

## **Angeline Monek**

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Interviewer: Phyllis Boeddinghaus  
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Abstract: Angeline Eleanor (Marzella) Monek (1911-2012), the daughter of Italian immigrants Christopher Marzella and Maria “Mary” Marzella, was born in Metuchen. Her father was a building mason that helped construct several homes in Metuchen. As one of six children, Ms. Monek grew up in her family home at 56 School Street, a frequent meeting place for neighborhood parties. Ms. Monek graduated from Metuchen High School in 1929. Following graduation, she worked as an assistant cashier and later as an assistant vice-president at the Metuchen National Bank (later renamed the National Bank of New Jersey). Ms. Monek also served as a member of the Italian American Civic League and was a communicant of the St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral in Metuchen. She married James Frank Monek in 1942 and they resided along Ross Avenue. They had one child: Donna Marie, born in 1947. She is buried at Hillside Cemetery in Metuchen.

In this interview, Ms. Monek discusses her parents as her father was a respected mason that built many homes and buildings in the area, and her mother was an excellent seamstress that made all of Ms. Monek’s clothes. She also discusses working as a teller and bookkeeper at the Metuchen National Bank and her memories of growing up in Metuchen. Ms. Monek ends the interview by talking about her husband and daughter as well as her travel experiences with her close friends.

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P. Boeddinghaus: This is an experiment to see how this recording machine works. I am going to interview Ange (Marzella) Monek today and get her oral history. She is a long-time resident of Metuchen and has some interesting stories to tell us. This recording is made under the auspices of the Metuchen[-Edison] Historical Society and it is made by Phyllis Boeddinghaus interviewing Ange (Marzella) Monek. [recording paused]

The recording is taking place on October 13, 1992. [recording paused]

Now I’d like to ask you, Ange, about when your family came to Metuchen. Were they born in this country?

**A. Monek: No. They were born in Italy, both of them. And as far as I can remember, they must have come around 1910. They didn’t come together now. They met here in America, not in Italy. But judging from their marriage and so on, it must have been around 1910 because my father [Christopher Marzella] was eighteen when he came; my mother [Maria “Mary” Marzella], I don’t know. My father came**

alone. My mother came with her sister, mother, and father. That was their family; they were just two girls and their parents. And when Pop came here, I don't know how, but he met Mr. McQuilland that lived here in Metuchen on Highway 27 on the way to Edison. And this Mr. McQuilland took him under his wing. He was a construction man also, taught him the business, and taught him a lot of the American language.

P. Boeddinghaus: And the business would be mason work?

A. Monek: **Yes. Construction, bricklayer, and yes and all, everything with masonry. And then after they were married (and I don't know when), but a long time after, then he went on his own and did general contracting. But he did the masonry work.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And what area in Italy do you think your dad came from?

A. Monek: **Well, my dad came from a city on the Adriatic and the name is Bari (B-a-r-i). It's a seaport. And my mother came from the outskirts of Bari, I don't know how far, but it was kind of close. And the name of her town—the town she lived in was Gioia del Colle. It's a musical, yes.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And where do you suppose they met then in the United States?

A. Monek: **In New York, because my mother and her family settled in New York. And I don't remember my father saying whether he stayed in New York for a while and then came to New Jersey, or whether he came direct to New Jersey. I don't know how they met. I don't know.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And so then they settled in Metuchen when they were young marrieds?

A. Monek: **Yes. They did when they were first married, which I think must have been about 1910, I think. And they lived—you know where the Durham Café is [at 140 Durham Avenue]? Across the street from it on the side, on Durham Avenue, there's a big white house there [at 131 Durham Avenue].**

P. Boeddinghaus: On the corner?

A. Monek: **Yeah. Well, they lived there until my father built their house on Central Avenue, corner of Central Avenue and School Street, that stucco house [at 144 Central Avenue].**

P. Boeddinghaus: Yes, yes. That's a beautiful home. I've been past it.

A. Monek: **Yeah. And then as time went on, that got too small for the family. So then he built the one next door on [56] School Street, which was huge. Yeah, but that's where they lived. But they met and married in New York.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And so did your mother work outside the home?

A. Monek: **No. Mom was a homemaker, which you know how the Italians are, she cooked and washed all day and took such good care of us. She was a seamstress and she made all our clothes.**

P. Boeddinghaus: I know you all especially had such beautiful outfits.

**A. Monek: Well, and I remember we used to go to Perth Amboy shopping. There used to be a nice material store over there. And my mother would take me with and we'd look in the dress shop windows. And I would see something I like, and right while we were in Perth Amboy, my mother, she would study it. She would take me to the material store, buy the same color material that was on there, come home and make the dress, no pattern. No pattern.**

P. Boeddinghaus: She had a flair for that then. She was a genius about material.

**A. Monek: Yeah, yes. And I think they're well-trained in Italy. You know when they're young girls they can knit, and croquet, and sew, and just do anything. And my mother taught me all those things.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh, you do it too?

**A. Monek: Yeah, I know how. I don't bother, but the sewing I followed up on. My mother taught me a lot. And when my mother stopped making my clothes, I made my own. And until I went to work, and even for a long while after I worked, I made everything I wore. Everything.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh, that's wonderful. Very satisfying feeling, I would think.

**A. Monek: Yes.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And so then did you go to the Metuchen school system from first grade or kindergarten right on up?

**A. Monek: Yes, yeah. I went to Franklin School right from the kindergarten right through high school, graduated from there [in 1929].**

P. Boeddinghaus: So was it located where it is now located [at 596 Middlesex Avenue]? Or were you in the old, old wooden building [later moved to New Street]?

**A. Monek: No, no. This was the only one I remember, um-hm.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Because I have seen old pictures of a wooden building. That's Franklin School also. So you went to the present building that's still there?

**A. Monek: Yes. It wasn't that large, of course, but it was the same [brick] building (the original).**

P. Boeddinghaus: And do you feel you had a happy childhood, school days?

**A. Monek: Well, very much. I enjoyed going to school and I had nice parents. They made life happy for us. It wasn't on the scale that it is today, but we did things together that were homey, and loveable, and just real nice.**

P. Boeddinghaus: That's a wonderful memory that you have about your childhood.

**A. Monek: Yes, it is, yeah.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And that you went to the local school system. And then out of high school, did you work at the bank?

A. Monek: **Well, see, that was a height of the Depression when I graduated, so I couldn't go on. But I went back to Franklin School the following year and took a post-graduate course in typing because I didn't have—well, they had just instituted the business course the year that I left, so it was too late for me to take it during my school year. So I went the following year and took it. So I learned to type. And then after that year, I went to work at the bank and stayed there until my last days.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And that was called the National Bank?

A. Monek: **No, that was the Metuchen National Bank [at 406 Main Street]. And then from Metuchen National Bank, it went to the National Bank of New Jersey [at 442 Main Street], at which time, I would just boosted and promoted, and just got everything that I should have had many years before that, but I didn't have because, as I say, I was a woman. Our Board of Directors just didn't believe in women officers. But National Bank of New Jersey did well by me. Yes, they were very kind. And then from there, I went to Fidelity Union [Bank], and of course, they're great, yeah.**

P. Boeddinghaus: So I've heard you talk about many pleasant banking memories, famous people, important people that you met in your job. You had some nice associations.

A. Monek: **Oh, very much. I enjoyed the banking end of it to no end. I just looked forward to going in every morning. It was a pleasure. I loved being able to help people and the people in turn were nice to me. I really enjoyed my work.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Now, when you go to the bank today, do you see a difference in the atmosphere or in the way that your account is handled?

A. Monek: **Very much. It is so different. There's no personal touch there whatsoever. And the people aren't trained the way we used to be trained. They're not knowledgeable of the things that they should be. People [then] could come to the tellers and get almost all of the information they wanted without having to go to the platform. Well, today, you don't. You don't get the greeting when you get in there, there's no laughter, although it's business, and it's serious, but you need that to go along with your work to make it pleasant and successful. I enjoyed it to no end. I just enjoyed helping people; it was a great feeling.**

P. Boeddinghaus: No matter what job you had, you would have carried through those feelings, but you had this leaning toward the banking?

A. Monek: **Well, you know you dealt with the public all the time, every single day. And that's the part I liked. Yeah, it was interesting. I enjoyed doing my work after the bank closed and we had lots of work to do then. And of course, then there was that challenge there that you were going—the figures were going to prove at the end of the day. Every day was a challenge. Yeah, they had to prove right to the penny every single day.**

P. Boeddinghaus: I often wondered about that. That's true.

**A. Monek: Oh, it is true. Yes, it is, yeah. For instance, when I was a teller, you got to prove your work. Then as time goes on, it was the Note Department. Well, everything had to prove there at the end of the [day]. Then I went to general bookkeeping where I did the books of the bank. Well, that was ever so interesting proving that at the end of the day. All the assets and the—well, the debits and credits had to prove the footings right to the penny! And many nights we stayed to eleven o'clock trying to find a penny. [laughs]**

P. Boeddinghaus: I suppose all of that is computerized. Everything is in a machine.

**A. Monek: Sure, sure. Yeah.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And if the computer breaks down.

**A. Monek: We only had maybe two or three adding machines in the whole bank. Where now, there's one at every single window. But we had to use our noodle. [laughter] We had to add and subtract and multiply. We didn't have the machines to do it. And we did it! We did it.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Well, let's change the subject here a little bit. Tell me about your marriage to Jim [James Frank Monek] and your daughter Donna [Marie Monek].

**A. Monek: Well, as you know, we just celebrated fifty years of marriage. So we were married in 1942, and Donna Marie came along in 1947. Well, she went to Metuchen High School—well, first she went to St. Francis [Cathedral School] for the first eight years and from there, she went to Metuchen High<sup>1</sup>. And from Metuchen High, she went to the Philadelphia College of Science and Pharmacy, [Philadelphia College of] Pharmacy and Science, yes. And from there, she got her master's [degree] at Farleigh Dickinson [University in 1976].**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh, yeah. In North Jersey.

**A. Monek: Yes. And from there, she went to the Freehold Area Hospital where she was for five years. And from there, she went to Rahway Hospital where she's been ever since.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Let's take a little break here. [recording paused]

Okay, let's continue with this interview. And then where was Jim working?

**A. Monek: Jim worked for—what was it? Jim worked for thirty-four years for Mack Trucks in New Brunswick, up until such time as they moved to Hagerstown [Maryland]. And he elected not go with them, so he retired from there after thirty-four years, yes. And then he was without work for, I think, well over a year. And from there, he went to work for Holophane in Edison for the next ten years and then took an early retirement.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And Jim is from New Brunswick?

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<sup>1</sup> Donna Marie Monek graduated from Metuchen High School in 1965.

**A. Monek:** He is from New Brunswick, yeah. He went to New Brunswick High; he didn't graduate from high school because he had to go to work before then. And he was a basketball player. He belonged to the Boys Club in New Brunswick and also the Hungarian-American Athletic Club. And that was his pride and joy, the basketball playing.

P. Boeddinghaus: Do I remember correctly that you met at a basketball game?

**A. Monek:** Yes, that's true. Over here at Franklin School, they used to have a basketball game. I think it was on Saturday nights (I'm not sure), basketball game. And in between the halves, they had dancing and that's where I met Jim. Of course, he attended all the basketball games because he was part of basketball and that's where I met him.

P. Boeddinghaus: I like basketball too. I used to watch the New Brunswick games when I attended Metuchen High. And do you have any other hobbies besides sewing, or knitting, or croqueting? You said you did some sewing.

**A. Monek:** Yeah, no. I don't. I used to bowl. I enjoyed that very much and I'm not able to do that anymore. But I belonged to the Italian American Civic League. But normally I'm an at-home person. I was out all my life in business, and now I am enjoying what I missed then. So I really enjoy my home; I enjoy cooking for the family and everything that goes with it.

P. Boeddinghaus: What year did you retire?

**A. Monek:** Nineteen-hundred-seventy-seven, yes. And Jim retired two years before I did, so that he got accustomed to being home and we weren't home together. And then I just slid right in, yes, and made it very, very comfortable.

P. Boeddinghaus: I think it's wonderful that you keep in touch with so many of your long-time friends and associates.

**A. Monek:** Yes. Well, that's one thing I enjoy. I enjoy having them also, being with them, you know entertain—not entertaining that much, but having them here for dinner and being together and reminiscing, yes.

P. Boeddinghaus: And since you have retired, you've traveled extensively.

**A. Monek:** Very, yeah.

P. Boeddinghaus: Or am I mistaken? Did you travel before you retired?

**A. Monek:** Well, Jim and I always traveled by car. Jim would go anyplace so long as he could drive. And we covered most of the United States and Canada. And then, after I retired, then we went abroad with friends. And Jim doesn't like to fly, number one. And number two, he isn't able to sit or stand for that long a time, so I go with our friends and Donna Marie, yes. And we've been many, many places.

P. Boeddinghaus: I'm always happy when you send me a postcard from your wonderful trips. [laughter] Of all the places you've been, which do you think is your favorite?

**A. Monek:** Ireland. I've been there three times and I'm ready to go again. I loved it. I love it, the people are so beautiful, and the country is so pretty. You have no idea. It's lovely, yeah.

P. Boeddinghaus: And have you been to Italy? Have you tried to go to your parents' birthplaces?

**A. Monek:** No, no. I don't know why. I have no desire to go. No. I think all the trips that go to Italy are—you go from cathedral to church, to church to cathedral. Well, I've had enough of that in England and a certain amount of it in Ireland. But yeah, I want to see other things besides that. I've seen a lot and Canada is full of that too. I love Canada. Yeah, that's beautiful.

P. Boeddinghaus: That's interesting.

**A. Monek:** Yeah, um-hm.

P. Boeddinghaus: So let's say something about the world today. What do you think is the most exciting thing that's happened lately?

**A. Monek:** Worldwide or here?

P. Boeddinghaus: Yeah, worldwide. We'll start with that, worldwide.

**A. Monek:** Oh boy. Good question. [laughs] Nothing hits me.

P. Boeddinghaus: It's all right if there's a little silence. [recording paused]

**A. Monek:** [recording begins mid-sentence] ... with the St. Francis is my parish and I like to go to the concerts that they have. And yes, they're very, very nice. But as far as taking part in any of the clubs, I don't bother. But I do enjoy those things that I have, yes.

P. Boeddinghaus: And your daughter takes you to concerts and ballets in New York City?

**A. Monek:** Yes, she does. Yes, that's one thing that I really enjoy a lot. It's either the theater or it's Lincoln Center [for the Performing Arts], Metropolitan Opera, the New York Symphony, the [New York City] Ballet. That's all very interesting and we spend a lot of time there.

P. Boeddinghaus: I think you told me one time your parents were very interested in opera. [dog barking in background]

**A. Monek:** Oh yes! You see, they lived in New York and so I think my mother and her sister saw every opera at the Metropolitan that was to be seen. And even after they were married and they lived here—I don't know who it was that arranged it—they had buses that would take them in to see opera at different times. And my father through my mother learned to like it also. But my mother especially, she really knew her opera, yeah.

P. Boeddinghaus: Did she sing also? Or she was more a listener?

**A. Monek:** She was a listener. But you would catch her when she was doing something, singing away, yes, yes.

P. Boeddinghaus: So you had music in your home?

**A. Monek:** Yes, yes, we did. Even before radio, we had a Victrola [record player] where they had all the records by [Enrico] Caruso [opera singer]. And oh, I can't name them offhand, the different ones. But they would play them and I really enjoyed every word that they were singing.

P. Boeddinghaus: That's interesting. You were telling me one time too about the house on School Street that your parents had such wonderful parties.

**A. Monek:** Yes. They were party people, not for outsiders, you know it was just like family group or all the friends, yes. They lived for that. Even in the summertime, my father had a truck naturally for his business. Well, he had two benches made for this back end of this truck. There weren't that many people on School Street at that time, but he would call them all and say, "Pack your lunches. Get ready. We're going down to shore Saturday." So he'd pack up all these neighbors, and we'd go down to the shore for the day and we'd all have our lunches and have the best time. And I remember coming back in traffic, it would stop and go, stop and go. But that's what he did, yes.

And then, I think the name of the holiday that he celebrated was St. Anthony, but I'm not sure. I know it was the last of August and they'd decorate the premises all up with stars and balloons and whatnots. And they would have all sorts of food. And we would go down to Costa's Ice Cream and get a couple of tubs of ice cream and invite the whole neighborhood. And everybody would come and have a snack; the kids would have the ice cream. But that was what they lived for. [plane flying in background] They were entertaining their neighbors and their friends.

P. Boeddinghaus: I worked at Costa Ice Cream store [at 416 Main Street] when I was in high school and they served that delicious Costa Ice Cream and that was made locally.

**A. Monek:** Oh, that was so good. Yes, right there on [16] Pearl Street, at the end of Pearl Street down by the railroad track [Pennsylvania Railroad]. I don't know what's in that building now. There's a large building there, but that was Costa's Ice Cream.

P. Boeddinghaus: And then the Costa family had the ice cream parlor also? They made sundaes and [unclear].

**A. Monek:** To begin with, Mr. Gregory Costa Sr.'s wife [Matilda (Moglia) Costa] used to make the candy that they sold. And then the candy, I remember the candy counters was on one side of the store, and on other side where they served the ice cream. And in the back part, they had tables if you wanted to go sit at the table. Or you could just have it at the fountain. Yeah, but it was all their own Costa's Ice Cream and Costa's Candy (homemade candy).

P. Boeddinghaus: Because when I worked there, the gentleman was Greek. His name was John Kalkanis.



**A. Monek: I remember him.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And I dished up the ice cream, made sodas and sundaes, but he made the candy. It seemed to me he was very secretive about it. He wouldn't let us young people work for him, watch how he did it. And he would secrete [seclude] himself in the back and do chocolate-covered peppermints and some other candies. And at Eastertime, the bunny rabbits, and eggs, and baskets, and so forth.

**A. Monek: Well, it must be whatever the Costas started, and they passed that on.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Because that was like a landmark downtown Metuchen, wasn't it? To go there for ice cream.

**A. Monek: Oh sure, yes, uh-huh. That and to go to Kramer's Department Store [at 441 Main Street]. [laughs] That you could buy most anything in there. And it was Harry Kramer, who was later our postmaster. And I think he had two sisters; I remember them. And I remember Mr. Kramer, the elderly Mr. [Edward] Kramer. I don't remember Mrs. Kramer. But anyway, it was nice to go in there. They help you with everything.**

P. Boeddinghaus: They had dry goods, the material, and other clothing, household things.

**A. Monek: Yes, uh-huh. I just remember the clothing and the dry goods, shoes (I believe they had), wearing apparel, um-hm.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Yes, I remember the store too. They had a very fine reputation.

**A. Monek: It's where the—**

P. Boeddinghaus: What's in there now? The pet shop?

**A. Monek: The pet shop, yeah. That's where it was.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Are any other shops along Main Street come to mind that you used to like to go to? Maybe the California [Fruit] Market [at 428 Main Street] that had fresh produce?

**A. Monek: Oh, who were that? The Zuts boys? Yes, I remember that. And what was there? There was a grocery store there, Butler [Grocery Company at 433 Main Street]. Butler, yeah, that was some—**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh, how did you manage during rationing? Remember during the war, we had the coupons and the tokens. Or did your mother do that? Shopping with those tokens and so forth.

**A. Monek: Oh, I guess mom did because I don't remember doing it. All we worried about, Jim and I, was to get enough to get some gas so we could go on a vacation. [laughter] But the other mom did, yeah.**

P. Boeddinghaus: So you lived with your parents when you were married? [dog barking in background]

**A. Monek: I did, yeah. We were a large family and everybody got married and moved away. And so when Jim and I were married, we couldn't bear to leave them because,**

**well, we were so close. So we lived with them all the time until they both passed away. And that's why, as I say, I never had my own home until after my mother passed away, who passed away last. So now I'm enjoying this a lot, but I'm glad we stayed with them because we had a very, very nice life. My parents were so wonderful; they were so understanding. My father called Jim his other son.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh, that's nice.

**A. Monek: Yeah, and they always got along so beautiful. And it helped me a whole lot when Donna Marie was born, and I was able to continue going to business. And so it all worked out fine.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Now you've told me other conversations about some of the homes that your father built or some of the buildings. Do you remember some of the buildings around town?

**A. Monek: Well, what's this big house on [245 East] Chestnut [Avenue] there that's all brick? It used to be Dr. [James Gilbert] Mason's house.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Yes, that's an English Tudor type home.

**A. Monek: Yeah, he built that. And he built the St. Francis School.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh, yes. Did he work on the church?

**A. Monek: No, no, no. Not the church.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And then backing up, and that neighborhood up there, Oak [Avenue] and Chestnut, in the woods, Woodwild Park, that house?

**A. Monek: Oh, that was Jack Connor's house [at 279 East Chestnut Avenue]. Yes, he did that, um-hm.**

P. Boeddinghaus: That's an interesting house.

**A. Monek: Yeah.**

P. Boeddinghaus: A lot of brick work and masonry work there, seemed to be added on to different places.

**A. Monek: Yes, it was.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And he worked there, worked on that. Now that was like his own project, or did he work for someone?

**A. Monek: No, he was in business for himself then. He did it.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And how about along this street [Ross Avenue]? He built a number of these houses?

**A. Monek: He built, yes, my brother's house<sup>2</sup>. The next one was Marguerite Voorhees' house [at 42 Ross Avenue], then our house [at 34 Ross Avenue], then next here is where**

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Marzella resided at 46 Ross Avenue.

**Wileys [phonetic] lived, they built that. They built that for Siegles, they were the original owners [at 24 Ross Avenue]. And the next one, which was owned by the Gough family [at 18 Ross Avenue].**

P. Boeddinghaus: I recall that name from around town. Well, he had a flair for architecture. They're beautifully designed and the brickwork is very nice.

**A. Monek: He and the boys did nice masonry work. And everybody complimented them on their nice clean work.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And did they build any office buildings or anything like that? Or any stores?

**A. Monek: I can't remember**

P. Boeddinghaus: Mostly homes?

**A. Monek: Yeah, uh-huh.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And in other towns?

**A. Monek: Well, in Woodbridge, he did the Masonic Temple. And his last job, and I know he was sick and our friend took him for a ride to see it, it was the firehouse in Iselin. It's right on [Route] 27, right off of 27 in Iselin. That was his last project before he passed away.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And then one of your brothers has continued in the business?

**A. Monek: Two of them had, yes. Well, things—you know Pop was gone. [laughs] And things got tougher and tougher, so then they gave up and then just worked masonry work out of the union, yeah. And Eddie [Edward Marzella], who was the last one, he just retired.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh yes, I went to high school with Ed. And he told us too, one evening, how he worked at Menlo Park, the new Menlo Park, the beautiful Nordstrom building [at Menlo Park Mall]. That's beautiful, beautiful workmanship.

**A. Monek: Oh yes, yes, yes. Eddie did a lot of work on the JFK Hospital [at 65 James Street, Edison], brickwork, yeah. That's his specialty.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Well, that's hard work too, the lifting of the bricks and the cement. They do lovely things. That's very interesting family life. Well, we've always enjoyed being your company, Ange.

**A. Monek: Oh, we just love it, yes.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And is there anything else you'd like to—any story or anything you'd like to tell me?

**A. Monek: Oh, I think you've pretty well covered everything.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Do you have any trips coming up? [recording paused]

**A. Monek: [recording begins mid-sentence] ... interesting.**

P. Boeddinghaus: So you're planning and thinking about a trip to the Canary Islands?

**A. Monek: Yes, next March.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh, and that's off the coast of Spain?

**A. Monek: Yeah, uh-huh. They call it Spain's Hawaii.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And what would prompt you to go there? Have you heard something about it?

**A. Monek: No, this is from our friends in Michigan. And they go and they include us all the time. So the four of us go together. And I roomed with my girlfriend, and Donna Marie rooms with her young sister. And we have a great, great time.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Now what was that relationship again? Was that family from this area originally? You have a long-time association with them.

**A. Monek: Yes. Frank McCormick, who is now deceased, was born and raised on the same street with my husband Jim.**

P. Boeddinghaus: In New Brunswick?

**A. Monek: In New Brunswick, yeah. We were married first and then Frank and Mary Margaret were married, oh, I don't know, few years after. And Mary Margaret, who was a stranger to me until I met her through Frank, asked me to be her matron of honor. And so we have been very, very close friends ever since then. Now Frank's been passed away for quite some time now, but we never forgot her. We kept in touch all the time. We visit there, they come here, we go on trips together. They're the ones that introduced us to Upper Michigan, the Upper Peninsula, yes.**

P. Boeddinghaus: So that's a long association, over fifty years.

**A. Monek: Yes! The whole time we were married, yes.**

P. Boeddinghaus: So you enjoy going out to Michigan to visit.

**A. Monek: Um-hm, yes. We have a great time there. They're people that love good times and we really enjoy being with them.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And then you travel together out of the country.

**A. Monek: We travel together, yeah. Been many places with them and then I also travel with a Lillian Moore and her daughter. And there, we do the same thing. Lillian Moore was a friend of ours through Mack Truck, where Jim worked. Walter Moore, Lillian's husband, came to Mack Truck from Scranton, Pennsylvania. He wasn't transferred, he just came there to apply for a job. So they hired him in the foundry, which is where Jim worked in the beginning. And then Jim noticed that nobody wanted to help him in any way. They don't know why. They resented another one coming in there, so Jim would help him. Well, this fellow never forgot that Jim was the only one out of the foundry that would show him around**

**and tell him some things about the work. So we, there, have been close friends also for fifty years or more. And so, Walter is deceased, but Lil and I travel together. She has a daughter, who is the same age as my daughter. Now Donna Marie and her daughter roomed together, Lil and I room together, and we travel together. They're the ones I went to Alaska with.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh yes. That was a wonderful trip for you, yes. I know you talk so glowingly about it. Now is Lil Moore in this Metuchen area?

**A. Monek: She lives in Somerset.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh, that's not too far.

**A. Monek: No, it's right outside of New Brunswick there, yeah.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Wonderful. And Ange, your hair always looks the same!

**A. Monek: Oh! [laughs]**

P. Boeddinghaus: You know if anyone met you on Main Street, they would know you. That's Ange Monek. So how are you able to use your hairstylists, fixing, because you have that distinct hairdo.

**A. Monek: Yes. And she's always threatening to cut my hair. [laughter] And I'll say, "Gee, nobody will know me if you do that." But she sets it nice and then I'm able to take care of it.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Oh wonderful. It always looks so lovely.

**A. Monek: Because I have a good head of hair and I can manage it, yeah.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And I know you like to cook and make all fresh and wonderful.

**A. Monek: Yeah. I don't do any gourmet cooking because Jim is from the old school and he likes the old-fashioned style of cooking. So I do it that way, but that's good. And then when we go out, if we want anything in the gourmet line, why that's when we have it, yes.**

P. Boeddinghaus: I know you're a very good cook. And everything is always fresh or homemade.

**A. Monek: Yes, yes. Everything is start from scratch, nothing canned.**

P. Boeddinghaus: That's a wonderful attribute, yeah. [recording paused]

[recording begins mid-sentence] ... Macaroni Night, was that a certain night of the week, did you say?

**A. Monek: Tuesday! Yeah, and every Tuesday night, [unclear] and Esther and who else? I don't remember everybody. Ralph didn't come (Ralph Noe), but he would bowl with us. But we would come and mom would serve the dinner, and then we'd go out after that.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Yeah, and what was the [bowling] team called? Like the National Bank?

**A. Monek: Yeah. You went by the bank name (Metuchen National Bank) at that time.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And was it down at Montagna's [Tavern and Restaurant at 660 Middlesex Avenue], those bowling alleys?

**A. Monek: Yes, yes.**

P. Boeddinghaus: They were lovely and clean.

**A. Monek: I'm trying to think who ran it. Oh, Ed Lynch [Edward Lynch] used to run the bowling alley [Metuchen Recreation Center] over there. And he was an all-right guy. You know we would have a lot of fun with him. It was nice, clean fun. We would have a real good time. But like I say, Tuesday night was Macaroni Night at mom's house. [laughter] My mother and father, especially my father, would always say, "Your friends are our friends. Bring home whomever you want." And we did.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And that gave you a very nice, warm, comfortable feeling when your parents accepted your friends.

**A. Monek: Yes, it did because they meant it. They were real good to my mother, [who] knocked herself out cooking for everybody, yes.**

P. Boeddinghaus: So do you remember your average from when you were bowling?

**A. Monek: Oh, not very much. I think 138 is what I ended up with. And it took a while to get up there, but yeah.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Well, the shop [Jack's Flower Shop at 182 Main Street], we sponsored teams over the years from St. Francis. That was fun and I ended up bowling with them. I had learned bowling in high school. That was one of our Phys Ed classes or courses. They showed you how to—your stance and how to bowl. And I would bowl at the Raritan Arsenal. There were lanes over there. Some of the officers' children went to Metuchen High and they'd invite us back to the Arsenal to bowl.

**A. Monek: So that was nice. I enjoyed when we bowled with the bank because you got to meet all the people from the other surrounding banks (New Brunswick Savings, and oh, I can't remember them all now). But we played all those teams. And then of course, at the end of the year, we'd have our banquet, which was real nice. And then all the big wigs from the bank would come to the banquet, yeah. And they'd buy us all a cocktail before it all started, and then we'd sit down for our regular dinner.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And then the awards, and prizes, and trophies, and so forth?

**A. Monek: Yes, um-hm.**

P. Boeddinghaus: And your brother is a very good bowler. I remember he had a perfect game. Didn't he have 300-game?

**A. Monek: Eddie?**

P. Boeddinghaus: Couple of them, yes.

**A. Monek: Yeah, he was quite a bowler. But Eddie stopped too on account of a bad back. He doesn't bowl anymore.**

P. Boeddinghaus: It's a very big sport and I think it still is with the various teams and the companies sponsored them and so on. [recording paused]

Ange, do you remember anything about the trolley that was on Main Street?

**A. Monek: Not too much. I remember that the tracks were in the middle of the road for a long, long time before they removed them. But I don't remember—**

P. Boeddinghaus: You didn't ride it?

**A. Monek: No. No, because my parents just didn't let us roam all over town by ourselves. So I never got a chance to get down there.**

P. Boeddinghaus: So you walked to the grocery store, you walked to [unclear] and so on? Or your dad would take you?

**A. Monek: Yes, it wasn't that far from School Street, yeah. Not far at all.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Your dad had a truck or a vehicle to take you down if needed?

**A. Monek: Yes. Yes, he had a truck for his business and then he had a pleasure car also.**

P. Boeddinghaus: Because the trolley was a big thing in Metuchen, many fond memories of the trolley operator, he was very personable.

**A. Monek: Oh, see I never—**

P. Boeddinghaus: Yeah, you don't remember him?

**A. Monek: No. That's too bad.**

P. Boeddinghaus: It's commemorative with Metuchen. [recording paused]

[END OF INTERVIEW]