Interview with Paul Jalbert
Interviewer: Sara Bolduc

This is Sara Bolduc, the date is April 26th, 2006, and I am about to interview Paul Jalbert at his place of work at All About You, in New Auburn, Maine.

Begin Interview:

Paul: With his brother, he started…

Sara: So he started with his brother….

Paul: Well no, he started with these other people, I don’t know. On Main Street in Lewiston.

Sara: Ok.

Paul: They were brothers, too, but I don’t know what their names were. And I could ask my father, but I don’t think he would remember.

Sara: Do you remember where on Cedar Street approximately?

Paul: Oh Sure! You know where… the building is not there anymore. It’s across the street from uh Lebels Sheet Metal.

Sara: Oh, it is.

Paul: Yep.

Sara: Ohh.

Paul: It’s a big vacant lot, I think Lebel owns the lot. It was just a little dinky tavern you know, a little, little house.

Sara: Across from Lebels.

Paul: Lebel’s Sheet Metal. That little building there, that’s where my brother, his name was Pete,

Sara: Pete

Paul: Pete Jalbert.

Sara: Ok so,
Paul: Alright.

Sara: So he started off on Cedar Street in Lewiston.

Paul: Opened up his first shop in 1937, after marrying, after wedding, after marriage...

Sara: Ok.

Paul: Something like that...

Sara: ... and... that was in Auburn?

Paul: Yeah, that was right where, actually it was a building beside Orbit. It’s nothing now. It’s a parking lot.

Sara: A parking lot?

Paul: Yeah, but uh, I’m trying to think of what the man’s name was, I can’t remember.

Sara: It was a guy who was a milkman who owned it right?

Paul: I think so.

Sara: Ok.

Paul: I think so. Let me call my father, he might remember.

Sara: Sure.

(Paul calls father)

Paul: I’m going to take a chance.

Sara: Yea.

Paul: What the hell, but, don’t hold me to it.

Sara: Ok (laughing).

Paul: 7-8-2 3-7-3. Hi dad. How are you? Hey, listen I got a few questions to ask you. This is Paul. Hello? Yeah! I got a few questions I want to ask you. Remember when you started cutting hair? Where did you learn to cut hair? No, no, no. Yea, but didn’t you have someone to train you? Well, what about your brother Uncle Pete? Yea. Oh so you learned by yourself. And then you went, and then you went to work for Uncle Pete. Well how old were you, how old were you then? How old were you? Were you 25 or.... You
were what? 15? Well 16 years old. Ok. Alright I got that straight. Now how many years did you work for your brother? Yeah but when you moved, when you moved when you got married, right in 1937? Yeah, and then you worked right next to where we were before, the building is gone. What was he a milkman? You know when you opened up your first shop there, It was the building right next to where the big, Madame Boucage, where where we were, right?

Do you remember who was in there? Was it a milk man or something like that? Horses in the back. What was his name, do you remember him? You. Yep. I thought you might remember. But that’s why I’m taking a chance. Well, try to remember. Then after that you moved into Madame Beaucage’s block there. That was a barber there before right? Yea, you know where. Yea, but wasn’t there a barber that was in there, like McCarthy? Yeah, I know, but wasn’t there a man who had started a barber shop in there?

You don’t remember that. Ok. Yeah well that’s ok. I just thought I’d take a chance that you might remember. Well I’m working but someone is writing an article up about the shop and I wanted to get some more information. (99)
But if you don’t remember, you don’t remember. That’s all. Well yea, I know, I know, but ok I thought you might remember where you moved there from uh. Ok alright. OK alright. Yep. Ok. Buh Bye

Background Person: Sara, I didn’t even recognize you.

Sara: How are you?

Paul: (to his father) Buh Bye.

Sara: Good, how are you? (to person in background)

Paul: Here’s the word that goes down.

Background Person: Your hair’s cute.

Sara: Thank you

Paul: In those days they didn’t have any school.

Sara: Ok.

Paul: so what he did, he learned it all himself. He picked up kids on the street and he cut their hair. (111)

Sara: Oh.

Paul: And then when he had enough experience he went to work with his brother Pete on Cedar Street.
Sara: On Cedar Street........

Paul: Ok? That's....... (mumbling something) And then when he got experience there, I know the rest of it is when he got married he decided to open his own shop and that’s what he opened up here. He moved up on the hill where his mother, they lived upstairs.

Sara: Oh really?

Paul: Yeah. That’s where our cousin Pete Jalbert, he just died, he lived right there.

Sara: What street did he live on?

Paul: Boone Avenue.

Sara: Boone Avenue

Paul: You know that, you know that.... The Jalberts live up there, they were cousins of ours.

Sara: Oh, yea.

Paul: And then your grandfather, your great grandfather, let me see.

Sara: My pepere’s dad.

Paul: That right. Well that, it’s the same house.

Sara: That same house?

Paul: They lived....

Sara: Oh that’s the one right by Walton.

Paul: Yea! Yea. Yea yea, you take that Boone Avenue, it’s the last house on the left.

Sara: Yea! That’s right. Its like Walton is right in the backyard. The backyard is like Walton.

Paul: Yea, Yea. That’s exactly... that.... That was my grandfather’s house. My father’s parents house. (129)

Sara: Oh ok.

Paul: I don’t know if you can put that in but that’s interesting. I don’t know if that has anything to do with it? That’s how it happened. My father got married, then he opened up
that vacant lot, there as a building there. Then in 1942, he was too old to go into the army then he had, he had two kids. He had me and Ronnie. That’s my brother, Ronnie. He was too old to go into the service but he wasn’t old enough to be excluded from going into the service, so he worked at Bath Iron Works as a welder. He worked there for three years during the war. Ok?

And at the same time, uh, he was working there, working in the uh, I’m gonna say the third ship, and then he cut hair when he come home. Yeah, he worked at night, until he had to go to work. He worked to build up his clientele. He worked there (BIW) because it was, excuse me, it was mandatory that he worked there. (147)

At Bath Iron Works. It was like going into the service but not, but you’re working for the government, yeah. Ah, they had a lot of women then that did come out, the used to call them the Rosie the Riveters. Because woman were, that’s when they came out in the work force. Years and years ago, women didn’t work, they stayed at home. And that’s when ah, The womens revolution, I guess they came out. They started working, doing mens work. It’s progressed to what it is today. You know. (156)

So that brings it up to in the forties now. And then, um, like I say I took it over in 1965. He turned it over to me. You got something like that?

Sara: I do. Right there.

Paul: Oh ok. And then uh, this man Ben the Barber, worked with us, he come home on weekends, cause he was only stationed in Massachusetts. He was a twenty year man, so on his tail end of it he was stationed, he was uh, I’m trying to think of what he did. I thought he used to, he worked for recruiting. A recruiting office. Something like that. And uh, he’d come home on weekends. And then he’d work for my father to make extra money. He was a nice guy. Nice really meticulous, prim and proper. In those days they all dressed up you know, in a tie, we all did, I did too.

Sara: Unlike now, huh?

Paul: Now we’re so relaxed. You know. Believe it now they have a relaxed day at the office on Friday. Even in banking, You notice is nothing unheard of now. They wear dungarees, relaxed day you know. (174)

Paul: So that brings you up to now, through the war. Then I worked, and then in 1965, my father wanted to, I was taking care of the business anyway, I had been since I was cutting hair. I started in 1955 myself. I was 16.

Sara: You were 16.

Paul: Yea. And then I graduated High School in 1957 with my license in hair. Oh, by the way my father learned by himself he said.
Sara: Yea, that's what you were saying.

Paul: Yep, yep, he'd drum up business by asking kids on the street....

Sara: If they needed a hair cut?

Paul: If he could cut their hair for practicing.

Sara: Oh, that's cool.

Paul: Yep. That's how he started. According to him, so I'm going to go by that. And uh....

Sara: So you just learned by your father teaching you?

Paul: No no, I learned from my father, but then I learned my theory, I went to Hanson's Barber School.

Sara: Hanson's Barber School.

Paul: Yeah that was located on Lisbon Street. That's where I learned the theory of the uh, of the uh, of, the skill of cutting hair. You know there was medical things that you had to learn.

Sara: Oh like the anatomy. (192)

Paul: Yea, right right. Something that you don't actually use. So, I had to do that to get my credits because I had to learn for 1800 hours, something like that. I had to learn more hours, and once I went to Barber School, I went 20..... 2000 hours, I think it was 1800 hours in Barber School. But it was something like that, 1800 hours. You know, if you want to put that in. Then uh, of course like I said 65, he turned it over to me. Actually I paid for it. Just like my nephew bought that Triple A from my brother. My brother is the banker. (mumbling) (205)

Paul: It was somewhat that way, and then um, I kept hiring people, and getting some people. We went up to a point where we had 10 people for a very short while, very short while. But I stayed with mostly 8 for many many years. You know for many years. Then it started dwindling down, of course I was getting older so, I put it up for sale, a year and a half no, I was 62

Sara: You were 62.

Paul: Yea I wanted to get out. I think it was 62 or 63. I'm 67 now. So that was about 4 years ago. So that's brings you up to what? 2001.

Sara: Yeah
Paul: 2002. Yea, something like that, 2002/2001. You know and um I sold it, I stayed there for about 2 years and decided to relocate, which I did down the street to All About You. So that’s pretty conclusive as to how it really, and I’m ending, I’m just closing out my career as retired and working for All About You.

Sara: You work just part time here, or?

Paul: Well, yeah, I do my own hours, you know. Is there anything else that you need?

Sara: Just um, well it doesn’t have to do with the store but, I heard that your father, well I was looking through the archives and I found pictures of your dad.

Paul: Yea he was in the (mumbling) That’s Saint Louis (referring to pictures I had brought of the choir his father was in.) Am I there?

Sara: Well there’s a ton of pictures if you want to look through them. I found a bunch of them.

Paul: There’s my father right here (pointing to picture) (228)

Sara: Yeah he was really a handsome man!

Paul: Yea he was. This is Mr. Lafayette, the one that owned Saindon (Insurance).

Sara: Oh that is him?

Paul: Yea. Michelle (?mumbling), Mr. Doucette, Alexis Cote, Marvin, Norm Cote I think. Bob Lachance, Oh boy. Him I don’t remember, (naming people he remembers.) There’s my father. That Parent, Roland Parent I think. Ok, there’s Bob Turcotte. Oh, my god, he was in there? And Norm, Norm. Norm Lacomte (?). No, that’s Norm Morin. And this was uh, What the hell? Oh that’s, That’s… well their names must be here. (241)

Sara: Yea it’s all right here.

Paul: Oh yeah.

Sara: Did you used to sing with your dad, in the choir?

Paul: Yea. I did years ago after that. But he was in the one of the oldest singing things.

Sara: This was one of the programs I found that your dad…….

Paul: Oh....

Sara: …..was in I think he’s on the other side. It’s all in French too. I couldn’t read it
Paul: Oh god yeah. I knew he sang that. He was a good singer really. My father was very good.

Sara: Yea that’s what I heard.

Paul: Extremely good.

Sara: There he is again. (247)

Paul: Well, that was when we were having out banquet. That’s Bob Turcotte, he died.

Sara: Oh really?

Paul: Yea. I’m not in that. Oh I’m not, He’s in Florida, died in Florida.

Sara: Did your dad sing anywhere else besides at St. Louis, or mostly at St. Louis?

Paul: Well... he was uh, he sang for uh, and operatic troop in the state of Maine when he was, when he was a teenager. Young, and I don’t know but, when he was in a few Operas.

Sara: Yea, well that’s cool.

Paul: And what is this? Let me see if I’m in that. I might be in there.

Sara: Oh really? Yea, cause some of them didn’t have any names. So I just photocopied, I remembered what he looked like, So I...

Paul: Yeah there he is right there (picture). Let’s me see if I’m in that?? There’s.... These were all the dignitaries, Oh gosh, he was there too. I can’t remember his name but, it will come back to me with time. Gosh that looks like my mother (picture 1). Yea I think that’s my mother!

Sara: Oh that’s your mother? (263)

Paul: Yea that’s where, my father and my mother. That must have been with their wives. Eddie Dubois, yes that is! Yeah Yea but this is Valley. (referring to pictures).

Beth Asselin (worker at All About You joins us at the bench and looks at the pictures I brought in.): He sticks out like a sore thumb. (refering to picture).

Paul: His wife, ah, Mary Anne

Beth Asselin: Yeah! Mary Ann Valley

Paul: Oh for Christ’s sakes.
Beth Asselin: Oh, no kidding!

Paul: Yea, these were husband and wife.

Beth Asselin: You can tell some of......

Paul: There’s another, that’s his brother. (picture ). Norm.

Beth Asselin: What was this for?

Sara: That was in the archives at my school. In the St. Louis folder.

Paul: Norm.... Yea I’m right here! (Picture 1)

Beth Asselin: at USM?

Sara: Oh, is that you? Yea. We have a Franco-American Archives

Beth Asselin: Ohhhh!

Sara: I’m putting together a folder of his father and his shop.

Paul: Yeah, this is me right here. (Picture 1) Put an x on top of it if you want to.

Beth Asselin: (Laughing) That’s You?

Paul: I’m reminiscing now!

Sara: (Laughing).

Beth Asselin: Oh I bet. There’s your father right there! (Picture 1)

Paul: Yep, and my mother’s not in this one, but anyways. The woman below him is my mother. Yep. (278)

Sara: Did she ever sing or......?

Paul: No. No this was just husband and wife.

Sara: There’s your dad again. (Picture)

Paul: Yeah. Alexis Cote was, his father was the piano director. Right here (picture). Bob Turcotte. Eddie, Eddie something. Huh. I’m not in there. Well some of these people I recognize. I don’t know (talking to Beth Asselin). That’s my brother Ronnie! God what the hell is he doing in here? Holy Shit! There’s my father.

Beth Asselin: I remember him!

Paul: Mr. Valencourt.
Beth Asselin: Mr. Valencourt!

Paul: But his son is in there too. (288)

Beth Asselin: Yea!

Paul: I think that’s him right there.

Sara: Some of the names sound familiar.

Beth Asselin: Oh, he did the Organ for many years at St. Louis. Did he play the organ?

Paul: Who? No!

Sara: That one’s your brother (pointing to picture 2).

Paul: Yeah! God damnit Ronnie, and that’s Alexis Cote’s son. You see there, right here.

Sara: Oh that’s his son (pointing to picture).

Paul: That, there son (picture). Right here. Where in the hell……

Beth Asselin: Who’s this? Is that Obe? (Picture)

Paul: No. That’s uh, his wife reads at church once in a while. They live in Florida in the winter. Let’s see if I’m in there (Picture). There’s my father, Bob (?), Eddie, Bob Lagagne. That’s my ….

Beth Asselin: Where’s Bob?

Paul: Right there. (297)

Beth Asselin: Oh No Kidding!

Paul: Ray Doucette.

Beth Asselin: Doesn’t even look like him.

Paul: Yeah, I’m not in this picture. You know, this is 1962?

Sara: I’m not sure.

Paul: I was probably in the service.

Sara: Oh, you were in the service?

Paul: Yeah.

Sara: How long were you in the service for?
Paul: Oh, just a year. We got activated, got activated during the Berlin crisis. And that’s when I came back from the service. (coughing). Oh that’s a, that’s a reproduction of the picture here.

Sara: This was an article in the newspaper.

Paul: Oh, yeah, yeah. St. Louis had a hell of a choir. They used to come for midnight mass, you had to buy tickets.

Sara: Really?

Paul: Oh yeah!

Beth Asselin: I used to watch his father up in that balcony.

Paul: Yeah, yeah.

Sara: Oh my goodness.

Paul: Oh that goes back.

Sara: That’s awesome. (308)

Paul: yeah.

Sara: Who’s singing? (Laughing)

Paul: Yea, this is what’s nice about you know, having archives or pictures you know. Even if it’s just with you family. Then you start 40/50 years from now like now, some of these people, Conrad Doucette’s passed away, Rob Turcotte passed away, He’s passed away, He’s passed away, He’s passed away. (Picture)

Sara: Yea that’s what they try to do is get as many artifacts of the Lewiston/Auburn area...

Paul: Yea.

Sara: .... And preserve it and, so when people down the road, can go back and look at them.

Paul: Yea well I wasn’t in that one.

Sara: (cough) Excuse me. (317)

Paul:... That looked like my brother when he was wearing glasses. This is quite informative. Yeah. Like I said, this one here is my father and mother, and my brother. Oh you can get another one of those.

Sara: Yeah I can. I can print another one. Actually I can print off copies for you.
Paul: No...

Sara: If you want you can keep those. If you want, cause I can, they have them in the archives.

Paul: That’s alright.

Sara: Some of the pictures had dates on the back. This one is 1956.

Paul: ’56?

Sara: (to Beth), Yea it’s going around right now.

Sara: So did any of your other brothers or sisters done hair?

Paul: No.

Sara: You had sisters right?

Paul: No, my sister, she liked to sing but she never sang. No, no the idea is as the years went along, choirs went out. It’s a thing of the past.

Sara: Yea that’s too bad though.

Paul: They had so many other interests. You know chorus, in those days, what did you do for a past time? So that had chorus and choirs. You know right now they’ve got singing groups. Like the Androscoggin Corale, or something like that you know. So, if you were interested in that they have venues that you can get into, but in those days choirs were pretty much the only thing. (337)

Paul: So, that’s how it went. But uh, 56, I don’t know where I was.

Sara: Maybe you left for a second or something?

Paul: I don’t know.

Sara: Did your brother Ronnie sing also?

Paul: Yea he tried but, he can’t carry a tune.

Sara: Oh no! (Laughing)

Paul: Everytime we’d sing in the summer time, as a matter of fact he’s coming in for a hair cut. I don’t know if it’s tomorrow or.... Yea, he just got back from Florida.

Sara: Oh nice!
Paul: He just became a grandfather again. Yesterday for the third time with his daughter Louise. She had a little girl. Yea, so he just came back into town. The night before. And she had it in the morning. Yesterday morning. 9 pounds 6 ounces.

Sara: Oh my goodness.

Paul: 22 inches long.

Sara: that’s a big baby.

Paul: Yeah. So both of them are healthy at Maine Med. Yea, so, he came back just in time for that I guess. No, he loves to sing but he can’t carry a tune.

Sara: That’s like me, I can’t.

Paul: No?

Sara: I have my dad’s voice! (Laughing)

Paul: Is that right? So...

Sara: (laughing) I don’t think the Bolduc’s are talented when it comes to singing.

Paul: Is your grandfather back yet?

Sara: No.

Paul: When’s he coming back? Now they’re going to go to Old Orchard again.

Sara: I don’t even think, no they sold their place in Old Orchard.

Paul: Oh they did?

Sara: Yea.

Sara: So...

Paul: Yeah. Even my brother, I saw him at Christmas time, he came back three days I think. Four days. It wasn’t very long. He came back, came in to see me for a hair cut and I don’t think he’s had a hair cut since.

Sara: Oh my goodness!

Paul: I talked to my sister-in-law she says “You got to do something, he’s got his, he looks like, like a, derelict. Soooo he’s supposed to come in and um.... At Christmas I saw him for the hair cut and...
Sara: Yea, do your sisters live around here?

Paul: My sisters, I have one who lives in Scarborough, and I have two brothers Ronnie and then the other one is in Pennsylvania. He lives um, right outside Gettysburg. He’s a baker. He’s got a bakery, he bakes bread.

Sara: Oh, that’s cool!

Paul: Well I don’t think he’s making money. He’s in the dough, but not the right type there.

Sara: Yea the wrong kind (Laugh)

Paul: Pretty small little bread business. They don’t make enough. I think he’s, he’s beating on a dead horse. Like the old saying, you know, I don’t think it’s ever going, I support him you know. He loves what he’s doing. I love him dearly. You’re happy, like my nephew, he went to college, he was working in a bank, and he said one time I remember he gives me a phone call. He said I don’t know if I can do it Uncle Paul. He says I’m working this bank and he says its good pay but I’m inside a cubicle I don’t see any windows, I look at a screen all day long. I says I’ll tell you what John, You’re better off to be digging a hole working construction and be happy than to be doing something that you don’t like.

Sara: Exactly!

Paul: So he got out of that(372)

Paul: ... out of it completely and he went to learn the business through another company in Massachusetts or New Hampshire, he went there for about a year or so to learn the in and out of uh the fire extinguisher, fire, fire business.

Sara: Triple A Fire right?

Paul: Yea, Yeah, So, he learned it and my brother wanted him to come back home with his tail between his legs and say well I’m going to take over my father’s business. My brother didn’t want him to. He says you want to learn the business, you learn it somewheres and then come back. And that’s the way it happened. John’s done well, he’s increased the business probably four or five times over. Yeah, he’s done well.

Sara: See he’s successful.

Paul: Huh?

Sara: That’s very successful! (380)

Paul: Yeah he’s done very well but my brother started the business you know. There’s always somebody to you know, I consider myself somewhat successful. But, not not in
that case, my father owned it and got the ball rolling you know. So if it wouldn’t have been for him, I wouldn’t have been where I’m at today you know.

Sara: Well, Fred’s Barber Shop is a huge landmark in New Auburn. I think, I think Fred’s is a huge landmark.

Paul: I think my dad had, he had a lot of popularity.

Sara: I knew about it when I was little, I always, crossing the bridge,

Paul: Oh yeah. Everybody knew about Fred’s. Yeah.

Sara: I never knew I was related to you, but…

Paul: Yeah.

Sara: Yea, I think it’s a big landmark.

Paul: Yeah so if there’s any information more than what we’ve discussed I can, I think that, we’ve covered it pretty well.

Sara: definitely! Good. Thank You very much.

Paul: You are very welcome. (390)
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Date(s) of Interview

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