and D-Day got it's play, but see D-Day was not a happy day when you figure 10,000 died just on the landing and, of course, they don't know how many else died like with the 101st, they were separated from the units completely.

SH: I am just asking about what you knew as a young boy in school.

FM: Well, I cut the papers, I had cut out the whole segment, we had scrapbooks, all of us, we all kept our scrapbooks on the war, and today I think it would be worth a small fortune.

SH: Do you remember more about the war in Europe or about the war in the Pacific? What were you seeing more in the press?

FM: In the newspaper, I think it was, as far as I could see, we bought the Daily News was the newspaper, and I would say that they gave coverage to both, they covered both of them, and it's hard to say which one, I will say that they did give the North African campaign a lot of heading, but then that was something new, that was our first landing in Europe or in Africa, and that was the start of everything, and then, of course, Italy, I remember Monte Casino, that was a big write-up ... because it was so disastrous also; the Battle of the Bulge. ...

SH: What did they call it then? It doesn't get that name until later.

FM: Well, I remember Malmedy, that was big because that was the complete massacre of American troops by the Germans for no reason whatsoever. See the funny part about that whole situation, there was, towards '44-'45, little bits were coming out now on concentration camps, very little though. To that point nobody knew what a concentration camp was, but I would say that the history of Europe took a sudden turn more so than the Japanese. Once the war was over in Europe, of course, everything was then concentrated on the Pacific, and it was at the very end too also because the Japanese emperor actually was trying to come up with a solution for surrender.

SH: Were you aware of that at the time?

FM: Yes, I was getting the writings from the newspaper and at that point we were much more elite, so we looked at the Journal American, they had bigger stories than they had in the Daily News, they covered more, but what they were studying is that when the Japanese turned over to the kamikazes, the most elite Air Force that they were able to put together, they knew the war was over, but they were willing to sit down and talk surrender, but they did not want to unconditionally surrender, and this is where Emperor Hirohito was trying to call them to come up with the decision, and while that decision was being made, and it took quite a few months, it was Iwo Jima, it was Guadalcanal, I should say Guadalcanal, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa which was the last battle of the war, and they were not easy battles because it was getting closer and closer to the island of Japan. Iwo Jima was critical because they wanted it to get the long range bombers in at the airfield that they had there, and it was only a four mile island, it was not big, and then, of course, Okinawa was a bloodbath on both sides and today if you, which gets me, is that talking with some I have to write the story on, today he responded that he has a very good friend that lives over where he does, he was a Japanese soldier, but today they are friends, and as they said they both fought for their countries. The countries don't tell you why you're fighting, it's just that you're at war.

SH: What about the dropping of the atomic bomb? You are out of school when it was covered in the newspapers.

FM: Yes, I was finished, that was in August, the way I looked at it, and reading the stories, in a way it may have saved millions of lives because I'll tell you one thing, if you landed on the Japanese island, the Japanese were not going to give up, they were a proud people so what are you faced with, you're faced with them defending their homeland, they would die rather than surrender. You have American troops coming in, they're trying to do their job, it would be a bloodbath. ... Where people don't realize, right towards the end of World War II in Europe, the city of Dresden was bombed. ...

SH: Was this something that was reported in the press?

SM: I can't recall. This information I got in checking through the Air Force. I paint for the United States Air Force, and as a result I have access to a lot of the information when I'm doing a certain painting, and as a result, anyone can go to the Library of Congress and it's all in there, but then I also have McGuire at my finger tips and as a result I'm able to get these stories and put it together today. ... It was reported, but nothing like what I have found out that actually took place. Even when, I think the headline in the Daily Newspaper when Hiroshima, "Atomic Bomb Drops On Japan," something like that, that was the big headline.

SH: Did you understand what an atomic bomb was?

FM: No, not at that time because none of us knew about it. We didn't know that they were going to have that. ... We never knew it, but yet I witnessed two atomic bombs being dropped when I was in the service.

SH: Can you tell me what the School of Art and Advertising was?

FM: When I was working with the bank, the vice president in charge of the advertising department says, "Frank, listen I want you to do some, go to school." I said, "What?" He said, "Yes, I want you to go in the evening to the School of Art and Advertising. I want you to learn everything you possibly can." So, I went, and I enjoyed it because I started to study the other side of art, what goes on in advertising, but also they had models, which I had never been able to afford or go to see, but we had them there. So it gave me an input to start doing two new segments, and as a result as you can just see by that painting behind you, learning how the human body works, I was able to put this all into motion and it came to life as I went along painting later on.

SH: What bank were you working with?

FM: I started to work with Manufacturer's Trust Company, it's no longer in existence today. ...

SH: Was the bank close to your neighborhood?

FM: No, I used to get on the subway at 118th Street and go all the way down to Wall Street. It was a ... good hour's trip going.

SH: What about the influx of GIs at this point?

FM: ... A lot of them went back to school. ...

SH: Were they in the School of Art and Advertising?

FM: They could have been, but the thing is once they got home, they didn't brag about where they were or what, they just wanted to get back to their normal life. In fact, many of them still will not talk about what happened.

SH: How long did you attend this school?

FM: Maybe about two years, that's when the vice president died, and the department was taken over by a new regime as you know, and I ended up working with the Boy Scouts at that point. I went to work at the National Supply Service.

SH: You stopped working at the bank.

FM: Yes, and then I went on to, before I got drafted. Then, when I came out, I ended up working with Texaco for a while, then back to banking.

SH: Was it difficult to find a job after you left the bank?

FM: No, I actually had the job before I left the bank when I went to the National Service, and then ... when I was in the Army, I was able to cross an awful lot of people which I followed through later in life, and one of them was when I witnessed the dropping of the atomic bombs. I had to give a general, tell him to get his ass out of one area that he shouldn't have been in, because after the bombs were dropped, a general came up walking--I didn't know he was a general--with about six or seven dignitaries, so I found out, and my job was to make sure that they did not step into this particular area because it was radioactive and contaminated, and he stepped into it, and I yelled to him, "Soldier get out of there," and he wouldn't move so I just let out the war hoot and he moved, and I found out later that it was General Mark Clark, but as he said to the commanding officer, he says, "He did his job," he says, "I don't blame him," he says, "I could have been dead."

SH: Let us back up then and talk about the beginning of the war in Korea. You registered for the draft when you were eighteen.

FM: I was given a letter, as I said, I received a letter from Truman on June the 26th, the day after the war started, I had already received the letter, it was as if they were waiting and it came, and that was when I told Eisenhower down at the jamboree ... that following weekend. ... I was an employee, and my job was to work on the stage that he was going to be on, and he was there at the stage so that he could see where he was going to be, and how he was going to talk on it, and that's when he tapped me on the shoulder. ... I found him to be a very, very gentle individual.

SH: From all of the photographs that had appeared in the paper, you didn't recognize him?

FM: No, I really didn't really take note, I just felt the tap on my shoulder, and when the question was asked, and then, it was later that I realized who it was.

SH: Where did you have to report then once you got your draft letter?

FM: Whitehall, I had to go down and take my physical at Whitehall, and I remember walking in, and standing in a line, all of us, completely nude, standing in the line, and when you got into the doctors and they start giving you the needles, you'd look this way and they'd be jabbing the other side. ... They saw this, ... I got two fingers that are paralyzed. They said, "Can you use your left hand," I says, "Well, I'm left handed." "This is good, we can make a gun for you, left-handed."

SH: Really?

FM: That's what it was.

SH: What had happened to your arm?

FM: I broke this playing hockey when I was a kid, when I was thirteen, I busted it in a couple of places, and they had to set it, and they had to take part of the bone out and put steel plate in.

SH: You played ice hockey?

FM: No, it was roller, street hockey, and I think the pavement is a little harder than the ice. The ice shatters, the street doesn't shatter. [laughter]

SH: That must have been an experience for a young kid.

FM: Oh, yes, because they called my mother, and they had taken me to the hospital, and all she says, "What trouble did he get into now," until she found out, but that happened. ... In fact, I didn't think I'd make the baseball team because I had a cast on my arm for about six months, but I went out and tried and still made the team so I felt pretty good on that.

SH: Was there any kind of physical therapy or anything that followed that?

FM: Yes, they gave me physical therapy, you know, move the arm back and forth. I had to go up to the joint disease hospital once a week for two weeks, that was it, and they says, "You'll be alright."

SH: The Army had no problem with it.

FM: They didn't have any problem. They made me a secretary, but then when an overseas levy came, they were looking for a secretary, but the commanding officer didn't want me to go, so he

changed my MOS to that of a draftsman, because they knew I could draw and I was doing a lot of artwork even though I was a secretary.

SH: Were you a secretary or a clerk?

FM: ... I had an MOS as a secretary. ... See if you have a special MOS, that tells whether you're a secretary or clerk. My job was secretary to the colonel, but he also found I could draw, and I was doing a lot of the artwork for the offices and maps.

SH: After Whitehall, where did you go?

FM: After the physical and we passed, we went to Fort Devens--it was Camp Devens at that time--that was up in Massachusetts. From there after seven days we were sent down to Camp Gordon, Georgia for basic training. That lasted until April. Once basic training was over, we were then sent to, took our leave, and came home and went back and we ended up in California and we went to Camp Cooke.

SH: How did you get to California?

FM: Train.

SH: How was that for a young kid that had only been to Upstate New York?

FM: Well, we were playing cards on the train mostly with the officers because it was a boring, boring ride because every time other trains were going through, we were put off to the side and we did not have the through that you would do today or something like that, you go on the side while the other trains go on by, then they pull you out. ... It took us six days to go across country from Georgia to California [because of] how many times you were pulled off. ... When we got to Camp Cook, we started to break into what we were doing, and then, we were transferred, I'd say about two months later, to Camp San Luis Obispo. Now, that was like going into heaven.

SH: Really?

FM: Oh, it was a WAC's camp during World War II, and it was right out on the island, an inlet, and it was gorgeous, you had the breeze coming in from the ocean, the fog in the morning, but it was great, but we all had bungalows that slept four. Now, I mean that's better than having fifty on a floor in a barracks, and that's when it started to get rough. ... I found out ... they had plans for me to do, I didn't know what it was, but I did have to take special courses out there with regards to drafting which I didn't mind, I learned a whole new trade so to speak, and then, in September of '51, we were told that some of us were picked to go to Desert Rock which was in Nevada about seventy-five miles north of ... Las Vegas. ... We stretched out there for, we were there right until around January of '52. ... We were then stationed at Frenchman's Creek in Las Vegas, north of Las Vegas, which was still Desert Rock, and then that's when we found out the plans that I was working on with another fellow was an area of ground zero, where the atomic

bomb was going to be dropped that was dropped in Hiroshima--same one--and what we had to do was to make the layout of where the soldiers were going to be bivouacked around the setting.

SH: What unit were you assigned to?

FM: I was assigned to a group, my own group, but I reported every day to a certain group that were on the base and we all lived in tents, and we would go and get the instructions of how they want it, but they still did not tell us what was going to happen. ...

SH: Were you part of the Signal Corps?

FM: I was in the Signal Corps, the 303rd Signal Service Battalion and what it is, our whole unit if we were called to duty was to serve an area, let's say the South Pacific. There was one over in Korea so we weren't going to be sent as a unit, they didn't need us, they had them over there already. Now what it was, the A Company was the pole linemen, B Company was cable and C Company was teletype operators, and then, of course, Headquarters. I started out in Headquarters and ended up in C Company, but that's another story.

PS: Going back to Camp Gordon for a second, President Truman ordered integration in 1948. Were there any conflicts that arose during basic training?

FM: No, no. In fact, we got some fellows who were serving over in Korea, they came back into our unit and I remember one, his name was Sergeant (Kelly?) and he and I became great friends right off the bat ... when he was introduced. ... He was a black fellow, we got along fine. We had no problems. I think my own feeling is I think politically and newspaper wise, they make more of a story than what it actually is. I think if they would have left it alone, what we're going through today, we wouldn't be going through if they had just left it alone. You know you put two guys, a black man and a white man in a foxhole together and the enemy is coming, they're not going to look and see what color you are, you're my buddy, you're going to save me, I'm going to watch your back, you watch my back, but then when that's all over what is the newspaper doing, what is radio doing, and what are politicians doing? Oh, how could you stand alongside him? It's wrong.

SH: Going back to Desert Rock, you were already a draftsman?

FM: I was a draftsman at that time, I was a full draftsman.

SH: You were a draftsman when you came out of Luis Obispo.

FM: Yes, because the overseas levy came down ... when I was in Camp Cooke. ... I did reach the rank of corporal, and the good part about that, when I'm over at McGuire, I let them all know now I have the rank of colonel when I'm painting with the United States Air Force, and I defy anyone to say you only made the rank of corporal and they just jumped you up to colonel. The only difference is that you don't get paid.

SH: Let us go back and talk about the work that you are doing at Desert Rock. What kind of security clearances and things like that did you have to go through?

FM: Not really, they had clearance on us already.

SH: How tight was the security in the area that you were at?

FM: ... In basic training out there getting ready for it, laying out the grounds, no one was allowed off the base.

SH: When you were first setting up the camp?

FM: When we were setting up the camp, the locations and everything all there was one road that ran all the way from Reno down to Las Vegas and it was as straight as an arrow almost. I don't know if you've ever been on that, and as a result there was an airport, ... it might have been Frenchman's Springs, maybe about forty-five, fifty miles outside of Las Vegas, I'm not sure, but it was a small little private airport, but that was the nearest thing to where we were going to have the bivouac and the training exercises, but it was heavily surrounded. We had MPs at every location that no one was going to get off that base. It wasn't until after the exercise began and the bombs were dropped that we were then allowed to go in to Las Vegas because they didn't even know we were there. That's how secretive it was. Now, I don't know how true it is, but they said that today they have the underground cities out there in that area where all the records and everything are kept. I never got to any, I didn't see anything, but we were at a place that they called Jane Russell Peaks--there were two mountains--that's what they called it, Jane Russell's Peaks, and it was rough out there because the temperature in the summertime when we started, September, October, was 132, 133 degrees, and then at night though it could drop. I remember we did go to bed one night and the next morning there was six inches of snow out on the ground, but then as soon as the heat comes up, it's all gone. ... When we came back, the exercise see was smaller.

SH: Can we talk a little bit about the preparation, what you were doing?

FM: Once we had the plans and everything and we knew now what was going on, one of the fellows, he had to do the complete diagram of the underground set up that they had. At that point, it was like a block house that they put underneath the ground, and they wanted us to see if animals and so forth could survive in it, but then they had animals that they tied up above ground. That had to be done to see what the effect would be, and we had to make sure that seven miles, a complete radius, let's say this is where the bomb is going to be dropped, and this is seven miles, that was the nearest that any soldier could get close to the bomb. ...

SH: They were dropped from airplanes?

FM: They were dropped at 18000 feet, just about what it was when they dropped it from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The bomb would detonate when it hit 2000 feet. That would be the first explosion, but that was just getting it set. When it hit the ground then, that's when the mushroom started to form going up, but the 2000, that's when everyone knew that the bomb was

going to go off, but no one could turn around and look at it, you had to turn your back. If you looked at the bomb when it was dropped, you would be blinded, and ... people fail to realize that before Hiroshima even was bombed, Truman notified the people with pamphlets both in Nagasaki and in Hiroshima and told them leave the city, get out of the city, a disaster, catastrophe is going to happen, do not come out and look at the bright light, something of that nature. I don't know what it [was said] actually, but those were the things that we were told, and when it was dropped, the people came out and they started to look, they couldn't move, they were blinded, and we had special glasses for everyone that had to wear these glasses, and when they says alright, you can turn around and you could see the brightness of that bomb even though it was after it exploded, but it was the mushroom, you could see how far out it went. ... Didn't reach, that's why they had us at seven miles.

SH: What specifically were you doing when the bomb was dropped?

FM: I was then instructing the guys I was sitting with. ... I was riding with my own unit, we all reported to our own units. Our work was now finished, so we were with whatever our outfit had to do, and then, we were there for the remaining balance.

SH: What did you do when the bomb was dropped?

FM: I was with my own group, the 303rd. ... We were all standing there with our backs to the bomb coming down.

SH: You were standing.

FM: We were all standing, yes, and then, we were told with a loud speaker once it was all [done], "Turn around, you could look."

SH: Was there continual communication to you and the other men as to what was going on?

FM: No, our job was finished.

SH: How were you informed of what was going on?

FM: ... They had loud speakers, and the ones who were then in charge of the bombing drop, they would tell us that there was going to be a B29 that was going to fly over and it will drop the bomb at 18000 feet, do not turn around, do not look, keep looking this way and make sure you do not turn around, and keep those glasses on at all times. When the bomb was dropped, ... at detonation you could hear the boom, you saw a big bright light go all over the area even with the lights, but you're looking this way, and then, of course when the explosion hit later on the ground just shook and of course it just spread out from ground zero, but we were in our own units at that time. Then, the next day it was back just as if you were back in your own base.

SH: Now what did you do after you were told you could turn around?

FM: Then, what it was, we were allowed to look at it, and then, they told us that you will not be able to go into that area, that is off limits because they did not know how long the radiation would be. ...

SH: Was there anybody monitoring the radiation that you were being exposed to at that point?

FM: Not at that point. Later on they came around and they said that from each unit they would have so many of us with Geiger counters, and that's when I got with the general, but we were told and instructed by our commanding officer, this is your area, this is what you're going to do, and you will then walk up and down and if you hear that Geiger going you make sure that nobody goes into that area and that's exactly what I did, we had them blocked off, but the general stepped over the line and that's when he got yelled at, but at that point, he was in the wrong and he knew it. ...

SH: Was there any other protection besides the glasses?

FM: No, not when the bomb was dropped, that was it.

SH: Were you told to do anything after the bomb was dropped?

FM: No, no, because from what they found out, when the bomb was dropped at Hiroshima, it didn't quite go out seven miles, went out I think five and a half or so, but you got to remember too, people fail to realize there were three planes that hit Hiroshima. There was one that was taking pictures of the whole attack, and the other one more or less there for protection, and the three planes went in there. ...

SH: As soon as the bomb is dropped, was your unit assigned to secure the area?

FM: No, just to stay right where we were, all the units were staying right where they were. We were no longer running the show or doing anything at this point. The commanding officers were told about the Geiger counters ahead, we didn't even know that, that was their assignment. My assignment along with say half a dozen other fellows were to do the drawing, laying out, and do the drafting so that the mileage and everything else was correct, and then, after that they had another group that were assigned to find out exactly how far the damages were done. That wasn't ours, we were finished.

SH: What were the men talking about before the bomb was dropped and after?

FM: Guys all were saying, they wouldn't want any of them dropped on us. When you saw the damage, ... we were allowed in three days later to see the damage that it done, that's when the radiation was pretty well taken care of, that it was down low enough. It rained one night and of course when it rained it just brought it all down into the ground. So we did find out that in those days they said if a bomb was dropped, you have to seek cover, and the best cover was to make sure that you were behind a table or something, crouched behind it, so that when the radiation comes, if it hits that, it will go up and go over your head that you're behind it, and you stay there until you get an all clear, but we didn't have to do it, but this is what they told us. There was a lot

of things that they told us, you know, that you do and so forth and we all then went to a few classes of this and that.

SH: Prior to the explosion?

FM: Yes, prior to the buildup. We all knew the bomb was coming, ... we didn't know what day it was going to be dropped, and it was an education, believe me.

SH: Was there any thought that this would be a weapon that would be used in Korea?

FM: Let me say this, with the way China was starting to act on the Chosin Reservoir, at that time they had amassed 260,000 troops. Now the Chosin Reservoir, we had ... 7th Armored plus Marines, but when we got to the Yalu River, of course, pull back, and in a way it was a smart move because we were going into 250,000 freshly coming up troops and, of course, the temperature also didn't help when it dropped all the way, and Truman I think was thinking if it was going to continue and if China went further in the war, he may have used the bomb.

SH: What were you talking about at Desert Rock, did you think this was possible?

FM: No, we weren't even thinking of that, it was just a question of the damage, something like that, and we wouldn't want to see that.

SH: You were just looking at it as an experiment.

FM: ... In other words, what they told us, this is what war can be, unless it can be controlled, and we were the only ones at that point that had it.

SH: How soon were you allowed to go then into the area?

FM: There were two bombs that we watched, the first one was dropped and three days later we were able to go in and take a look at it. The second was dropped about a week later or two weeks later.

SH: Same area?

FM: Same area, same area, and they cleaned it all up, you know, freshened it all up, and they dropped a second one.

SH: You had the same assignment?

FM: No, they already had the assignment, they knew that the second bomb was not going to be as powerful as the first one, but what they wanted to do was to make it a little bit more closely knit with different setups in it as far as a city, if they put up some buildings, how would wooden buildings take and so forth, steel, and they did that for a week or so. That was the Army engineers, they came in, and did all of that, and it was very interesting because we weren't involved with it. Everything else, what we did was finished and, of course, they had others from

the corps of engineers working and it was interesting because we were allowed to go through it while they were building it.

SH: Oh, were you?

FM: Yes, the bomb was already, everybody knew the bomb was exploded, but they didn't know another one was coming so soon, but they wanted to find out how it would work out, they found out that you could live underground if it was good, but they found out that they didn't make the first one strong enough with the cement. I think they made it three feet, they said you need six feet in order for it not to penetrate the radiation. So, these are the things that they were experimenting with, and I'm sure that they went on after that, and they're still doing it.

SH: You talked about the animals being tested. Did you ever hear what had happened to them?

FM: No, that's information that we didn't get. We assumed that from the way they were talking that the ones in the basement so to speak, made it, but not the ones on top.

SH: How would you describe the damage?

FM: I would say everything above ground was completely demolished. When I took a look later in life when I was doing the story of Hiroshima since I did a painting of it for the Air Force, and they have the original down in Washington, I could understand the destruction when I saw Hiroshima, the way it was destroyed, and believe me, you don't have a chance when something like that goes. A regular bomb, you might get away with, but see when the British did it, they went over wave, after wave, after wave in Dresden and they just leveled the whole city, but see Dresden wasn't prepared. That was where the difference. ... It wasn't announced that Hitler had taken all of the anti-aircraft guns, but Hiroshima, they didn't have ... anti-aircraft guns either because once that bomb hit, it was finished.

SH: You were transferred then from Desert Rock?

FM: Well, after that to Fort Hood, but then again before that, I was at Hunter Liggett. ... We were up there for maneuvers and that was nice, our home base for a while for our unit was the Marion Davies home. ...

SH: What was your duty?

FM: I was just attached to my unit so they kept me busy. I remember I had to do one, I did a painting of Marilyn Monroe for the barracks. ... We were all participants. If we were captured you know one Army against the other, but we were setup in Hunter Liggett where main headquarters, and we did our regular routine work for the day for our units. We'd have roll call in the morning, and then, it was checked out to see everybody was there, and the tenants and so forth, that nobody was missing, and then, your regular work if there was any work that had to be done by the majors and the colonels and so forth, they passed it on to us, and we just kept at daily work, and at that time I would say in '52, there was a tremendous amount now of integration, a lot more than was at the very beginning, because now there was more coming in

and in a way it was better, because you could understand why one group during World War II was hated because they only could fight with their own unit and in many cases they wouldn't let them fight, and that's why I always loved the story about George Watson with the robbery of the train. Did you ever hear that story?

SH: No.

FM: Oh, God, well George was with the Tuskegee airmen, went to Tuskegee school down here, and he was one of the mechanics and how they found out they were assigned to do a bombing raid in Berlin, and their captain found out that it was going to be a one way trip, they were going to pick up B17s coming in from Europe, and then they were going to be escorted with P47s, they were going to be picked up by P47s and delivered there, and then the P47s would leave and the Tuskegee's would have to get in there to support them there, but they wouldn't have enough fuel to get home. ... Colonel didn't like this, the captain I should say, and he decided he heard of a train coming up from Southern Italy heading towards the northern part loaded with large canisters to be attached under the P51s. They only had the small canisters that got them to one way. So he decided, he told them get six trucks, load up, make sure your guns are loaded with ammunition, we're going to pull a raid. So, they went out and they held up the train, take everything, so they took all of the canisters, brought them back, put them on their planes by eight o'clock in the morning and took off, met the B17s, there wasn't any P47s, not one, the raid was completed, they came back they shot down three Germans, no B17s were lost, but Mark Clark heard about this, and he says, "What happened? What did you guys do wrong?" He says, "Do you know you held up the train and took the fuel that was headed for the P47s?" At that time the notice came in, they had gotten it to Truman that the raid was taking place and what happened, and he sent a notice to the head of the outfit, "Great day that's what we like to see." So, when George told me about it, he says, "We can't tell anything." The original painting was given to him over at McGuire. The first thing when he walked in, he didn't know anything about the painting or anything and the colonel there says, "Well, George we don't know if we're going to send you up the river on that," but his description of what happened was different than what it is now today.

SH: Did the P51s escort the bombers?

FM: They took them up there and they came back. ... The B17s then landed in Italy. ... They were sent to meet them up there, the P47s, which were in Northern Italy, were supposed to pick them up and drive them up, and then come back home, which wasn't a long run. They were in Southern Italy in the middle, and that's when they had a long run, that's why they needed the big canisters. They got them.

SH: How long were you at Hunter Liggett?

FM: We were there for the whole summer, nice hut, knocking the mosquitoes off you all the time. It was I'd say, we were learning, actually it was more like desert warfare that we were doing there, that's very barren land up around there, but hey, then we went to Fort Hood, and that was, I would prefer Hunter Liggett than Fort Hood in many ways, but of course, first off, we're right near Killeen. Killeen was a dry town, but see when we were up at Hunter Liggett, we used

to spend a lot of our time in this little town Pasa Robles and what was fascinating, there is a church there, a mission church and we all remarked how it was divided in the center with a big crack right down from the roof down on the side. When the earthquake hit in 1906, it reached out as far as Pasa Robles from San Francisco and the church was split up. Now, they never had pews in the old mission churches, so there were still no pews, and they held mass just the way it was in the old days, and we used to get a charge because it was really something. ... They did put something to prevent the rain from coming in, but you could see the opening. It was like there was glass I guess put up there to prevent it, but the crack was still there in the walls and that was one thing that we did like seeing about Pasa Robles. That had one bar and that was it, but we weren't drunk all the time. [laughter]

SH: What did you do at Fort Hood then?

FM: Fort Hood was just a maneuver that actually I didn't do much because they had me doing some clean up because we were all getting ready to be discharged, because our outfit was going to be [disbanded]. Whether they kept it in existence, I don't know, but 303rd was going to be disbanded for the majority of us in November.

SH: What did they have you doing?

FM: We were cleaning up mostly, just doing regular drills and so forth, go to the firing range, you know, things of that nature. It was just like a rerun of basic training, but we couldn't be assigned anywhere, this was it, we all went back to San Luis Obispo and spent time enjoying the beaches.

SH: Was there any talk that you might be sent to Korea?

FM: No, at that point Eisenhower was now elected in November, and the very first thing that he started to do was to say he wanted to end the war one way or another. ... At that time the stalemate was already in line at the 38th parallel, and what it was more men died in small skirmishes around the 38th than did at the Chosin Reservoir and so forth because it was "boom, boom, boom," but you worked, there was nowhere really to go. The main forces were on the 38th on both sides.

SH: Did you consider staying in the military?

FM: No, I had my time--two years--not that I didn't enjoy it, I did, but the thing is I was ready to go on. Twenty-one dollars a month didn't go very far in those days.

SH: What were your plans when you got out of the military?

FM: ... I was going to go back to work with the National Supply Service, but they were moving to Texas, so I said no, I didn't want to go to Texas, I had been there, and that's when I went and got a job with Texaco as a draftsman, and then, later on became a secretary to the head of the producing department. It worked just the opposite, just worked the opposite way.

SH: Where were you working for Texaco?

FM: Down in the Chrysler Building, that's where their main office was at that time.

SH: Did you go back home to live at home?

FM: Oh, yes, I used to live right up in the Bronx now. They had since then moved and I found out that they had moved. Yes, I worked down there, and then, Texaco assigned me to the sales department and I was working in the operations of the thruway, and then, I worked up at the bulk plants in Ossining, first Albany for a while, and then, down to Ossining as my main base, and then when they built a new office in Tarrytown, into the Tarrytown office. So, I moved around.

SH: Did you move to these different locations then?

FM: ... Yes, I went up to Delmar, but when I came back I was close in Ossining and Tarrytown. I just drove home, it wasn't bad. There was no traffic on the thruway like it is today.

SH: When did you get your first car?

FM: I got my first car when I was working with Manufacturer's Trust Company in 1948. What the heck, they gave me the loan and all, so it was made.

SH: Did you have to learn how to drive?

FM: No, I learned in the Army out in Desert Rock, they gave us jeeps and just let us go out.

SH: Did you own a car before you learned to drive?

FM: ... I could drive before, but not the way the Army wants you to drive because jeeps were completely different. You had no sides or anything like that. ... I had the Plymouth for '48, '49, and then, '50. ... When I came out I got a car, and in the Bronx, it was a lot different in those days. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

PS: Camp Cooke is now Vandenberg Air Force Base and Space Command. Did you have any interactions with the Air Force? Did you have any knowledge of the space program?

FM: No, none whatsoever. We weren't even advised of that. When they moved us from Camp Cooke to Camp Luis, all we said is, "Thank God." It was a great relief to go to San Luis Obispo.

PS: Were you excited by the possibility of being stationed overseas?

FM: At that point, if went overseas, I was looking forward to it, you know, but see the fellow who went overseas that they took as a secretary ended up in Japan, because he was needed in the offices of the staff that was running the war in Korea. So that's where they needed the secretary,

so he never really got to the end, and they even sent, I remember they sent me in the Army, they even sent me to learn how to be a forger, being an artist. Well, here is the thing, in battle one of the items that is necessary is you do not want to let the enemy know that your commanding officer has been killed or anything of that nature. First things they look for is morning reports in many, many instances. So, when the enemy comes through, if the enemy was killed, they would assign some of the forgers to forge his name on papers just to get them back to that place, but I could do a good forgery.

SH: You are talking signature strictly, right.

FM: Yes, yes.

SH: Thank heavens you were out of the banking industry.

FM: Yes, but I went back into it. [laughter]

PS: I have a few questions about basic training, what areas did you find most difficult?

FM: No, no, I enjoyed it. See, at that time, I was about 120 pounds, so they were going to put weight on me and I was as thin as a rail, but I had played sports, and in doing sports, a lot of the exercises didn't bother us. Now, we did not have weights, and we did not have gyms like they have today. We just did ours all outside, with all of this and that.

SH: Calisthenics.

FM: Just calisthenics all the way through. That got you trimmed, shaped, and off you went, but no, I found that one of the hardest things going through I think is the when you're going through basic training and you got to go out and do some of the testings that you have, like climbing a wall, and trying to get over that wall in so many seconds and jumping on the ropes, and then you do the infiltration course, that was rough because they're using live ammunition there. If you stuck your head up it could be blown off, they make sure you keep your head down, but other than that everybody went through it and hey, you're in the service you're going to have to go through it one way or another, and there were some that balked at it, but had to go through it anyway otherwise, they would throw you in the jug if you didn't want to do it outside of finding another reason to throw you out with a dishonorable discharge.

SH: What about the interaction with the MPs? Did you ever have any encounters since you would go into town on pass?

FM: I'll tell you one off the record.

SH: One question, do you want me to turn the tape off?

FM: ... See if you want to put it on later.

[TAPE PAUSED]

PS: Did you use your GI Bill?

FM: Yes, I did. I didn't go to college, but I attended classes with the GI Bill in reference to what I was following through, like I took, since I was in banking I ended up working. ... When I was with Texaco I used it and I took up some real estate since that was very big, and then I went to collegiate school--which was on 42nd Street--to take law, commercial law just to understand what was going on. So, I started to fill in with quite a few of these little courses here and there and they did help, especially back when I went back into banking. ... When I left Texaco, I went to work with Emigrant Savings Bank and I also became an insurance salesman for New York Life. ... As time got on, we had the assassination of Kennedy, I can remember that day. We were in having lunch in one of the places down in Midtown right across the street from the office of New York Life when the announcement came over from Walter Cronkite and the television was on at that time and that was a shock because of the way it happened and so forth, and then, I left insurance and I went back to banking and I worked with Emigrant Savings Bank, and then, from Emigrant I went to Perth Amboy Savings, and that's when I became a "Jersey-ite" back in 1968.

SH: That is when you first moved to Jersey?

FM: Yes, 1968, I moved to Jersey, and got married in 1963.

SH: How did you meet your wife?

FM: ... I was coming home from an all night party and the snow was on the ground and I saw this redhead out in the street shoveling the snow and I drove right up close and put all the snow all over her car. ... I lived down about four houses down, she came down with the shovel, that's how we met. I didn't know it was going to end up like this.

SH: You had not met her before that?

FM: Nope. I had seen her going up, that was it. But boy, what a temper, don't get a redhead because my God are they nasty. They'll hit you. ... [laughter]

SH: How long after you met did you get married?

FM: We got married the next August, ... so eight months. Yes, that was alright. In those days, you did things faster than they do today.

SH: Was Mrs. McGinley working at that time?

FM: Oh, yes, she was working with Catholic Relief, and she had a good job, she was working with the overseas part of dispensing the food and so forth, so she enjoyed that, she was there for a while, and then when we got married we moved to Riverdale, and then I used to commute down to Emigrant until we decided to head out to the boondocks in Perth Amboy. Then, I was there for nineteen years.

SH: Oh, were you?

FM: Yes, and then when the president died ... a new guy came in and he was changing everything, I stayed for a couple of more years with the new change, but I didn't like it. Then, I left and started to go back to selling and doing some appraisal work, and worked with some other banks underwriting which was good. I worked with the competitor that was in Perth Amboy, First Savings, and I was there for about, I guess maybe three, four years doing underwriting, it was at the heat of the Reagan era, and real estate was booming so I was in the right field at the time with mortgages, and then, I was in mortgages all the way through my life with Perth Amboy Savings, and then I retired from First Savings. ... My son was working with a credit union and they ran into problems, MonOc, out here in Toms River, it's no longer there, they changed the name of that one, but I went there and worked as a consultant. I was supposed to go in for a year and I ended up six years with them and I'm still very friendly with the president, and then, I started to work heavily with the art and that took off.

SH: How many children do you have?

FM: I have four--I have two boys followed by two girls. My oldest boy Francis, ... he is my oldest. ... He'll be forty-six at the end of this year [2010]. He's autistic, but he has a job and give him credit, but he works half a day, and he has been for ... over twenty years, and he was also the first autistic child to get into Ocean County College, and he didn't graduate, but he had two years of it, and smart as a whip when it comes to figures, and you can take him and he'll give you figures, go down to Atlantic City, and he'll hit every time he goes, he hits the jackpot or something because he can work the machines quicker than the machines can work. ... I take him down there, he likes to go at least once a month and he'll win. I lose he wins, and then, of course I have Peter. Peter went to college and he went to a music school, he loves to play the bass. ... He's caught up in the unemployment list, has his degree in music and everything, but he's a nut when it comes to music because he believes in theory and is an excellent teacher on it. He was teaching, but because nobody wants to be taught today, you know, they just can't afford it, but he lost his job and he's still unemployed because he's a good salesman and he has good credentials, worked with the credit union and all, but he plays now with pick up bands and so forth, but he says it's even rough in that because the economy has gone the opposite way. Then, I have my daughter Laura and she's had it rough, she's married to a fellow who was a first responder at 9/11 who's on his way out and of course with what's happened in Washington, I won't get into that because I can just start with nasty words all the way through what the way they have treated these fellows who were in the first responders. ... In his group over 800 are dead and they have done nothing to help these poor guys, and they are still doing nothing except, oh let's find twenty billion dollars here and twenty billion dollars there for what, for somebody's protection of the geese or whatever, I disagree with them, but she's had it rough and he's in hospice so we just have to take that as it goes. My other daughter, that's the one we call, with the Mercedes and so forth, she's done very well, she works for Horizon and she's one of their chief specialists and they call on her to do an awful lot of work, which she works from home because she was injured in an automobile accident, but as they said she'd get a top job if she was right up there now, and then, of course I got "Red," who you have met; "she who must be obeyed."

SH: Mrs. McGinley said you were driving the car that put snow all over her.

FM: ... Yes, I came right down and I went "zoom." ... Hey, I did a good job too.

SH: Would you like to talk briefly about the artwork and how that has evolved?

FM: Well, I do an awful lot of fundraising, and I did this even when I was working with Perth Amboy Savings. ... This goes back to 1979, '78 around that time, but it actually started before that. Let me start at the beginning. When I was with Perth Amboy Savings and I did artwork and the president of the bank was very instrumental with Rutgers University, he has a wing that's named after him at Raritan Bay Medical Center, but because of Francis we didn't know where to take him, and through contacts that he knew, Francis ended up going to Douglass College every week, Tuesday. I had to leave the bank at twelve o'clock, he says, "You take the afternoon and take him," and Francis and I went to Douglass, how many years was that Jane, two or three years that I took Francis to Douglass College?

Mary J. McGinley: How old was he?

FM: He was about six at that time. ...

MM: Four and a half. Yes, he was four and a half because he wasn't talking.

FM: ... That's when Ernie arranged to get him to go over.

JM: Yes, his boss arranged it. It was the best thing in the world.

FM: See Douglass is associated with Rutgers. ... We did a breakthrough, and Dr. (Dumont?), I'm not sure what her name, or (Devoe?) or something of that nature, she was the head of the department and what it was she assigned some of the girls who were in the classes for working with children at that age, and at that point they did not know how to diagnose Francis because no one knew about autism, it wasn't even a word. We took him to a specialist in New York and all she could say is well maybe three out of 10000 children get it, but we don't know what it is, and of course he's a marvel. So, all of the kids have done well, and then, I got two grandchildren and I just showed you the picture of one and the other one she's already got her scholarship for two years to Ocean County College. She's on the honor roll now in Toms River East, but she's been on the honor roll ever since she got in school, she wants to be a writer, and she's a Harry Potter lover. She's fifteen now, but she's doing great.

SH: You were going to talk about your art.

FM: Yes, and then, when I was in the bank, Ernie found out that I could draw and he says go out and talk on Francis, and I talked in front of the Rotary Club and I talked on autism. So, at the end of the event, the president of the Rotary, I think it was Bob Depow, he says, "Frank, what can we do here to help children of that nature?" ... He says, "We haven't got money." I said, "You ever think of a fundraiser?" He says, "What do you mean a fund raiser?" I says, "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll make a painting and turn it into a lithograph," and one of them says,

"Well, what's a lithograph?" I say, "I'll do the painting," and I say, "we'll run it off, and we'll make copies and see if we can sell it." So, they said, "Well what does that cost?" I say, "Well, I'll get the price on it." So, I got the price on how much, he says, "Oh, we can do that," it was a thousand dollars. So, we put the lithograph out and he says, "Let's just sell it for twenty dollars." So, we put it out, and we sold all five hundred of them in a month. We had ten thousand dollars that we got and there were some extras, of course, you know, artist's proofs and so forth. At that time Francis was going to the Search Day School for Autistic Children and they gave ... the school the ten thousand dollars, but this is the funny part. One of those lithographs from that first run was auctioned off at the hospital as a fund raiser, and they got five thousand dollars on the one copy. Another one was sold for \$2500. Now, they're going, if you can get them, they're selling them on eBay I understand and they're going as high as \$400, \$500 a copy, and not the poor artist, he's still starving, but then I started to do more. So, I ended doing [them] ... for Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, churches in the area of Perth Amboy, I even went into Staten Island, and as the president of the bank says, "Look, you're doing exactly what a bank is supposed to do, help the people." He says, "You just keep doing what you're doing," he says, "You got your job here and you're doing your job fine." ... I was in charge of the delinquencies, foreclosures and so forth and I can go on another story just on that, ... but anyway they even gave me a write up in the news, New Brunswick, *Home News* at that time, there was a gal by the name of Brown, she was a reporter, and she gave me a complete story on how we were working with the people on delinquencies, I never had more than 3/10s of one percent as a delinquency in the bank, so it can be done, they know how to do it, but they don't want to do it. Today, it's all money, but then I started to do lithographs for even into Pennsylvania. Then, I came out and I went to work with Mon Oc Federal Credit as I told you and all through that time I had done maybe about sixty lithographs. They were looking for a fund raiser because they were part of advertising in the Blue Claws up in Lakewood, new baseball team. So, from there on I had to do an original painting for the Blue Claws and each year the bank, the credit union, sponsored a piece of art that I designed and we ran it into lithographs, gave out as many as four thousand of the copies to the people that came into the ballgame. Ball club was elated, it was the biggest draw because everybody wanted a copy of them, each year I changed it. In fact do you know anything about baseball? You know, Ryan Howard, yes, I did a painting of him with Gavin, I did the two of them. That was for 2003 when they were still playing with the Blue Claws, Gavin is with the White Sox and of course Ryan is with the Phillies. Then I did Cole Hamels in another one, he's just pitching, but I didn't know it was him at the time. I did that for six years while with the credit union before I retired, but then I ended up doing the artwork for Providence House down here as a fund raiser and for the Toms River Rotary clubs, and then I ended up doing for the last five, six years the Big Brothers, Big Sisters which have run into bad times because of contributions, they just don't have money to get the mentors out, and I'm still thinking of a way to help, but their funding is gone, they used to have nine hundred children in their program, they're down to 100, 150 if they're lucky, because they have no mentors, the mentors are all out of work, and then I keep going and now, of course, I'm working with McGuire and I paint with the United States Air Force.

SH: When did you connect with the military then?

FM: The Air Force, in 1999, I started doing the paintings with the Air Force, but before that, back in 1987, '88, '89 and up to even the present day, I was asked if I would design covers for a series of books on the holocaust which I did. ...

SH: Who was behind that?

FM: ... I have it in there, I have all the books, I'll show them to you before you leave, and what I did was to design the covers for them, and they were sold internationally. I understand the complete set is now down at the museum in Washington and from that, the gentleman that I spoke on the phone a few minutes ago, that I'll call back, he is responsible for giving me a tremendous amount of the work going into the paintings with the holocaust. I have stories that people never heard of what happened in the concentration camps, from people that I have met when I did the books. I had to read the manuscripts before I could come up with the idea for the painting. When I'm doing a painting I want to get into it so that I myself am part of that painting, just like the ones I showed you a few moments ago. It has to be me that is doing it to a point that I was there maybe, I don't know, but I become part of the painting, but I have to know the story. Now, I'll show you before you leave a story that I just did which was furnished to me by Heidi Stark over at the McGuire Air Force Base and in it I met a fellow by the name of Joe O' Donnell. He was a flyer in the B17s before the US Air Force ever came to existence, but he was attached to the 305th at that time. I believe it was the Eighth Air Force, but don't hold me to that, at the time, but his B17 was shot down, second engine was shot over Vienna, and he was captured by the Germans and put into a concentration camp, Stalag Four, and I got his whole story on what it was like in Stalag Four. I have it on tape just like you're doing, and I have to play it, I have the painting done, now I'm going to get ready to do the rest, and I also have the story of Mickey Marcus who was the only, as far as I know general in the Israeli Army, he was the first Israeli general in over 2000 years, when Ben-Gurion took over, but he was also a colonel in the United States Army, and he was over there and he refused the brigadiership five times. ... When he was over in Israel helping the Israeli government, he went by the name of Mickey Stone because they didn't want him to have his real name known over there because he had left the Army, and then he joined just to get back over there to help the Israeli government and he laid the groundwork also at Nuremburg. He was the one who was the officer, this guy, he's a real character, and he was killed by a sentry. ... It was hot one night, he walked out with a white sheet around him, the sentry yelled at him to halt and he didn't know Yiddish, and he was shot dead, but these are the kind of stories that I'm getting from individuals and I have quite a story on it, but she's given me the one on Joe O' Donnell, and I've got to play that, and your interview is just like the interview I had with him. I have it on tape, I ran out of the tape. I have books now to go on that he gave me.

SH: Is this the first book that you have done?

FM: When I was in the hospital, they nearly lost me twice, and I couldn't do my, I was sapped of my strength and my legs I couldn't walk for six weeks, I was blind in one eye, and thank God because everything turned around, I had the right doctors at the right time although I don't have my strength back, I walk now with a cane, not all the time, around the house I can walk without it, but if I go to a crowded place like Atlantic City I take it just if I have to beat the old ladies you know, get them the hell out of the way, but I kept painting and painting and I say, oh God, what do I got to do, I got to do something. So, talking with a friend of mine he says, "Frank, ... why

don't you make a book of your paintings just have the paintings done and put it into a book," but then I says, "Geez, I don't know," so a friend of mine, he was an author, he was having a book published so he invited me to the publication and I talked with the publisher, he says, "Frank, start writing stories about the paintings," and he says, "Let's see what happens." Well, I say, "I'll give it a shot." Well, I started then, this was last December, I have now close to about thirty stories that I've written, the paintings are all done, but I have about another thirty-five, forty, but he has a target date for the end of 2011. So, he says we'll make it, and he's gone along with me on it, heard some of the stories, he says, "Just don't change the style of writing." What I'm trying to do in the book is to be personal. I had an interview with Jimmy Doolittle, so I have the story of the Tokyo bombing. I also have how their destination was China and how some of them didn't make it, and I have that whole story, and I also mentioned when I met Eisenhower and when I did his, and of course, I gave a story on him being over in Europe. I have Bud Lomell who you know and have done, and I was trying to get Bill (Euger?) but Bill won't tell me, I'll get to him, and then, I got Carl's story. Originally the book was going to be World War II, Korea and Vietnam, all three, along with the Holocaust. Well, it's gotten so big that the publisher says let's just do the Holocaust and World War II since they are intermingled and that's what we're doing, and then, he says, "We'll think about and do Korea." Now, I have about twenty paintings of mine here on Korea plus the Rockland County Korean War vets own a whole slew which they purchased years ago which they've been taking around to the schools telling the children about "the Forgotten War." ... I'm embarrassed to say, but the State of New Jersey has nothing in the history books covering the Korean War and very little in fact on World War II and Vietnam. I say shame of the state for allowing their education department not to give the history of these wars. That's America, not what they're printing. Sorry if anybody might disagree with me, but that's the way I feel, I'd go further, but I won't. I have a young lady here.

[TAPE PAUSED]

FM: I can't do much today. ... Right now I have an exhibit over at McGuire Air Force Base where they have about sixty of my paintings. I've also got an exhibit in Perth Amboy right now at Raritan Bay Medical. I'm also getting prepared on September 4th, I'm going to be speaking at the Vietnam Wall up here in Holmdel, so, I'm getting paintings ready now, I showed you the one of Vietnam, these are all getting ready, I have to get them ready for the event, and then, I am also getting ready, they want me to have a show on a boat for McGuire Air Force Base, and they're bringing up my paintings that the US Air Force owns that I've done for them in the past and they're going to have them on exhibit on the ship as it goes around New York. So, it's exciting in that respect, the book has opened up a whole new bunch of avenues of which way I can go and I'll tell you, I didn't think writing was this hard, but now it's getting easier, once you get into it. I find the only thing is I can't shut up, I keep going and going, and I did a story on--it's on the Holocaust--that was on the St. Louis, I don't know if you ever heard of the St. Louis, "the ship of fools," they called it. They made the movie, I couldn't stop writing because I got the information of how the people actually lived on the ship, and I got that written, it took me about I guess it will be about fifteen pages just on the one painting, but this is what I'm finding out that it is so great to do this that I just hope that the people will acknowledge it, but as the publisher said, he thinks it will, because it's going differently. He says it's just not a history book, he says it's an eyewitness from the majority of the stories that I have. I have Congressional Medal of Honor winners that people have never even heard of and to me that's more important, getting the story

out and letting them to know what people have gone through to defend this country and to keep this country the way it is.

SH: We thank you for allowing us to come in today and talk with you and see your work.

FM: ... I hope I wasn't too long.

SH: Not at all, and again my thanks.

FM: Thank you.

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Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 8/29/12

Reviewed by Francis J. McGinley 11/6/12