

Lionel: ...1950, I was born 1932 in a little town called Graniteville, just like Granite-ville. It's just outside of Barry, between Barry and Montpelier. You've heard of Barry? Montpelier? It's the central part of the state. I have two brothers, two sisters. I'm the second one from the oldest...eldest. Uh, and actually that happened when my mother...I was fourteen, that's what got me into cooking, because with two brothers, two sisters, my Dad...I had to kinda take over and do meals, whatever a housewife does.

SLHS: Do you mind us asking what the accident was?

Lionel: It was a collision with a train...train coming down a big hill with big blocks of granite on it. The crossing had only a wooden cross, saying it was a crossing but you can't see it very well, and my mother was in the car, a passenger, and the lady driving got nervous, stalled the car on the tracks, couldn't get it started, train was coming down, can't stop, pushed the car down the tracks about five hundred feet. So, it broke her neck and she was going to have a child, a baby that same evening.

SLHS: Your mom?

Lionel: Yeah. And what's peculiar about the accident is...I'm hitchhiking with the other lady's son, and we, there's a spot where you put your thumb out, it's just below the crossing. The crossing is up a little further and we got to the spot where, to hitchhike and we saw a commotion up there, cars and the train was gone. The car was still sitting there and when they told me it was my mother I felt pretty bad. I started walking home. I was four miles when they picked me up. The rest is history. But I took care of my home. Then, ah, as I grew older I worked in the quarries, the granite quarry. I did all kinds of jobs. I even worked on a jitney, what they called a jitney. It's like a truck, it runs on the tracks and it picks up stones and boulders and transfers all the equipment to cut the stone. So I did that. My dad got hurt that particular time, broke his leg so he couldn't work. But anyways, I got to be 19, your draft is on, so I'm thinking with my friend, which is the son of the lady that was with my mother, we decided to go into the Navy. At first we went and tried to get in a ...(?)...but they didn't need nobody. We volunteered in the Navy four years...

SLHS: This was...

Lionel: ...in the Navy I was, I wanted to be a baker. No baking, they didn't need nobody so put me in what they call the deck force. You would mop, and

chip, and paint, and broom... so, I was in the 6th division. We got aboard the battleship, Missouri, after training in boot camp, twelve weeks. We got put on battleship Missouri, the USS Missouri. You've heard of that ship?

SLHS: Yeah...

Lionel: Ah, we stayed together, me and my buddy from hometown stayed together on the same ship. Then after a while I decided...he went into Radar, K division. I went to K division too. I volunteered to go into there. So they accepted me. There, all you do is look at scopes that tells you the speed of airplanes, the ships on the ocean, stuff like that. But I didn't like it. So I went back to deck division again. But anyways, after two years, I transferred on the USS Colartin (sp?), shore duty in Boston. I was in Boston two years 'til...all we had to do there was ah, go and board these World War II vessels. And, they're all in mothball. They called them mothball, there all covered with synthetic stuff to preserve 'em. But they're still there. All they had to do up there was... they give us a job to go and pull out some stuff that's in the store room, all kinds of insulators and capacitors, and all stuff like that, for the computers. But anyways, after I got discharged...I brought some stuff here...discharged from the Navy I decided to go to school under the GI bill. So, from there I volunteered, or I tried, I heard about the Culinary Institute of America, you've heard about that?

SLHS: Yeah...

Lionel: So I was in there two years in New Haven. Then after that I continued with Paul Smiths College, (?)...hotel course. I graduated from that and all the others was experience. But I can show you some of the things the Culinary Institute...this was my book where we learned to cook for fifty people.

SLHS: So your interest in cooking came from your cooking for your brothers and sisters when you were younger?

Lionel: That's where it started...that's where it started...I used to...I picked up a lot of ideas from some of my neighbors...showed me how to cook pies and stuff like that.

SLHS: So what brought you to Paul Smiths College?

Lionel: Well from the Culinary, on the bulletin board you have all kinds of things

that pertains to the food business. It had Paul Smiths College on there so I decided I'd come up this way and I'd take a look at it. It was in the winter, it was in April. That year there was big snow banks and everything. Anyways, I decided to go to Paul Smiths. I graduated in '59... '57 to '59. Then, while I was in one of the dorms there, this friend of mine says "come on," I got a nice young lady that you can meet in town. I said, "naw". I was interested in other stuff like bottle of beer, stuff like that. Finally, he kept asking me so I said, "ok, I'll go see this young lady." Well anyways, I met her where the eye care is in town. Eyecare, you know where that is? It used to be called Leonard's Department Store. She was working there. So, I met her and took her for a drive down towards Jay, near the ski jump there. And we stopped and talked, and from then on it was just another date and another date. Finally, summer came along. I worked at the Wawbeek, the old Wawbeek on Upper Saranac Lake. It's gone now, it burned down. I worked there six summers. But anyways, we had some kind of misunderstanding about something and I left her for a while, for a couple of weeks, and she kept looking for me and looking for me. Finally at Dewdrop's, you know where Dewdrop's is in town near the bridge?

SLHS: Yeah...

Lionel: It was drawing business then, and she'd go there every night with some of her friends to see if she could see me. Finally I came to town with a bunch of the waitresses and the other help from the Wawbeek. She saw me, I was coming across the bridge near the steps there, "Aw," she says to her friend, "I'm gonna marry that guy." So, that's what happened. We got married after I graduated. I been in town ever since. So, from there... I've got papers here from way back...so I went through Paul Smiths College, oh yeah, I work at Paul Smiths College. I worked there when I was going to school, in the cafeteria. Then after I graduated I went to, my first job was in Lake Placid, Northwoods School. I worked as a second cook there for one year and then the head chef, which was the the Charcoal Pit, you've heard of the Charcoal Pit? Well, the man that runs the Charcoal Pit is gone now, but he had the job of feeding the Northwood kids. So, the second year he decided he didn't want to do it anymore so he made me chef. I was chef there two more years. We used to cook breakfast and lunch, and then I'd go home to Saranac Lake and have a little nap, and then I'd go back at night for the evening meal...did that three years. After that, I was fortunate enough to get another job, Gabriels, where the prison is. It's gone now. I worked there three years for the Sisters of Mercy. There was two chefs, so there was me and another fellow. I had the morning shift and he had the evening shift.

There we had to feed...Sister Michelle, she was the head one, she's the one that got Uhlein started, to get money for building it, to build it. She was very strict and she wanted everybody, all the patients to eat whatever they could because they didn't want something, they didn't have to have it. So, half the patients there had all individual menus, different foods that they liked. I had to prepare and weigh and everything. It was a real tough job. It took me over an hour just to set up the trays to go upstairs to the rooms. It was kind of a, well aggravating job. You had to have a lot of patience. I tell you, food business, you need patience. Well anyways, after that, the sisters were all through in Gabriels, and they had the new place set up at Uhlein, and they wanted a chef there, but I went for an interview, but the money wasn't there, so I said, "I'm not gonna take the job." Meanwhile, this fellow from college, Paul Smiths College, he heard about me and asked me to go over for an interview and I got the job there. I worked there from 1963 to 1979. I worked at the college. In the summer I was in charge of the food and cooking classes, in the winter I was second in charge, I was there all the time to take care of the quantity food. We had a class there, we fed about 250, maybe 300, meals from scratch. Make the rolls, make the desserts, make the main entrée and everything. I did that for about seven years...the quantity class. But I was there from '63 to '79. And from there, I lost my job. You've heard about downsizing these places? They downsized Paul Smiths, I was one of 'em to let go because they brought in a catering, not a catering, but an organization where they plan all the meals. The Sky Chef, you've heard of Sky Chef? Sky Chef is a business where they do everything. In other words, being a college to teach foods, I don't know why they did it. They let me go, I worked in the...(?)...department 'til before Christmas time, and then...the pink paper. You're done. It's hard to get a job up here. So, it took me almost three months to find work. But anyways, I found work at ah...there's a little restaurant right now next to the little plaza there next to the...it's a little Italian place.

SLHS: Little Italy?

Lionel: No...

SLHS: Nonna Fina?

Lional: Right next to Ace Hardware, you know there's a little hotel? There's a little restaurant? Well anyways, it was called Duffy's....Duffy's Cedar Post. I got a job there and I was the deep fryer cook, and I was the assistant to the cook. So, I had two jobs then. I worked in a lumber...(?)...lumber company, then I'd go to work at Duffy's Cedar Post. I did

that about 3 years. And I put my resume in for the state prison in Raybrook, Adirondack Correctional. First time I went for an interview, they didn't need me. So I left it there. Several months went by and I put another one in and this time I was ok. They hired me. I was there from 1981 to 1998. Then I retired. And there, I will show you all these things afterward, there I started as a cook, head cook in 1985, then in 1990 the head administrator was given a better job and left me...I was the only one with a degree so I had to take over as administrator. I did that 18 months. In a prison like that you get a lot of people in the administration section, the people that guard the inmates, ah security division, there's another boss there, and there's another boss there. There's three bosses. So I'm in-between with the food business. You try to serve meals and you have a lot of aggravation with this little gal here and this guy here. And I said that for the amount of \$2000 extra, it's not worth it. Well, I asked them to find somebody else to take my place and I went back to head cook. I had retired as head cook. Ok, what else would you like to ask?

SLHS: Uh, well we know that you're interested in painting, you like to paint. Where did that interest come from?

Lionel: Well, let's see. I live on McClellan street in town and across from me there was a neighbor who self-taught himself to paint. He was very good. He was excellent and sold a lot of paintings to people around here. I've seen a lot of 'em. So, I decided to go for it. It was kind of a...I said it was going to be kind of relaxing for me to do something different, you know. So I went over for five lessons, but kept teaching you and taking the brush from you and show you too much, too much for me. So after five lessons I said, "I'm sorry, I'm gonna go on my own." So, meanwhile, at Paul Smiths college...I was at the college, I would paint 'em and put 'em up for \$30, \$40. Mostly scenes from around the college...like the Leaning Pine, St. Regis Mountain, the Forestry Club, the sugar house. So, I must have...I have a list at home of over 200 paintings that I did, so far. I didn't do as I went along because I did a lot of them, and I gave a lot of paintings away. I sold a lot. I'm still... I got some downtown right now at Another's Treasure. You know where that little store is? Right going up the little hill is?

SLHS: Yeah, I think I know where you are talking about but I've never been in there.

Lionel: You go in there, you'll see, I've got one here.

SLHS: It's called Another's Treasure?

Lionel: Another's Treasure. It's a used furniture store. I just started that about a week and a half ago. It happened I was going walking with my wife, we stopped the lady was still there working at a computer. So, we looked in, door was locked so she unlocked the door. Then we talked about different things, and then before the end of the conversation she says, "I wish I could find something to put on my walls, it's all bare up there." I said, "I know what. I got a lot of paintings at home. I have about 40 at home. I'll bring some down." She said, "Oh sure, bring some down." So the first time I brought 7 down, and just last week I brought 5 more. I got 12 there... a big bear with a paw open, and other scenes. What else?

SLHS: Since you've been in the Adirondacks for a while, can you just tell us a little bit like, what was Saranac Lake like back then? And like how it differs now?

Lionel: I got papers here to show you. How much time we got left?

SLHS: About 15 minutes.

Lionel: 15, that's all?

SLHS: Yeah.

Lionel: These are college papers.

SLHS: And was Winter Carnival, like as big as it is now?

Lionel: Oh, it was beautiful, and it stopped being nice around the 60's.

SLHS: So it was nicer when it first came out? What was Winter Carnival like? Were there like, the same activities, or were there...

Lionel: They had huge floats that cost, the last one my wife was on, Catholic Daughters, it cost over \$700. This was way back in the 70's. They used to have at least 10 huge floats, which were beautiful. I mean they were all decorated up and everything. And then ah, most of those big bands come from Canada, two or three, and our own band. Mr. Baker was in charge. My daughter was in the band. I had two daughters that came here. This is paper of the year 2000. And then I had, this one here is a more interesting one. These are all the businesses that were here, but they're gone now. It's changed so much over the years. It's hard to believe. These are all people, people and business gone, all these businesses. Then you got another category, right here....businesses...

SLHS: Well, since you like cooking so much, obviously, we were just curious, what was your favorite thing to cook and what where your...were you more of a baker, or were you more of...like did you like to cook a lot of meats. I mean, what were your specialties.

Lionel: Well, while I was going to culinary school I got a job with a bakery in New Haven, Ct. for the school year. I had to get up at four in the morning or so, drive to work, to the bakery, and then I would fry between ninety and a hundred of jelly donuts and fill 'em...fry 'em and fill 'em with jelly and put 'em all on racks. Then I'd go to school. But ah, while going to school I worked with two other fellows, we used to be cooks for the athletes at Yale. I did that for five or six months. Then I worked at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, I worked in a Tea Room. That was the most difficult job. I had to do all the breakfasts, anything they wanted for breakfast. Anything they wanted for breakfast I had to do it, all alone. You gotta remember, it got pretty busy, it was summertime. It was summer work. Then I worked at the Lake Placid Club in Lake Placid. I worked in a tea room, I worked in a butcher shop. I worked as a broiler cook. I think that's enough. I worked there through three winters. Let's see...what's the other questions...oh, food...

SLHS: Yeah, we were just wondering what are your favorite things to cook? And like do you still cook even though you're retired?

Lionel: Well, there really isn't a favorite, but you know, I cook prime ribs.

SLHS: And you still cook even though...

Lionel: Oh, I cook. My wife and I, we share the cooking. She does some meals, I do others. I do all the spaghetti sauces and soups and chilies, and when I bake I do the cakes and breads, like banana bread and stuff like that. She does the pies, 'course I can make pies too. I'm not very good with the crust...

SLHS: Of all the places that you worked what was your favorite place? Like which one did you enjoy the most?

Lionel: Uh, probably the Adirondack Correctional. There it's different. You have the inmates doing all the heavy stuff for ya, and if they give you any problems, all you gotta do is tell the officers in charge of the mess hall, he'll take care of the problems. But I never had any problems with any of the inmates. It's how you deal with people. You gotta learn how to deal

with different people, how to accept 'em and deliver orders to 'em...very important.

SLHS: I think you have answered all of our questions, but is there anything you can tell us about Saranac Lake or the Adirondacks, like how it was so different that we might not know about just by looking at the paper? Like how was the community back then?

Lionel: Well, when I came in '59, I came in '57 to go to Paul Smiths. Then in those days some of the students could live in town. But I lived in the dorm, called the Snake Pit. After I got married there was three big hotels downtown that burned down. They burned down in the 60's...it's all in the paper here...they burned down in the 60's, they were beautiful. There was one across from the Eye Care, where the little bandshell is now, you know the place where they sing. There was a hotel there, the St. Regis, no, that wasn't the St. Regis. St.Regis was down there where the light is over by Bloomingdale Avenue. There's a parking lot...that was St. Regis. Across the street, next to the Rusty Nail was the Alpine hotel. Across the street from that where the Chinese place is, that was another big building...that burned down. But people were really friendly. You could go down the street and enjoy yourself going from store to store. There was Fishman's, where Sears is now, you could spend an hour and a half, two hours going store to store enjoying everything. Now you only got two or three things to go through.

SLHS: So is it safe to say you like you decision to move up to the Adirondacks? Like you enjoyed everything about it?

Lionel: Yes, ah...before I met my wife, I had intentions of going to California to work, after I graduated. But I'm glad I didn't because this is a very nice place. It's very similar to my home town around in Vermont, Barry, VT....same as this. I still have a brother and sister over there, two brothers and a sister. So, what can I say about the town? My wife lives in the same house she was born in. She's still there, it's an old house....1886, recorded. This is all the people that lived in there (here papers are being shuffled)...different people over the years. So what else... you all through with the questions?

SLHS: Yeah, we got through all of our questions? If there is anything you like to add, like little stories or....

Lionel: Well, oh, I could show you the painting...this one I just did. I just did a dear too.

- SLHS: When did you start painting?
- Lionel: 1964. And I've got over two hundred paintings listed, but I did more than that. My paintings are about just a lot of places in the world...Thailand, India, Japan...
- SLHS: Have you traveled to all those places, or you just...
- Lionel: I've been to Japan. When I was aboard the ship we went there for six months. Now you see that over there...
- SLSH: Yeah, that's really good.
- Lionel: I could put it on the chair. You can pass the word around to the kids here. My paintings aren't very expensive, about \$70.
- SLHS: How long did it take for you to make that painting?
- Lionel: Three hours. I make my own frames.
- SLHS: It took you three hours?
- Lionel: That comes from...I've got too much stuff here. Here's some pictures... That's Buddha in Japan.
- SLHS: Now you said that you basically raised your younger siblings. Did you miss out on like the typical childhood due to this?
- Lionel: On yeah, this is great. I missed out on a lot. I was 14, older brother was 16, younger brother was 11 and had a sister who was 6 and the other one was 8. So the two girls went to board with another lady in town for about two or three years, and I took care of my two brothers and Dad....had to do all the meals. I used to come from high school, right up home and prepare meals and clean the house and you know, regular stuff...dust and mop floors, bake, cook. I've done everything...(?)....I've done preservatives. I've done fruits, I canned vegetables, stuff like that. I made some jellies out of cherries, all kinds of stuff.
- SLHS: So instead of playing sports and stuff...

- Lionel: Yep, couldn't play sports. If I would have played sports I would have liked to have gotten into basketball but...this is the sugar house at Paul Smiths. I painted that scene too.
- SLHS: Do you ever regret not having a childhood like everyone else, or are you happy...
- Lionel: Well, it comes back to mind ever so often. No, not really. I did what I had to do...
.I donated a lot...I donate paintings when things come up around town about people that have bad luck with their health, or send money...sometimes people want money to go to India or China or even Africa. This is a painting I did of Paul Smiths College, this is a Leaning Pine. This is my battleship, see if you can spot me there.
- SLHS: Oh goodness...
- Lionel: I'm underneath the middle gun in the top row...
- SLSH: This one right here, I was going to guess that one.
- SLHS: So where do they hang the painting?
- Lionel: I don't know if they still got it hanging up. They put it in the library for a while. I don't know, since the college changed hands and stuff, I don't know if they still got it up. That was there logo, the Leaning Pine, until they chopped it down. These are my two certificates...this is the school of culinary...(?)...
- SLHS: Now, was your wife your first girlfriend, or no?
- Lionel: No, between nineteen and twenty-three years while I was in the service, I always dated other people. I dated people in Boston, I dated some girls from Maine, Massachusetts. You know I was working...back in college I had a girlfriend from New Hampshire. I had some in Barry, Vermont, and I had some in Burlington, Vermont.
These are my graduating class. This is from culinary...how much time we got left?
- SLHS: It's the end of our day, actually.
- Lionel: We served ten thousand meals...(end of recording)...