

Interviewer: Elizabeth Camp

Interviewee: Chang Lu

Time: 7:20 pm, Nov. 29, 2011.

Location: 357 Benefit Street, John Nicholas Brown Center, Providence, RI

Purpose: This interview was conducted for the project *Reservoir of Memories, A Community Collection about Mashapaug* for the course *Oral History and Community Memory* at Brown University which is co-taught by Professor Anne Valk and Holly Ewald.

Chang Lu: Today is November 29, 2011. I'm Chang Lu. I'm here in John Nicholas Brown Center with Mrs. Camp, Liz Camp. And this interview is for the collection of the project of Oral History. So, ok... for the project of Reservoir of Memories. Ok, now I think we can start.

Liz Camp: Ok.

Lu: Thank you very much Mrs. Camp. (**Camp:** You're welcome.) It's very nice to have you here. So how long have you been living in the Mashapaug Pond community?

Camp: I have been living there since 1984.

Lu: Ok.

Camp: We moved in June, 1984.

Lu: What was the first impression that you got for the pond for the community while you first moved there?

Camp: Well when we first... the property, we have been looking at a lot of different places, not necessarily in that neighborhood, but our real estate agent was selling this house also. She was an agent for the sellers. She said "I think you might like this" after she saw some of the things we were looking at. And we fell in love with that house immediately. It's on water front, it's very private, you know the whole idea of having a house that we could afford that we can have any neighbors behind us, you know we are close on the sides, but it's still a very private neighborhood. There is... one two three four five six...streets that all come off Niantic. And we really love that. We get to know the neighbors, and love the quiet kind of peacefulness of the neighborhood, the fact that everybody knew each other and kind of looked out for each other's property. So I thought this is a good place for me to raise our family.

Lu: How did you get the impression that the neighborhood take care of each other?

Camp: We got, right away, my next door neighbor came out. We came... we went back to the house to look at the house again a second time. And the next door neighbor came out, said : “Excuse me, who are you? And what are you doing? [laughter]” So I know immediately that the neighbor’s ok. The neighbor’s keeping an eye on each other. And she said that, she introduced herself, and she said: “We kind of look out for each other’s properties.” and stuff or so. So I did get that kind of impression. When we, when one of our neighbor her husband had gone to Iraq, for the Iraq conflict, for the Golf War. And he was, we knew he was coming back. And he was kind of the first person in the neighborhood who was, you know, he was in the reserves. And, so we went around to the neighborhood, we created this big sign for his welcome home party. And everybody in the whole neighborhood put up yellow ribbons on their properties all through the neighborhood. And everybody signed the sign almost everybody in the neighborhood. We went around and everybody signed it “Welcome back Arthur,” and so, you know it’s that kind of neighborhood. It’s very diverse. The neighborhood has every kind of minority you can think of in that neighborhood. And everybody just seems to be able to get along. For the most part, it’s a pretty nice place.

Lu: I don’t know how much attention did you pay for the pond while you first moved there? And how much do you enjoy the company of the pond in the community?

Camp: We love the pond [laughter]. My husband fishes. He started fishing when we moved in there. He took up fishing. And we loved going out on the pond on the boat and stuff. And we had neighbor who did water skiing and we went water skiing with them and stuff. So we got a lot used to the pond. Plus we love just the quietness, you know the peacefulness of the pond. At first, it used to be I think a lot worse polluted-wise, because we used to see kind of green slime come across the water, because some of the culverts were still open and will be dumped by car companies and so forth, dumping the oil, things like that. But that seems to have stopped for the most part. So now we just have, it’s a, what do they call that, what’s that

word, when the pond has nitrogen, too much nitrogen, I forgot what's it called. But anyway, it's polluted because it doesn't get enough oxygen in the water. There's not enough oxygen. So, but... and you can't eat any fish from it, you are not supposed to swim in it or anything. But it's still beautiful to have that view in the back. We have a porch, we have a screen and a porch, off our dinning room and goes out to a deck. We are up kind of upon the hill of the pond so you can look at it. You can see the pond, my backyard goes right down to the waterfront. And it's just so nice on a Sunday morning, get you a coffee and go out on the porch, all the birds flew out there, there's eagles and there's herons, there's all kinds of wildlife around there. It's so great to be living in a city and you have all this wild life all this diversity.

Lu: [6:19] You and Rose McCarthy you organized Mashapaug Pond Action Committee that's, you know, that I suppose you like the pond so much that you organized such a committee named after it.

Camp: We did that...that was...it happened long time ago [laughter], probably 20 years ago. Our councilman, our city councilman, Dave Dylan, was coming by with a petition. And he was letting all the neighbors know that the property, the vacant property at the end of our street had been brought by a developer, and the developer had plans to put 25 houses on that piece of property. So we were kind of crazy [laughter] that, we said "that's insane, you can't put 25 more houses in the community because it's gonna ruin the pond, ruining the land, it's gonna create all kinds of traffic problems you know, it was gonna open us up to Niantic Avenue, just, it was just, unthinkable. So Rose McCarthy and I were kind of the most... the most incensed by this idea. And we got some neighbors together when we formed the committee and we decided we were going to fight this. And there was an option at that point, that the State was putting together a bill for open spaces. And we said "we want this space to be open space. We want the city to buy the property or the state to buy the property. And we want it to be open spaces." So, we became activists, neighborhood activists for this park to get this property built, I mean, bought, and built into a park instead of 25 houses to go on that property. And it took us several years. I think we started in 19...how old was my son... he

was probably 4, so it was 1980...no, probably about 1989 or (19)90. Yes, between (19)89 and (19)90 we started working on it. And the park was finally created. And (19)94. So it was a good 5 or 6 years to get that park built. It was horrendous that we need to go through to do it. But we got a lot of neighbors together and everybody contributed, and me being a kind of bossy person I kind of took charge of the whole thing [laughter]. But we did a lot of things. We kind of learned as we went along. Because nobody had done this kind of work before. So this was brand new for all of us. And we put together calling trees and had people calling those state representatives. And it's amazing, it was amazing to me, I think that the most amazing thing is that we decided to create a calling campaign to get the governor and to get the senators and legislators involved in this. Our state representative was very involved in it. He was very good. But we need to get the governor involved in it. And, so I put together a kind of script for everybody, and said "ok, here's what we're gonna do. Over the next a couple of days everybody needs to make phone calls. You're gonna to call the governor's office. Here's the number you're calling and here's what you'll say." And probably 10 or 11 people had called. And I called the governor's office and the person who answered said: "You, Elizabeth Camp," he said, "you people you're driving us crazy. Alright, we're gonna do something." And it was only about 10 or 11 people who had called. So it's amazing how few people it takes to get somebody to do some action, you know, when you start bugging them [laughter]. So it was very interesting. We did get a lot help. My next door neighbor Barbara Hemo, Barbara Hamilton Trainor, her husband Joe Trainor was a... he worked in the State House. He was a lawyer of the State House. He was very helpful and he was one of the people that the park was named for. And Jerry Murphy was our legislator at that time. He was our representative. And he was also very helpful. And he also passed away during the time that we were fighting for this park. So that's why it became the Murphy-Trainor Memorial Park. We put both of their names into the park.

[11:38]But it was many many nights in city hall, sitting in city hall. Because we were kind of used as pawns by both sides. The developer who owned it knew that he had a neighborhood group who was lobbying to get this park bought, to get this property brought. And he knew he could make some money out of it and squeeze it as much as he can to raise up the price way

more than it was worth, at the time way more what he had paid for. And he had done nothing to develop it except to put a couple of bulldozers there. So he was using the group as pawns, and the city council, part of the people on the city council was using us as pawns to get concessions from our councilman who really needed to get this done. So, it was a, it was a learning experience for all of us. But we did get it done. And I bought you some pictures of the commemoration in the park. My girlfriend took these pictures. And some of the pictures you can see that, one in particular... [flicking through the pictures, there were 26 of them] oh and Rose and I also wrote what's on the memorial here on the dedication there. There's a picture in here that was very interesting to me because Jerry Murphy, one of the things that he requested, one of the things he told me when we were working on this, he said "Elizabeth, this park has been built," he says, "I'm very partial to birch trees," so he said "you know if we can get some birch trees put in there somewhere." So when the park finally got purchased, the land got purchased, I worked with Bob McMahon who is now the head of the Parks Department for Providence, to design the park. What are we gonna do, putting in the path and so forth. It came out very nice. In this picture, you can see, these birch trees right here, these three trees right here, behind the wall. And those trees are like 25 feet now there. They are fully grown trees. So it's interesting to me, it like that when I saw this picture again, looking at it after some of the years later, wow they looked like little twigs here and they are full-grown trees now.

Lu: Were those trees put there intentionally in the place?

Camp: Yes. I asked Bob, I said I wanted to put some birch trees there near the front wall, for Jerry, because Jerry has passed away at that point.

Lu: In which way did Mr. Trainor and Mr. Murphy helped?

Camp: Well Joe Trainor was, had been the State House, in the State House for a long time, knew everybody, knew who to deal with, was able to direct us, where to go, who to talk to, you know, how to get passed certain issues and stuff. He was really really helpful with that.

Jerry Murphy because he was a legislator, he was able to kind of push for votes, to get the votes to get the bill up on the ballot. And once it was on the ballot, the city of Providence, well the State, it was on the State ballot as a referendum. And it was passed. It was included in that referendum. But then, the referendum has certain amount of money that was set aside to buy open spaces, and the park was mentioned in it, you know, that piece of property was mentioned in it, but it was never really kind of finalized what would go, where. So then Jerry Murphy was very instrumental in making sure that the money gets put aside for this particular piece. And then the city had to kick in a portion of it. So that was another huge battle because we went through two different mayors during that period. They didn't like each other so [laughter] it was very difficult to work with one and then to work with the next one, and then to go back to the original one. Because Buddy Cianci had been there originally, and then Joe Paolino was the mayor, and then Buddy Cianci was the mayor again. So, that was a very good learning experience.

[16:46] But through it all, the neighbors were always there, always helpful, you know. We met in my living room, discussed strategy, what would we gonna do, and... it was a very big deal for our neighborhood.

Lu: And how often did you meet?

Camp: Oh, at the beginning we'll meet once a week or so. And then once we got to this kind of this point, you know, you get to different points where you have to wait. So we have to wait for the referendum to come off to get voted this stuff. And once it got voted on, everything moves so slowly in the government. There were a lot of waiting period. And so we would just once a month, catch up with everybody and say here's where we are, we are still waiting for this, we are still waiting for that, you know this person is dragging our feet and so forth. So every once a while we'll need to move people and I'll say ok, everybody we're gonna make a calling campaign, we are gonna do a letter campaign, or you know something else that we needed to do. And we were able to, we actually, when we did the letters, we, I was working at Fleet Bank at that time which borders the pond also, the operation center

down there. It's Bank of America now but it was Fleet at that time. And they have a fitness center in the building. And the woman who ran the fitness center, it's a separate company who runs the fitness center, so I had her write a letter specifically about you know what a great thing it would be for the fitness center to be able to take their, to do their runs and their walks they do daily at lunch time and to be able to go down through the park and then turn back around and so forth. And there was a daycare center over in Cranston, I had them write about that wouldn't it be great if we had a park we can take the children to and you know see the wildlife and so forth. So we used a lot of strategies for saying "Look, this is going to be good for you because..." here's the reason you know. So it was good.

Lu: So it was all your idea to find those strategies to convince people?

Camp: Well, I came up with some of them and other people you know came up with ideas too. It wasn't all me. But it was, I'm the kind of person that I would do that, figure out what's in it for everybody. Because in order to get people to gain consensus, you have to determine, you have to find out what's in it for them and let them see it. And that's how we get people to do things that we need it done, as figure out how it's gonna be good for them, you know how this is gonna help them or benefit them. And let them know how.

Lu: Do you remember how many people were there in the committee?

Camp: On the committee? There was only... probably 9 people. And we would, we would create, we would make a newsletter, like every a couple of months or so. We put together a little newsletter about where we, what we were doing and you know we are things stood and stuff, and we would distribute it out to all the houses in the neighborhood. And Dave would take it sometimes to put it on the other side of the park.

Lu: You mean Dave Talan?

Camp: Dave Talan. Yes, Dave was on the committee. And put it on the other side of the park

so we would get people to volunteer to drop it at houses and stuff like that. Everybody would know what was going on. And we would meet sometimes at the Mediator because the, back then, there was a neighborhood watch group, the Reservoir Triangle Neighborhood Association, Dave might have mentioned that. So they would meet at the Mediator, the Church at the Mediator, and have different activities and stuff. So we would give updates at that as well.

Lu: [21:24] What would you think that bring people together and stick around for that many years?

Camp: What do you mean?

Lu: Just wonder what's... it's not an easy journey. It took about, I read, it took about 5 years and you need to fight against the government.

Camp: Yes, I think it's just because we all had a stake in it. You know, everybody there, nobody in that neighborhood wanna to see that property destroyed, you know wanna to see it all built up, because we've been through so much building already. There were houses that were getting cramped into little spaces, and that was part of what we did too was to change the Grandfather rules of property, the property, what would you call them, like it is supposed to be 10,000 square feet in order to put a house on a piece of property in Providence. But because it was Grandfather Clauses people could put it on 3,000 or 5,000 square foot of a piece of property. So you have somebody who sold a lot in a neighborhood and it was like a single lot, but because it was because the Grandfather it had 3 seperate lots on it and they put 3 houses on it. These 3 tiny houses that were squeezed together with a tiny little driveway on them. And it just didn't fit the neighborhood and we said something's gotta be done about this. And that's how they are gonna put 25 houses down on that piece of property. So I think everybody saw that they had a stake in this. You know and that's what kept people working together. And it was just constant, you know Rose and I were just constantly booting people and moving people and pushing people and saying "Come on, come on, come on! [laughter]"

Lu: Were there... did you encounter some big difficulty during that process when you encounter some people that were very difficult to talk to or some people from the government side that was extremely the case?

Camp: Yes, yes! Absolutely! There were a couple of incidents specifically that I can remember. The first time we went to meet with the developer about the property, he was just so bullheaded. And he bought it for a little under \$2,000 and he said "I want a million.[laughter]" "What? Are we gonna talk about this?" "No, I want a million!" You couldn't talk to him. It's just insane. And when I went to see Joseph Paolino, who was then the mayor of the city, and it was his last day in office. So he's doing a million things. And I'm sitting there in the chair, I think Dave Talan was with me. Dave and I was sitting there, or Dave Dylan, can't remember it was Dave Talan or Dave Dylan, to talk to him about property and stuff. And he even didn't give us 30 seconds. And then he ends the phone, and it was like "get out" [laughter]. Ok. That was useless. But because he was supposed to be signing the document to authorize the city to purchase the property, but he didn't do it. So it was another battle. Once the new mayor came in, Cianci came back. But actually he was very supportive. He was very good once he gets in there. There was a lot of dissension between members of the city council and that was very frustrating because we would go to the city council meeting to discuss, for the finance committee to discuss the purchase. And we would have to wait outside while they had discussions about you know and they've said "whn we are gonna be talking about sell and reasons stuff so you can come in." So we waited for hours outside that office, outside that room, waiting for our turn to come in. And then they call us in. And we get 5 minutes, and, Lombardi at that time, would say "Why I think this is just too much money and I think it's ridiculous." And Dave Dylan would be arguing "Look, we really need to do this. It's important to the neighbors. This is important to my district. " And then they said "Oh it's not ridiculous. We'll table this until next meeting." And then we sigh and we leave [laughter]. And that's how we went for a long time.

Lu: Can you remember your feeling during those frustrating moments?

Camp: [26: 30] Frustrating is exactly the word. Just frustrated. You know, get on with it. You know I was in the business world and I was like, you know, if I were in my business like this, if I, if I you know try to run a project this way, I would be fired [laughter]. Because you get nothing done. And I remember when we finally did get everything settled, and the owners came back to us, and they were kind of you know try to use us to get more money out of it and stuff, using our group to lobby for them. And after they had signed the purchase agreement stuff, they wanted us to go in and say that they should get their taxes reduced that they shouldn't pay all the taxes, the property taxes that were owed on it. And I said "No. I live in this city too. You're gonna pay your property taxes. You gave us such a hard time but the price is this, you pay your taxes. We are not fighting for you on that. You've already signed the agreement. You're out." So, you know everybody was just trying to get something out of it. And all we want was our park [laughter]. We just want our park. We want that property saved. And it did turn into a beautiful park. That was the best part. Once all the politics was done, once all the money was settled, then working with Bob McMahon, who is just a wonderful man, wonderful wonderful man, working with him on designing the park, it was so exciting at that point. Then it got really fun. You know I went to see the Park's Department bringing machines in, do the digging, where we're gonna put the path, building the dock and stuff. Everyday I would walk down there with my sons and you know, "Look, look what they do today. So then it was really exciting. Then it moved. And it was great.

Lu: So what are the people get involved in designing the park?

Camp: Nobody else really [laughter]. But as I said I am a very controlling person so, you know, by that point everybody was like yeah it would be nice when the park is built. They really didn't care so much that how it looked or you know as long as it was gonna be a nice park and you know everybody had an opinion about no cars, not allowing cars to park inside it or anything, you know, what they are gonna do with the swampy area. A lot of people had input on what they're gonna do about that. But really everybody left that to the Park's Department because we figure they know what they are doing, they build parks and so...

Lu: And do people who used to be in the committee they still meet now?

Camp: No. Once the park was dedicated we dissolved the committee. Holly Ewald in the past a couple of years she came back and she started the parade for the, to bring awareness about the pond and stuff. And then she got a couple of people involved in getting together to discuss about what could we do about the water quality. And that result in the signs went up and so forth about “No fishing” and stuff in different languages. And that kind of fell apart. I didn’t really get too involved in that part. Although I did go to the most recent meetings where the Park’s Department put together a meeting to discuss water quality in Roger Williams Park. Because Mashapaug Pond feeds the water in Roger William Park, that’s where it comes from, and Mashapaug Pond gets its water fed from Spectacle Pond and Spectacle Pond gets its water fed from Tongue Pond. So it’s a much bigger problem than you know just cleaning up Mashapaug Pond, because you can’t, the water comes from somewhere else. So the same thing with Roger Williams Park. But I did talk about it to McMahon, I think there’s some really good ideas they’ve got for what they can do but I think it’s massive what has to happen, and it’s gonna have to be a really long term kind of effort.

Lu: [31:31] Do you find the contamination in the pond disturbing and how much do you feel that?

Camp: Yes. I do find it disturbing.

Lu: How much does it influence your life?

Camp: Not a whole lot. Because we don’t, you know we don’t go into the water. I look at the water. But I see so much wildlife that uses the water. We got these birds that have been there all summer, these colorants, they are just beautiful. They perch down on the cove, there’s four of them they perch on this dead log of the middle cove. They are just so beautiful. And I see them, I saw a couple of herons this summer, perch down on my neighbor’s tree that had fallen

over in the wind storms. There is possums and raccoons and squirrels, there's hawks, there's all kinds of wildlife. And I know that it's gonna impact them somehow. I know that some of the immigrants I know they fish on that pond and they take their fish home. It's like, that's disturbing. I think some of the Vietnamese are among people that fish in that pond and eat the fish.

Lu: Don't they see the signs?

Camp: It's even in languages that they should be able to read. But, I don't know that. People do it.

Lu: I don't know how much you know about Gorham, the silver manufacture which used to be there. The contamination in the pond, as far as I learned, is part of the legacy of Gorham.

Camp: Absolutely, absolutely. Because it was a plant that produced heavy metals and deposited it into the pond. So the settlement of the pond has a lot of heavy metals in it. That's how we understand anyway, what was explained to us. And what we've known for a long time.

Lu: And how do you see Gorham?

Camp: They are long gone. And I know that they did, Textron made some significant efforts to clean up unless they got left behind. I haven't really followed it as much what they are doing. And I know that is ongoing still. So I don't know. Dave probably knows a lot more about that than I do. There are some people that are involved on the other side of the pond with Gorham property and with the cleaning up. But I get tired after that [laughter]. I made the park and I said "I'm done" [laughter].

Lu: Maybe have you thought about that the community really need a person like you you know to organize people together, to put effort into one cause and to get it done?

Camp: Yes, they do. They need someone much younger than me. Like I was when I was younger [laughter].

Lu: How old, can I ask how old were you when you were...

Camp: I was... probably like 20... no, not 29, 29 when I got pregnant with Mat. So I was probably like 32 when I started. And 37 when I finished.

Lu: And you just don't want to have any more this similar kind of things?

Camp: No, I mean I would do more... focused effort, I think. And that's actually something I have been thinking about. Bank of America, as I said, bought us the property. And they have a parking lot that goes right up to the water. One of the things that was talked about was that all the parking spaces in Industrial Park the run-off goes right into the pond and that put a lot of dissolved oil, pollutants into the pond and causes part of the problem. And one of the solutions that they discussed was creating wells, natural wells, which is almost like a ditch, where there will be plantings, so that when the water runs off it runs off into the wells and the water gets filtered before it going into the pond. And nobody has approached anybody on the park side. But I was thinking, since I was working for Bank of America, I'm gonna talk to somebody about, who do I need to talk to about making, looking and working with the Park's Department about being the first company to do that. Because they do need, Bank of America does a lot of community action and they are very big, getting involved in the community and doing donations and philanthropic work. So I think that if we can convince Bank of America first, and get them to do it and put the bill to put the wells along the parking area, maybe that will influence some of the other groups to do the same thing. You know some of the other companies to come to the pond to do the same thing. So that's something I'm considering as a focused effort. Something that I might have some control of you know to work with the two groups, the Park's Department and Bank of America, to see if I can get them together. I am looking at my efforts now more as a facilitator than as an activist.

Lu: So you've lived in that neighborhood for about 27 years?

Camp: About... yes.

Lu: As you told me yesterday. And so what are the significant changes you witness along the years you live there?

Camp: It's, the neighborhood has cycled through, you know, a generation. A lot of the people who were elderly when I moved in there they're of course gone. But I see a lot of people, well, there's a couple of different things. People who were there originally when I went, when I moved in there, and there're families who have been there for generations, they stay. That's their home and they, their children buy houses in the neighborhood or close to the neighborhood if they can. The Drowens lived upon the corners on Niantic Avenue. Their son Bobby Drowen bought across a street from me. His sister lives in a house right across the street from Rose. So you know people who grew up in the neighborhood tend to stay in the neighborhood. People who bought the new houses that got built on the little postage stamps, those people they don't stay along. They are kind like it's their first home and then they move on as soon as they can get something better, and get something bigger, get something better. They move on. So those houses, you see a lot of kind of turnover of people. The neighborhood as I said, is very diverse. You know you have old Italian, old Irish, but you have gays, lesbians, Hispanic, African American. Everybody's living in this neighborhood. And, you have biracial families. I mean, you have everything you can think of. That's the neighborhood. And it all seems to work. You know people, people not so much, I think people used to watch out for each other a lot more than it is now because newer people kind of they come and they go. But the people who have been there for a long time still, still do watch out for each other and still do, see what's going on, to keep an eye on what's going on and the neighborhood. It's good to see the young families that come to the neighborhood and to see them raising their children in the neighborhood the way I did too raised my children in the neighborhood. So it's nice. The good thing is the neighborhood is not that impacted by

changes, at this neighborhood I'm talking about, on my side of the pond.

Lu: So where is it?

Camp: [41: 41] Off Niantic Avenue, on Route 10 side. You have Route 10 over here, you have the Industrial Park down here, you have the Reservoir Avenue in the Job Lot Plaza over here, and you have the park behind us. So there is nothing, they can't, there's nothing can be built, there's nothing that can really impact the neighborhood at this point. You know, if you come down off the Niantic Avenue, you could only go back of the Niantic Avenue. And there's no reason for people to come driving through the neighborhood or anything. So the neighborhood is really, it's kind of insular in that way.

Lu: Ok. I think I almost have all my questions asked. And...so if we go back to the 5 year campaign for the building of Murphy-Trainor Park, were there some moments that were especially touching for you? Or some special moment if you remember?

Camp: There were lots of moments, lots of individual moments that were touching for me. I always get emotional when I talk about how hard it was, how beautiful that property was, even when it was vacant property. Because it was all wooded, and it was along the water and there was you know beaten path went through it. But it's always been emotional for me. And I used to walk my son down there, all the time we would go and see the rabbits going through across the field or so. I mean it was a beautiful place. And I always, whenever I would be arguing about it with somebody, from the government, from the State, or from the city or something, "it's just a vacant lot", I would get very emotional, I would get very upset. It was very hard for me sometimes because if I get emotional about something, I would even start to cry like I start to well up and I start to cry. It makes me crazy because I don't want to be crying. I don't want to make anybody thinking that "Oh I made her cry." You didn't make me cry. It just happened when I talk about that [laughter]. So there were a lot of emotional moments that I talk, when I talk about how I felt about the pond, the park, that's when I'll get

emotional about it. When we finally had the commemoration, I made a speech at the commemoration, and I got emotional then. One of the funny things at the commemoration, it was a day in June, and it was close to 100 degrees, it was so hot. And so my little one, Mat, who at the time was about five, and my girl friend who lived up the street, her three daughters, the four of them were always together. So they said, we decided, you know you can do it guys. We can put popsicles and lemonade and cool them and bring it down there and you can sell them on the side of the park. People will buy because it's really a hot day. But what we didn't realize that Buddy Cianci, who was the mayor then and was gonna be speaking, hired a Dell's lemonade truck to come down and give out free lemonade to anybody who came to the commemoration, the opening of the park. So the kids are like "Nobody's buying our lemonade. They get the free lemonade from Dell's." Someone saw Cianci came afterwards, and said "did you know what you did, the kids were trying to make some money here and you..." So he went over and give them some money and said "I wanna buy some of your lemonade [laughter]." He said he really felt bad [laughter]. That was really cute though. And the man Ben Carbon, who was one of our neighbors, was on the committee, a really nice guy, Ben and Carol there, quite elderly now but they're still living in that house, still on the corner across the opening of the park. And they invited everybody down into the basement of their house after the, after the celebration was done. They had drinks and like little, and sodas, pastry and air conditioning [laughter]. Everybody there was like "Oh, Gosh! [laughter]" That was fun. So that was, that was it. It was funny how, it took so much tooth pulling to get people, to get politicians to get involved, to listen and to get behind it. But when it came to the opening of the park, everybody wanted to speak. Everybody wants to have a speech [laughter]. And people who have not been involved in any of it, they all had to have comment and speak.

Lu: [47:32] You mean those politicians?

Camp: Yes. All the politicians. They all have to get their word and it was funny. Because we just kind of stood on side, we were the last to speak you know, Rose and I. And Rose didn't want to speak at all. She said "Liz, you'll do all the speaking."

Lu: Why didn't she?

Camp: She was just too nervous about it. So she cannot do public speaking. So I did the speaking. But we were like the last to speak because we were the least important. You had to go through the politicians, whatever importance you know. But I got the biggest had because all my neighbors were there in the opening [laughter] and mentioned them all. And the committee and the people on the committee or so. I got a big applause.

Lu: And you mentioned many times that during those years you learned a lot, and I wonder what's the biggest thing you learned?

Camp: The biggest thing I learned was that I was a very impatient person, and I learned patience. I learned perseverance and when I had to shut my mouth. Because I was, I am a very outspoken person [laughter]. And I had to learn that I couldn't just say everything that I wanted to say. If I wanted to get people to work with me and to get this done, I have to be patient, I have to be calm, and I had to...not, not kiss ass, but you had to , you had to massage people until going with what you wanted them to do. So I had to learn how to be that way. It's not my nature, and I had to learn how to do that. And it helped me in that and it helped me in business. When I had projects at work, and I had to get people to work together and to do things they didn't want to do. It was helpful that way. So, ok?

Lu: Any other thing you would like to mention or share with us? Anything it can be.

Camp: I think I have great neighbors there. I think we have a lot of people with a lot of passion in that neighborhood. You know that I'm willing to chip in, willing to work together to get things done. We did a lot of neighborhood clean up projects, cleaned up in the park, cleaned up in the water, the pond, around the edges and stuff. And we always have people to help out, it was a small room though [laughter]. But we always got people to help. And I met a lot of nice people, a lot of people through the whole experience. And I think I got to the

point that I almost knew everybody in the neighborhood and found out something in the neighborhood as I talk to some of the older people. You know how...it's not something I learned recently from one of my neighbors that he has been there since 1942. And he said "I can remember when this street wasn't paved." He said "We need to pay \$40 each to get it paved." I said "Really?" He said "Yep," they had to pitch in to get the street paved, because the city wouldn't pay that. Isn't that amazing? Really. And people did that. He said "you know, we need to pitch in."

Lu: That was around what decade?

Camp: [51:36] That was in the 60s that they got it paved. And some of the houses were actually moved there. Because in order to put the Route 10 they had to move the houses that were in the path of Route 10. So they put them either to one side that's in Cranston or to the side in Providence and where Route 10 would go through. That was interesting too. And the fact that where the park is there's still streets on the books, the streets that go through the park, and streets go between pieces of property in the neighborhood that are just paper streets I've never been, never been in Biandon, never been in like Goba, they're still there on paper. So learning some of the history of the neighborhood was interesting too. Alright?

Lu: Yes. Thank you so much.

Camp: Thank you. Would you like to see these pictures?

Lu: Sure. [End]

