

Interview with Frank Sarvello

November 29 2009

217 West Barnum Street Ishpeming, MI

[Transcribers note: The recording had moments where it would cut in and out which intensified towards the end of the interview. Either the disc was damaged at some point, or there was some sort of issue burning the recording onto the CD.]

Paul Alto (PA): This is Paul Alto, November 29th 6:11 PM, 217 West Barnum Street...interviewing Frank Sarvello. Alright, can you please give me your full name?

Frank Sarvello (FS): Frank Aloysius Sarvello.

PA: And your place of birth- your date and place of birth?

FS: 2/4/28. February the fourth 1928, and I was born in Ishpeming.

PA: Alright, and I can imagine that you were- Were you born in a hospital?

FS: No, I was born right in, right in the home that- See our house had burned down in Barnum location and we came to Ishpeming and my father owned the lot and we were staying just across the alley from there, and my dad had a house built there, on that lot.

PA: Alright, and-

FS: Oh, and my sister had told me that when I was born I was on the floor, there wasn't- My mother was on the floor and...a neighbor woman was the one who delivered the baby.

PA: Alright, and how many brothers and sisters did you have?

FS: I have 5 sisters and 4 brothers. That's what it was for the whole family.

PA: Were they all born pretty much the same way [Slightly louder] Were they all born the same way pretty much?

FS: Well that I wouldn't know because I wasn't born then. [Both Laugh] You know? No, we had a home- Most of them, I think, were born in Barnum Location, because that's where we had a home, but on Christmas Eve the house burned down, so then we had to move to town.

PA: Alright...Oh and was that- on Christmas Eve was that with the cat and the Christmas tree? How did your house burn down?

FS: It burned down because, well my mom and dad had rented a room to this here man, and he drank quite a bit, and in those days we had candles on the tree, and they hit the candle off the tree and that's what burned it down.

PA: Alright, so you were born and then...Where-Where were you baptized?

FS: I was baptized- I was the first one. Myself and Frankie Andraky [Spelled Phonetically] from the Venice were baptized on the same day, and that was St. John's Church. They had just completed the- just completed the church, and we were the first two born there.

PA: Alright, and then you said that your house burned down and then you moved. Do you remember any of the layout of the neighborhood when you were growing up?

FS: No, because I wasn't born then. I was born in 1928, and the house had burned down in 1927, around Christmas.

PA: Okay, and then where you grew up did-

FS: Oh where I grew up?

PA: Yeah.

FS: Oh yeah we- Where I grew up was, years ago we used to call it, Dago Town, because it was mostly Italians living there, and if you were another nationality and young, you know, you wouldn't dare come to Dago Town. [Both Laugh]

PA: Alright, and where was- where was that located?

FS: Right across the street from the fire hall is where our home was.

PA: Alrighty, and then who lived in that house? With you, like when you were young.

FS: Well, my mother and dad and nine of us children.

PA: And- and then your mother's name was...?

FS: Clara [SP]. Ciara [SP] in Italian is what they used to call it. Yeah that was- and she was- let's see...I'm trying to think of the name...I can't think of their last name.

PA: Okay.

FS: And then my dad- My mother and dad were both from Italy there, and they came to this country, and...well, let's see...I can't think of my mother's maiden name- Oh! Volala was her last name. My mother's name was, last name was Volala, and that was my mother. Then my dad was Frank Sarvello, and I was named after him. And...yeah, that's what...

PA: And then you said they were from Italy, from Calabria?

FS: Yeah, we're from Calabria, yeah. Simbario is the name of the town, and it was Calabria, and the province was Catanzaro...and my dad lived in- he was born and raised in the hills, and many times bandits would, would go through there, and they used to bury things there, and say "Remember this! If you touch any of that your whole family is going to be dead." Of course that time none of us kids were born, you know. My mother lived in Simbario, and she used to go back and forth to Italy. She'd leave clothes there, how much money she built- she had gave money to the church, and she built a home for her mother which would have been my grandmother...and when I went to Italy, that was, that was the only grandmother that was living that I had seen. The grandfather, I don't know what happened to him.

PA: And so they met over in Italy? Your mother and father met over in Italy, right?

FS: Yeah they were born more or less- See my father lived in the mountains, but then he used to come down and they were boyfriend and girlfriend with the eyes, because that's what they did years ago. You

looked at someone and then that was it! And it was a good stare, and that's how my mother and dad met. [Both Laugh]

PA: Well that's interesting. Alright then they, and so then they met and then did they marry over there and come over or-

FS: No. What happened; my father came here first. See, he came here first, and then he sent for his brother who was Dominic Sarvello, and he was- He lived here in Ishpeming too, so he got my grandmother. He sent for my grandmother, his brother, and then his wife. Or his fiancée I should say.

PA: Alright, and then when he came over, did he immediately come to Ishpeming, or did he first- Did he settle himself in?

FS: Well, he went somewhere else, but I don't know that story. My sister Rose knows it.

PA: Okay.

FS: See...because he had gone somewhere else, and he was working there. He worked in the mines, he was a miner and he worked in the mines. And then I don't know if it was my uncle who came here first and then my dad followed him over here to Ishpeming.

PA: Alright...Okay, so you were living at the house across from the fire hall, do you remember- When you said you were baptized with Franky Andracky, was he pretty much your friend then, growing up as a child?

FS: Yeah, our families were friends, see? And naturally, like that was in 1928, well we were good friends. He had a bar...the Andracky's, the Venice Café, and we had the Royal Bar.

PA: Alright. Growing up do you remember- Of course it was a lot different than nowadays, but do you remember any of the games you used to play? The stuff you used to do for fun?

FS: The games, well we used to play bocce ball in the alley, see? That's what we used to do for a while, and then we played horseshoes, and we'd play, like, hockey out in the street...and stuff like that, you know. That's what I remember, and then we played baseball, you know, and that was out in the street. Yeah, we had, see normally in those days the part of town you came from, you had a team, you know? And we used to play different teams.

PA: And we're they all like, pretty much different nationalities? Like the Italians versus the-

FS: Yeah. You had like- We had the Finnish people, and then there were quite a few Irish people, you know. Some lived near us, you know, but anyone who lived near us they- we all got along.

PA: Alright, so when you were growing up it was- that was during the depression. [Slightly louder] That was during the depression when you were growing up.

FS: Yes. Yeah it was during the depression. Things were pretty hard. I remember going to the store and where they used to sell the meat, I used to go there and they used to load my sleigh- They used to ask me to sing a song, and I'd sing a song and then they'd load my sleigh there with some [Unintelligible] bones, and different things like that from animals, you know what I mean, and we used to have enough food for the week there.

PA: All for the price of a song. [Laughs]

FS: That's what depressions are! [Laughs] Pretty tough.

PA: No doubt, no doubt. And you said that you had- that your family had the bar, did you- Was it always like a family oriented business? Were you working there when you were...?

FS: Yeah. The license was in my brother's name. The oldest boy. He turned 21, as soon as he turned 21 my dad went- he set him up in business, see? The original Royal Bar was right where the Wunder Bar is there. You know where the Wunder Bar is? That was the original Royal Bar to start with. I remember they had that floor put in. You know, to rise the floor. Yeah...and then...my mother went to Italy, and before she had gone to Italy she had bought there, a building. But, like I say, she went to Italy and she left a lot of her- Oh, and my father wasn't going to go to Italy because he wanted to paint that one side of the house, but the neighbors wouldn't let him go into the yard to paint it! So he says "I'll go on the trip". So my mother, she was supposed to go on the trip because she had things to give to some people there. Some sort of old medicines that they used to concoct, you know, and...and then on the way back, well, they got in that automobile accident, and...I was eight years old at the time, and the baby of the family, and it was pretty hard for me. In all those years, to lose a mother and father like that- Didn't even get to know them very well, you know? That was it with my mom and dad.

PA: That's pretty rough, and then when that happened, the rest of your family-

FS: Oh, well in the car, in the car when they got in the accident it was my mother and dad, my brother Joe who drove the car, and my sister Rose, and my sister Catherine. They were all in the car. Catherine almost died. My mother and dad died [Unintelligible] a few hours after the accident. My father asked, "How's my wife?" you know? They told him she was alright, but she was dead, and then my father said "Well, that's what I wanted to know" and he died. That's the way that went.

PA: That's rough.

FS: But my sister Catherine almost died. Rose didn't know who she was till a few days after. My brother Joe, well he was- he got out of it pretty good, so, you know...that was it.

PA: And how did they- How did they get in the accident? Was it driving-

FS: It was- They hit another car, and they had never come to the- it was never settled whose fault it was. If it was my brother's, or the other people, so...and in those days they didn't investigate, or you know, like they do today. That was... [Long Pause]...yeah...so...

PA: Alright, and then you said your mother was concocting medicines?

FS: Well, she had to deliver things to Minnesota, and that's where they went. They had gone to Minnesota, and on the way back is where it happened, and that was something. Yeah and the only thing I go by is what my sisters told me, and, you know because I was young at the time, you know eight years old you don't remember much.

PA: And then did your sister take you in?

FS: Huh?

PA: [Louder] Who took you in?

FS: And then my oldest sister, who was married, and she was living next door to where we were living, and she said- Well you know even my sisters weren't that old because while I was eight years old at the time, my brother Toody was ten, my sister Catherine was 12, and Rose was 14, but she moved in the house. She was the only one who was married, she moved into the house, and she took care of all of us

kids, and one by one they got married. My brother Bruno, he was the oldest in the family, he got married, and my sister Mary, and then Cecilia, then Rose, then Catherine, Toody...

PA: And then you were the last one.

FS: Yeah that's right [Laughs], you know that's right!

PA: Alright, so after your...you were being raised by your sister then. You guys still kept the bar, and because it was in your brother's-

FS: Yeah, well my brother had the bar, and he runned it, and I actually was there from the time I was eight years old. I used to fill cases up, and you know- with the bottles because they had all those returnables, and swept the floor, mopped the floor, did what I could at my age, you know, and that's the way I was brought up- I even had to weight on customers! My brother Bruno, he was funny. He said "Hey, he wants some beer! Go give him some beer!" [Both laugh] And I could barely reach the tap, but I did it! [Both laugh]

PA: Alright so, you were saying that Bruno got the liquor license. Was that- Why didn't your father get the liquor license?

FS: Huh?

PA: [Louder] Why didn't your father get the liquor license? If you don't mind me asking. [FS laughs]

FS: Normally I wouldn't say anything about it but- See my father couldn't get a license because he was bootlegging there, see? He made the best moonshine around, you know, and we had cousins in Chicago that told him "We'll buy all you make, and we'll give you three, four times more than what you'd get around here". So that's how we got along, and then my father had gotten someone that had squealed on him and federal men came over. My father spent a few months in prison, and that's how that was and...yeah that- Oh! When they came back, yeah after we got everything settled we knew about the building had bought before she went to Italy, and they had it remodeled, you know? And that's where they moved from the other place.

PA: Oh, okay.

FS: They moved from the other place to move over there. So they had their own building and their own business.

PA: Alright. Okay, and then- and that's when the old Royal became the Wunderbar?

FS: Yeah, that's right, yeah.

PA: Alright, and then how was- I'm sure it was rough growing up with- like how did your other friends treat you with you not having parents? Like did they invite you over to see their parents? How did people treat you with you being an orphan?

FS: Oh, they treated me good. The friends I had I'd go over to their house, and they'd come over to our house. Wherever we went we always had to drink or to eat, you know. Not alcohol though, you know. [Both laugh]

PA: Alright...Okay and then as you were growing- When you were a teenager you were working at the bar?

FS: Yeah.

PA: Okay, alright.

FS: Yeah, as a matter of fact I worked at the bar when I was a teenager, and that was- I had to work sometimes till 12 at night and go to school the next day, and then I played in sports. See basketball, football, and one of the teachers had come by and seen me working at the bar and I was reported so they wanted to take me off of the team! One of the people on the schoolboard said "He has to work, because he pays, you know, he gives his sister so much a week out of what he makes" which- that was the way it was. I'd make \$25 a week and I'd give her \$15 for groceries...and my sister was a wonderful person. She took care of me all those years, as a matter of fact the whole family until they got married, you know. Yeah, I had a wonderful, wonderful family, and I loved them all, and above all she was so good to me that I can never repay her. Which I tried to, the more money I made, the more money I gave her.

PA: Sounds like you really had a close-knit family.

FS: Yeah.

PA: Yes but you really had to be back then.

FS: Oh definitely, yeah, in the depression.

PA: Yeah. Alright, so you graduated from high school?

FS: Yes.

PA: Pretty good time? You graduated from Ishpeming?

FS: Yeah, from Ishpeming High School I graduated.

PA: Okay.

FS: Yeah, and I was no honor student, but at least I graduated. [Both laugh]

PA: And then after you graduated did you stick around town? Did you have plans?

FS: Well, I turned 18 during the war and I enlisted, and then Franky Andracky said "You enlisted, well I'm gonna enlist too". So I really made enemies with his family, because they didn't like it, especially his mother! [Both laugh] Yeah, so we went for a- We were in the service and we were in Chicago, I forget the place. Anyway, we had a guy there that said "Who can speak Italian?" and I was the only one that could speak Italian, because we used to speak Italian in the house, you know when my parents were alive. Of course that was quite a few years after, but, I mean I still remembered a lot of the Italian, and then I had- I met a friend from Marquette, and he said "Let's go to the beerhall", you know? So I went to the beerhall with him, and really I was never a beer drinker, but we had a few. When we got back no one was there! So I was the only one that could speak Italian, they all went to Italy and they sent me to Japan! [Both laugh] That's a fact!

PA: Actually, I have a- How did you feel about Italy? Like, with Mussolini being part of the Axis versus America? Did that- Was that conflicting with you being Italian and with you being American, like fighting other Italians?

FS: Oh, well-

PA: I know you didn't go there, but how were the Italians views in America?

FS: In America? Oh, when I was there?

PA: Yeah.

FS: Well, when- I'll tell you that after I get through this other stuff.

PA: [Laughs] Okay, alright so you went to Japan?

FS: Yeah, so I went to Japan, and well I- there I was. I liked it there pretty much, and then I got- I started singing, so I was in a few shows that year, because music has always been my favorite, you know. My dad used to ask me "Sing this, Sing that", and most of the songs were in Italian, you know. So I was singing. Then, when the singing gave up I started boxing. I seen the sign around, and when I was young (that's one thing I forgot to mention) we had the fire hall there, and we had a boxer there that used to train us kids in Boxing! So that little experience that I had in Ishpeming here helped me when I got onto the service. So I made the boxing team, and I was the leading contender in the middle-weight class, and so...I was, I was happy about that. I did a good job there, and it's- We had our own barracks- It really helped me in the service, because we had our own barracks, our own cook, you know it was nice...And then I- When I got out of there...I was discharged in '48, and then from '48 I came home, worked at the bar for a while, and then I said "I'm going to go study music", so I went to Minneapolis, and I studied at MacPhail School of Music, conservatory of music. I was there for...pretty close to three years. I got one diploma, but that was it. And then I- I came home, and then from...I worked in the mine for a year, saved up the money and I decide to go to Italy. I wanted to see where my parents were born, and that's exactly what I did. I went there, and I stayed in Italy for three-and-a-half years, and I really went to school there, and it was good, but I mean I really couldn't make the top grade as far as the [Unintelligible], but I did alright. I enjoyed it, and the main thing it was; I finally seen the grandmother, you know? And family. When I was sitting at the table I could swear that I was sitting at the table in Ishpeming, because everyone looks so much alike, you know? [Both laugh] It was a wonderful experience, and I took a few trips back and forth there, and I was in Naples for two years, and Rome for a year-and-a-half. I enjoyed it, I loved Italy, had a lot of friends. Most of my friends were studying medicine, studying to be doctors! They were the only Americans that I knew, and so it was very interesting, yeah. If I would have had your brains I would have done good. [PA laughs] I would have gotten degrees which I should have gotten.

PA: Yeah. And now which did you like better Naples or Rome? Or could you even compare them really?

FS: Well, I liked Rome because that's while the Pope was there, and you know I used to go to the cathedral every Sunday, you know, and then where I rented I was right across the street from Villa Borghese, and that was wonderful. That was a big park there, matter of fact it's one of the...what do you call them, the seven...

PA: Oh! The wonders of the world?

FS: Huh?

PA: The Seven Wonders of the World or whatever it's called?

FS: Yeah, something...yeah. And I traveled all around, you know? I even went to Germany. I had a friend, he was engaged to a girl who danced in a Charlie Blay (Spelled Phonetically), and he wanted someone to go with him to Germany, and I said "I'll go with you", so I went with him there. We had a good time, and we came back...and I traveled all around Europe there. Matter of fact...the ski-riders had to go to- I forget where it was now, my mind isn't all the way there, but I wanted to go to see them, but I didn't make it to see them because it was friend's that I had grown up with, and gone to school with. It would

have been nice to see them. I was sorry. That was my fault, I could have made it but I didn't do it. That's another mistake I made. I made many mistakes in my life.

PA: So when you were over in Italy, how did Italians treat you?

FS: Well it took a little while for me to learn it, because it was years that we didn't speak it in the home, but I tried to do the best I could, you know. I don't know what would have happened- But, I mean I spoke pretty good when I was there, so I got along with the language pretty good.

PA: And how did- How did the people treat you there, like, with you being an American?

FS: Oh, they were all good. I really never did associate with too many of them. The only ones that I was, you know- I was with the Americans most of the time, my friends that were studying medicine, and had I had a degree when I was here in the states, when I went there I would have switched to medicine, but you have to have a degree before you get in there. Otherwise I certainly would've.

PA: Yeah. Alright so, before the war now, before you went there how were- How did the Americans feel about the Italians being against America? Like is it...

FS: Well, you see where- The Italians there...The Italians there- Where I was staying, I was staying at a home, and it was the San Giovanni home, the lad he had his friends com over and they used to study together, you know, three of them. One would read 50 pages and then the three of them would discuss the 50 pages. Then the other one would do 50 pages and do the same thing. The three of them did the same thing, see? And I could see right then and there that, Hey, that's a good way to do it, you know? And...oh! And then the conversation would come up with- about the Americans. They says "Well...", you know they said "They made a lot of mistakes, the Americans", see, and the three of those lads that studied, they spoke English also. They were Italians born in Italy, but they were intelligent boys, and they said- well I said "Listen, don't you ever talk about the Americans to me. Nothing wrong with 'em, and I'm an American, and don't you ever forget that!" and they said "Frank, we don't mean that" and one of the lads says "Here, come over- Come on by the window" I came by the window, "You see all those places down there? They were bombed by the Americans. The Americans laid those bombs on those people. How would you feel if your family got wiped out? Would you love Americans?" I says "You got a point there" because I started to think that's true, you know? They said "We have nothing against the American people, we just mean that whoever was in power, they did that, that's- you know, would you like it if we wanted your mother, brother, sister dead?" So that cured me of that.

PA: And around here did any- did you ever get- before the war did anyone get on you for being Italian?

FS: No, no.

PA: Okay. Alright, so you were in Italy there, and you met all your family, what made you decide to come back?

FS: Well, to start with I had to come back, otherwise my passport would have been no good over there, and one thing about it if you're Italian and you're in Italy you're always Italian. They can even draft you, so that's the way it was years ago.

PA: I didn't know that. That's interesting.

FS: Huh?

PA: That's interesting that that-

FS: Yeah, that's what it was.

PA: So you came back here, and then did you come back to Ishpeming then?

FS: Yeah I came right back home to Ishpeming, yeah.

PA: Alright, so before you went to Italy, you came out of the service, and you had some- and you came out of the service, you came to Ishpeming, then what happened?

FS: I remember reading about Alaska, and I says "Gee, I think I'd like to go there!" you know? So what I did is- that's what I did. Well I didn't get to Alaska, but I got to Oregon, because in those days you used to travel by train, and then I noticed they were having a rodeo, and I says "I always liked horses", and so I stayed there for a while, and I got into gambling which was bad. It was a big mistake, but I gambled and I lost. I lost all my money, and then my brother sent me a few hundred dollars, but he got tired of sending me money, my brother Bruno. He says "I'll send you enough money to get home on and that's it!" you know? And I said "Well that's alright" so I started picking fruit. I never picked fruit in my life, but I started learning, and then that gave up so then the apples came, so I started picking apples and I got to be pretty good at it. I made a few friends, and this one lad, he showed me how to set the ladder under trees, and I became one of the fastest pickers in the orchard! [Both Laugh] And it was interesting...I really liked it and [Unintelligible]. We went from orchard to orchard, and then after...after I decided, I decided to come home. I picked for maybe 7 or 8 months, you know, but it was enough to live on, what I was making picking fruit, you know? Then I came home...yeah. It was a good experience, you know, I- good experience and I had a few problems there. When you're young and someone tries to take advantage of you, well you fight back and that's what I did. I had a few good scrapes, but having the training I had in boxing I never had much trouble, you know? So I did pretty good there...and the thing was I gambled, and that was bad. See, I lost everything I had. That's why I say I wish I had more upstairs than downstairs. Yeah, I had a pretty interesting life. Lot of mistakes, course that comes.

PA: Yeah. You said you met a lot of interesting people through picking, I can imagine. Like were-

FS: Oh yeah, yeah, I did, yeah. I met a lot of good ones and then I met a few bad ones, yeah.

PA: So then- So that's when you came back to Ishpeming, and then that's when you went to Italy? Or is that when you went to Minneapolis then, and then to Italy?

FS: No, that was before I went to Minneapolis.

PA: Okay, okay.

FS: When I went, yeah.

PA: Alright, well then, so you came back from Italy, and then did you just start working at the bar again?

FS: Yeah. I started working at the bar, and I...then I worked construction. Yeah, yeah I had the...and [mumbles] I like construction, but I mean in the- I never joined the unions right away, which I should of. Then I would have had a pension from them, but...I made mistakes, like I say those little mistakes that when you can't sleep at night you think about those. [Both laugh] Yeah...they say you're supposed to learn from mistakes, but when do you learn from the mistakes, do you know what I mean? [Both laugh] Yeah, I had an interesting that I thank God for many times. I'm still labeled a, you know, being 81 years old, almost 82, I'm thankful to still be here, and one thing...my religion comes up good. I never really thought about the Lord that much, but I do now. I say prayers and I'm happier. Little by little I'm forgetting all these mistakes, but when you make so many mistakes that you can't sleep at night, that's

what's bad. But right now I'd say I'm coming along pretty good, and I'd say it's all from having faith in the Lord.

PA: Now, did you spend any time down in Chicago?

FS: Yeah well, No well, not too much. Not too much, but a few days. Whenever I went through Chicago I had friends I could stay with, you know? And...and I'd take a trip there once in a while. Go to Soldier's Field and see a game, football game. Yeah, and I didn't see many of my relatives there, because, well I was too young to know most of them, you know? But we had one who- Tony, Tony Tosoni (Spelled phonetically), he was a police officer there, you know, he used to come to Ishpeming quite a bit, so I knew him well. You know, he was our cousin, [Chuckles] and a funny thing happened. When I had taken the trip with two of my buddies from Marquette, while we were in the car they mentioned my cousins name, they were looking for him. [Laughing] He was a gangster and we all started laughing. "Yeah, that's my cousin!" [Laughs] Yeah, yeah and this here Tony, he had a son who would get into trouble. Many times he got demoted on account of that, but that's what it is. You're born in Chicago and you got all those friends and cousins. Oh! And while I was in Italy, a thing that always sticks with me is that I met Lucky Lucciano. See, my buddy who was studying medicine over there, he said "Frank, I've been here for two years. I never gave one exam yet. [Laughs] And he had a beautiful voice, he was a good singer. Tony Cuazo (Spelled phonetically), I'll never forget him, God bless him. And anyway "He says my aunt just come from New Jersey, and she wants to go to an opera." He says "I gotta take that exam tomorrow, could you do me a favor?" I said "Yeah, certainly." He says "Well take her to an opera" So I went to pick her up, I forget the name of the hotel she was staying at, but anyway I went in to pick her up and all I could see was one guy there, you know? With his back to me, and then I asked the clerk there behind the encounter, I says "Is there a Ms. Cuazo here?" you know, it was his aunt you know, and he says "Yeah, she's talking to that fellow over there." When I went there she introduced me to Lucky Lucciano. [Both laugh] I says "I wish I had a camera" I would have taken a picture with him! But anyway, when we left she told me he wanted to know everything that's going around, you know, and he wanted information about this and that. He wanted a date with her and stuff, so I met him and we shook hands you know. That was interesting, you know to meet Lucky Lucciano.

PA: Pretty nice guy, or?

FS: Huh?

PA: [Louder] Was he a pretty nice guy?

FS: Oh yeah, oh he was. Matter of fact if I would've used my head I would have asked him for a job!
[Both laugh]

[About a minute gap in the recording here]

PA: - St. Rocco's or were you a member of St. Rocco's...

FS: Oh, I was a member before that, yeah. Yeah, I was a member before that. When I was 18 years old [Coughs] I was a member.

PA: Oh, alright.

FS: Yeah, I was a member there from when I was 18.

PA: This is kind of out of the blue, but when you were growing up, the food that you ate, was it pretty much the food we eat now, or...?

FS: Well, it was a lot of macaroni, a lot of cabbage and macaroni. [Coughs] It was more or less we had macaroni with everything, you know. That's it, and the meatballs, stuff like that had good food you know, we never stopped, and then my father had a garden in the Barnum location, from here you might as well say at the top of the hill, and ah... he did a lot of planting and he use to take me with him a lot of times and I would spend a day there with him helping him. I couldn't do too much then I was too young, I wasn't even about eight years old.

PA: So how old were you about when you came back to Ishpeming to really kind of settle, like when you were working construction?

FS: Back then I was 25, 27, about 28

PA: 28, alright then did you just kind of work for a few years there?

FS: Huh?

PA: Did you just work then?

FS: Yeah that's what I did, I just work, like I say at the bar, construction, and ah, that was about it. I worked with the boil room laborers, I worked with boil makers, I worked as a laborer on construction as a, with the electricians and ah also with the plumbers, I worked with the plumbers. Yeah that was it, and labors, I belonged to a labor union finally you know

PA: So you were in Minneapolis in 19.... Like late 40's?

FS: 40's into... ah... I would say 49/50. 'Cuz I turned 21 when I was in Minneapolis and previous to becoming a bar tender there. Geeze I forgot to tell you about the bar. Previous to that yeah I was.... I was a barboy, and I worked- Like you had to go get the ice. You couldn't pour drinks and that, but you could do anything, you know, wash the glasses, make sure this is there, if a bottle is empty to take it an open up another one and put it up there. So when I turned 21 I was working at Murray's Theatre and Lounge. They had entertainment there. A very ritzy place in Minneapolis. Yeah, and besides going to school that's what I did, and then I got into the bartender's local, but they had told me "You'll never get in there!" (in the bartender's local), but this bartender that I was working with, I'll never forget him, he was a great man, and he was one of the best mixed drink artists I've ever seen in my life. Any kind of a drink. Little by little he started showing me, so I got to the point where I could do- not as well as him, but at least familiar making different drinks. When I turned 21 he says "Frank, when you turn 21 you come back here" he says "and we'll get you in the union" (the bartender's union) So...So he did what he could, but what happened- there was this Italian restaurant I used to go every Sunday and sometimes during the week, and then he (the owner of the bar)- I used to sit at the counter, and then this priest came next to me and he said, the guy that owned the restaurant says "Jeez father" he says "the fellow next to you, he's an Italian there from Ishpeming, and he's trying to get into the bartender's local, but he can't get into it!" you know? And this is another thing I want you to know why I think of this here, [FS thumps table] he says "Give me a paper and pencil!" so the fellow behind the counter gave him the- and he wrote down on the piece of paper, he says [FS thumps table with every word] "You give this here to the president of the local. Don't give it to no one else, you go to the president!" So I did that. When he got it, the president of the- he says "These priests are always asking for favors!" he says "Jeez!" he says "Well listen, you get your own job and you're in the union, but don't tell anyone how you got into the union!" [Both laugh] And that's how I got- I had just turned 21, you know? So I got into the union, and then this bartender I was working for, you know the one that's give me- he says- he took me over to the [Unintelligible], and his brother-in-law was the manager- bookkeeper! He was the bookkeeper there. He asked his brother-in-law, Buck, "Does he know how to mix drinks?" he says "I taught him, and he knows

how to mix drinks better than anyone you have working here, or ever had working here. I trained him.” So I got the job at the [Unintelligible]. [Both laugh] Yeah, that was interesting. I was fortunate in so many ways, and like I say, ended up being a priest that got me into the union. Yeah, so...that was wonderful. I had a good life, I can’t kick...and I’m still here, so I can’t kick a bit. Yeah- [About half a minute gap here]

PA: - really become like your full-time job?

FS: To make it full-time?

PA: Yeah.

FS: Well see, when I was working for my brother I could always work construction besides, and then I got married, you know, and then when I got married things started to change, because, well it wasn’t my decision all the time, you know? When you’re married you...I won’t say much more, anyway [Coughs extremely loud] then I decided to buy the bar, so I bought the bar, and then I had it for- until I was 65. I started getting social security when I was 62, which I should have waited until I was 65, and well I had heart problems. Who knows how long I was gonna live, you know? I thank the lord I’m still here, you know, and I’ve never had anything outside of a couple of heart operations, and stuff like that. I’ve been pretty good. I can’t quibble about that.

PA: Running the bar- [Clears throat] Running the bar for so many years though, you must have met a lot of people around Ishpeming.

FS: Oh yeah.

PA: Pretty big customer base...

FS: I didn’t tell you about who I met over in Italy! I met...see I had a buddy, Bozio [Spelled phonetically] from North Lake that- he was stationed at Bagnoli, and this was when I was stationed at Naples. He said they wanted a bartender who could speak English, and Italian, and knew how to mix drinks. So he got me that job, and it was for Ingrid Bergman and naturally Rossellini, her husband. She recited in Italian- it was the first time that someone recited...Joan of Arc is it? Yeah. In Italian, so after that they had this here party, you know? And Ingrid Bergman, Rossellini, so many others that I didn’t even get to meet, but I worked behind the bar, see I mixed the drinks, and Ingrid Bergman, they started talking about her daughter, and this and the other thing, well she came to the bar quite a few times drinking martinis and that’s where I met her, you know. She was talking Italian to me and says, well, you know I says “I speak English too.” [Laughs] So we started talking, and then the fellow that put on the party, his name was Commander Starks, I’ll never forget that name, he says “Frank, do me a favor and make sure everyone gets off of the elevators safely and lock the door before you come back up” so I take this one down, that one- The last two to leave were Ingrid Bergman and Rossellini, and the elevator went down about this much too far [makes gesture with arms], and when she came she had a little jacket on, you know? When Ingrid tripped, well I was right there so I put my arms out and grabbed her, and Rossellini was laughing and she gave me a big kiss. [Laughs] And I says “The thing that...” when I see a movie, like the other day I was seeing a movie with her in it, I says “Isn’t this something, eh?” You know? And I met Gina Lollobrigida when I was there, and Sophie Lauren. I met them, not to have much of a conversation, but I did meet them, you know.

PA: That would have been interesting the most...

FS: I had an interesting life when I think about it, yeah.

PA: Oh! So, on the subject of movies actors and stuff, you were here when *Anatomy of a Murder* was being filmed, right?

FS: Yeah, I was here.

PA: How was that?

FS: That was- Well we weren't living in this house then. No, we weren't living in this house.

PA: Okay, but you were in Ishpeming though right?

FS: Yeah I was in Ishpeming. Matter of fact I was going over to Helen, and then I took her over to...whatever they call it, I don't remember-

PA: The premier?

FS: Yeah, when they had the premier Helen and I were there...Yeah, got to meet a lot of them because they used to be around the Roosevelt quite a bit, and I just lived around the corner from the Roosevelt, and I met quite a few of them...and then when I went to Church- I forget her name, she was a movie actress, but she came and sat next to me, and it was so crowded that I left and went in the back, you know.

PA: That must have been pretty interesting for the town, you know?

FS: Yeah. Oh yeah it was. That was [mumbles off]

PA: Alright, so-

FS: Oh! My cousin was the chief of police, and his name was also Frank Sarvello, so I started to get many of his phone calls, you know [Laughing] me! At two, three, four o'clock in the morning, but that's funny though, that was nice. He was always a good man, yeah. [30 second gap in recording] -yeah...[Coughs]

PA: Alright, so...I have a quick question, so when you came back to Ishpeming, is that when you joined- [Break in recording here]

FS: Anything else Paul?

PA: Alright so after you came- When did you get involved in the bar business? When did- [Recording breaks again] alright.

[END OF RECORDING]