

Log of interview

Alex Palma interviewing John Mackin

0:44- Family life: Father worked in Philadelphia and had been in WW2, mother stayed at home but had worked before he was born. She was interested in art. John lived in Collingswood and Cherryhill during his childhood. He described himself as a “fairly easy child to deal with.” Grandfather owned a chicken coup and had at one point owned a farm.

8:12- Interrupted briefly by my phone ringing.

9:00 Siblings Tom, Richard, Eileen, Rob described. Richard was in Vietnam and he has PTSD.

12:00 started a fire as a kid.

14:30 Grand parents died soon after one another. John describes this as a great impact on his life. He had lived in their house while his father was away in WW2. Afterwards, visited them every month

18:20 schooling. John went to St. John’s Catholic school in 1st and 2nd grade, learned about confession and communion. Was told that he would be good at music. In 3rd grade John’s parents moved him to JF Tatem public school but eventually went to St. John’s. Started learning guitar and piano, later singing in high school. Played Football. Father thought he should be a lawyer but John wasn’t interested.

23:00 High school and political life, John got interested in politics. Worked for JFK campaign office and called Independent voters trying to get them to vote for JFK. John had a very high opinion of JFK.

27:30 describes news reports of JFK’s death. John also described his reaction and the reactions of others to his death.

30:20 what was the cold war like? Lots of paranoia.

32:28 What was it like being a teenager in the late 1950s, 1960s? John mentions girls and dances. He talks about how he is still in touch with the girl he took to the prom.

34:01 John had his first job collecting soda bottles, used the money he got from the refunds to buy construction workers soda. John also worked as a paper boy for the Philadelphia evening bulletin. After that he worked at an appliance store and a clothing store.

36:00 John’s Relationship with parents during teenage years was somewhat mild. John had a small conflict with his parents over going away to college.

37:00 John chose to go to Boston College because he had itchy feet. Was influenced by Kennedy and by a babysitter who was from Boston, was also romantically interested in a girl who lived near Boston.

38:10 Was interested in Civil Rights after reading about it in the papers. Involved in a tutoring group connected to SNCC and the Men’s/Women’s Sodality at Boston College.

39:35 Events that shaped John's political views: Devastated by MLK's assassination (so were his parents), recalls Brown vs Board of education. John talks about how there were only 2 black students in his High School. Additionally, John talks about how his parents were fairly progressive and how they did not mind him having black friends. He talks about how racist attitudes amongst his friends annoyed him greatly.

45:19 John describes his interest in history. He says that he wanted to use history to understand how the political environment got to the point it was at. Talks about political diversity at Boston College. Also mentions that his dormitory proctor was a priest (Father Richard Toomey) who was involved in the Civil Rights movement. John at this point recalls the hate mail that Toomey would get. Also recalls that there was 1 student of color at Boston College. Two black Professors at Boston College Professor Fontaign, Dr. Jackson, dean of school of education.

52:06 John applied to Harvard, St. Joes and Seaton Hall.

52:40 Talks about the interests of his siblings

Richard – Many interests, fought in Vietnam. Lives in Pennsauken today, living off military disability.

Tom – Graduated from Temple, in a pre-med program. Was interested in becoming a professional pianist. Lives in Montgomery county, PA. Worked for a computer company for many years. Suffers from MS.

Eilleen – Degree in Psychology. Is a housewife today

Rob – International Business. Lives in Connecticut, is a wine merchant.

56:07 Felt homesick at Boston College. Revisited Boston College 7 years after he left in 1972. John does not keep in touch with friends from College.

58:00 mentions graduate studies, started at temple but switched to Boston College. John Mackin became quickly discouraged and dropped out of grad school.

59:44 mentions that while was at Boston College, he was dating a girl in Philadelphia.

1:00:15 Couldn't hold onto a job because of his alcoholism. Moved away from University City in Philadelphia to Germantown. Mentions that this eventually caused him to work at La Salle. Says that he lost apartments, girlfriends and jobs.

1:01:50 Worked at a workshop for recovering people. Also touched on his time at La Salle.

1:03:30 Talked about how crack cocaine epidemic affected Germantown.

1:04:15 Attended AA meetings at 40th and Walnut at the 4021 club. John attended St. Agatha/St. James Church. St. Vincent de Paul Church during his time in Philadelphia

1:05:45 John talks about how his alcoholism ended him up in an emergency room. Mentions long term health effects.

1:07:00 At this point, John talks about the role religion has played in his life. He left the church for a number of years after College. Got into AA through church. Also talks about how the Catholic Church has influenced his views of Social Justice.

1:11:00 John talks about meetings of the Catholic Peace Movement and AA meetings that he had attended before working at La Salle. John was hired by Brother Grunenwald in 1984. He was interested in working at La Salle because his AA counselor recommended working in higher education.

1:14:00 Talks about his initial role at the La Salle Library, John worked in the circulation department. John was Involved in reclassifying library off of the Dewey decimal system to the Library of Congress system.

1:16:09 John details the massive changes that computerization brought to the library.

1:18:40 John says that the biggest changes at La Salle have been the increase of the size of campus, the decline in the number of Christian brothers, increase in gender/religious/ethnic diversity on campus, more impersonal

1:22:50 Mentions a comic that was in the Collegian that was racially insensitive. The comic depicted black food servant workers cooking a white man. Soon after the multicultural center was started.

1:25:00 At this point John talks about what has remained constant at La Salle; Catholic identity and dedication to students.

1:26:55 Mentions that some faculty at La Salle feel that La Salle has lost its Catholic identity.

1:29: 00 John talks about his "adult" hobbies, including music, his religious life.

1:31:00 At this point, I ask John what he thinks of La Salle's stance on social Justice. John mentions Maggie McGuinness and Maureen O'Connell as strong advocates of social justice on campus. I also ask John his opinion of Dorothy Day and political Catholicism. John mentions that he visited Dorothy Day's study. Also mentions reading Peter Maurin. John talks about how Political Catholicism helped to bring him out of alcoholism.

1:35: 01 I ask John what he thought of the transition between the David Leo Lawrence Library and the Connelly Library. He much prefers the Connelly library but mentions how it is in need of repair.

1:37:30 I ask John to compare Boston College and La Salle. He says that Boston College is a larger College. Boston College is also more of a selective school than La Salle is. Once again, he brings up computers, saying that computers have caused students to learn differently.

1:41:14 At this point, John talks about how well he got along with Brother Michael McGuinness, before he was president even. Is still good friends with him. Mentions that Brother Burke may have been asked to

resign by the board of directors. He also is looking forward to the new president, though he mentions that he has not met her.

1:43:00 I ask John several questions about what he thinks over La Salle and Academia in general. At times he feels as though he's not qualified to answer these questions.

1:47:00 I ask John about his present day political opinions. He lacks faith in either political party. John believes that our political problems can only be solved by another cultural and spiritual great awakening.

1:49: 24 John talks about the organizations he's involved with today, his church, an organization that helps the mentally ill. Also he talks about his interest in racial politics and the intersection of religion with these politics and with music.

1:50: 35 John mentions that he lost a fiancé during his alcoholism .Also mentions that he came close to becoming married to a girl from Nigeria, but she moved back to Nigeria.

1:52:34 Our interview is interrupted by a knock on the door

1:53:00 John recounts a story of a time he met Louis Armstrong. From here to the end of the interview, he talks about his political and religious beliefs and where he thinks the world is going.