

Frank Troitino Log

Logged by Amber Griffin

Checked by Philip E. Coyle

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Frank Troitino Interview

Date: June 30, 2003

Interviewer: Philip E. Coyle

Transcribed by: Amber Griffin

Checked by: Philip E. Coyle

Frank Troitino is a Spanish stone-mason. His uncle worked on the original Blue Ridge Parkway, and he worked on the Linn Cove Viaduct. Jackie Holt mentioned him to me and so I followed up. This interview was conducted in a conference room at the Blue Ridge Parkway Headquarters, at Hemphill Knob. Mr. Troitino was easy-going and open. He would be an interesting person to follow around as he does his work. He continues to win contracts to do stone work for the BLRI, and other members of his family continued to be involved in masonry contracting. I found his comments about the differences between Spanish and Italian stone-masons particularly interesting, but the whole interview is very rich with good sound quality. Mr. Troitino has a very heavy accent, which makes transcription difficult at points.

Philip Coyle: My name is Philip Coyle and I am called Ted Coyle and it is June 30, 2003 and I am in the Blue Ridge Parkway Headquarters on Hemphill Knob with Frank Troitino and would you spell your name for me?

Frank Troitino: Last name or the whole thing?

Philip Coyle: Last name

Frank Troitino: T-R-O-I-T-I-N-O

Philip Coyle: And when were you born?

Frank Troitino: I was born August the sixth 1935.

Philip Coyle: And where were you born?

(008) **Frank Troitino:** In a small village in Spain, Northwest of Spain that they call them Galicia, the region.

Philip Coyle: And what was the name of the village?

Frank Troitino: Posada

Philip Coyle: That is "Posada," P-O-S-A-D-A, no?

Frank Troitino: Yes

Philip Coyle: OK. Let's see, how did you get to the United States?

(012) **Frank Troitino:** Well I have my father here and my Uncle and he built a lot of bridges on the Blue Ridge Parkway. And they tried to get me here when I was 18 years old but when I went get permission from the Spanish authorities they told me I had to go to serve in the service forces, the Army. So I had no legal entrance into this country until I was twenty-one, but at twenty-one I was in the military and [inaudible]. I tried and they told me, "there was no way." And so that was around 1959 or 1960, I received a letter from American Embassy in Madrid saying that if I still want to come to this country. They let me know later. I don't have to get in touch with them. They let me know later. I don't wait no more I went straight to the embassy. [Laughing] So they told me, "no, you cannot go, you cannot enter in the United States until 1961, and you have to be single." I was single, so when January 1961 come to the embassy in Madrid they told me that everything was fixed up and to get the paper ready to get out of Spain. That is what I did and I come into this country on January thirty-first, 1961.

Philip Coyle: Maybe you could tell me about your father and uncle?

(035) **Frank Troitino:** Well my uncle, he come in 1914 and he was 14 years old, too young to work, but he a fake his birth certificate. So after a few years here he went back and he had a friend, a neighbor, a guy they had been raised together, and that guy was here in this country before him. So both of them they went back to Spain and when they was there the other guy lost the entrance. The visa expired, and so he say I have to go to Canada and my uncle went behind him. When they was in Canada my uncle visa expired, so they could not get into this country legal and they went through at the Niagara Fall Bridge and they caught them. They put them in jail, six months in jail. Somebody, a Catholic priest whatever, went to see them and he asked them a few things—asked them that the Catholic book that they call Doctrina and they knew a good part of it and so he got them out of that. They went to the what do you call them...the stone quarries. Vermont. And they worked in the stone quarries in Vermont and after they come somewhere here in West Virginia to the coal mine. And I don't know for how long they work there. And my uncle started to get work for himself as a stonemason; because he was already was a stonemason, he learned with his dad in Spain and is how he started to getting stone work. The other guy, his friend, was the same he was a stonemason, too. So call him, say, "Joe, they started a road through the mountains in Virginia and in North Carolina and if you come we will see what is going on there. So they got work and the other guy he had bad luck and he died in the late thirties, early forties but my uncle he stayed until 1987.

Philip Coyle: That was Joe Troitino?

Frank Troitino: Joe Troitino. That was my uncle. The other guy's name was Joe Genero

Philip Coyle: So Joe Troitino, he lived until the 1980s you said?

(073) **Frank Troitino:** Yes, and he had work in the Smoky Mountains. I think it was 1984 or 1985, he still come there and get the hammer and beat the rock like a young fellow.

Philip Coyle: So where did he work on the Blue Ridge Parkway?

(076) **Frank Troitino:** The way I have understand, he worked from 1935 when they start here and there and everywhere but most of all on the North Carolina side. And I come... the first time I come to work on the Parkway oh I don't know if it is all together but I don't know if you call it Parkway or Skyline Drive they have a few walls, guide walls and then somebody tried to steal rock from us, throw them down the hill whatever and I come there for two weeks and it was back in 1962. In 1963 in August I come to Roanoke, Virginia they was building the Parkway what is now Roanoke, Virginia. And we build there, a few bridges. And since then, he had work way back in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and he was working right here on this bridge on 70 and back this way. And in 1963 they already was working for the tunnels on Pisgah. I think there are 6 tunnels. So, I come in 1964. See I was working in 1963 around Roanoke. In 1964 I went to West Virginia and worked on one of his jobs and then in November of 1964 they called me to come to Pisgah Mountain and on-and-off since then we have worked everywhere—Grandfather Mountain. What do you call that place, do you know where Soco is? Well, I call them Soco Mountain on the way to the end of the Parkway down there at the river...

Philip Coyle: Into the Cherokee Reservation

(109) **Frank Troitino:** Yes, the Cherokee Reservation and that area. After we jump from the Blue Ridge Parkway to the Smoky Mountain National Park then we was in and out like that.

Philip Coyle: So you could say that your family's style has really made a big contribution to both of these national Parks.

(111) **Frank Troitino:** Oh, yeah. I don't remember exactly but I think in 1969 they figured out that Joe Troitino build 75% of the stonework on the Blue Ridge Parkway and after that he build most of it from 1969 till he died he build most of them. Yeah, he done, he work a lot.

Philip Coyle: You think of all the literally millions of people who have gone on the Blue Ridge Parkway and admired the stonework maybe not knowing who built it but....

(120) **Frank Troitino:** Yeah, well, that is the truth, is truth and I sometime if we was working next to the road and people come by "Oh that looks beautiful," but you tell them do you see any mistakes, "what do you know about stone?" "Oh I don't know nothing about stone," [Laughing] "but it looks beautiful." We had to do what the Federal Highway Administration said. We was under them.

Philip Coyle: Well, for those of us who don't know anything about stone and stonework what should look for in a quality job?

(127) **Frank Troitino:** Well the size of the stone, the way that it's placed, the joints don't get too much different. Look for their runs to be close as possible to be level, even if its not. Sometimes it is not perfectly level, but it looks like it is level. And the roughness of the rock, on the face of the wall, the top of the wall, you call them the cupola. You look at the lines and again the roughness up on top.

Philip Coyle: There must have been a place that Joe Troitino was particularly proud of, or a job that he was particularly proud of. What might be those jobs?

(139) **FT:** Well, well Joe was this, this type of man. He would go to the job and say, "boys we have to build it as soon as possible, the best we can, and I want to please the government. So, really, I say he be proud from one end to another. He showed me a lot of walls and bridges that he build before I come here, they beautiful, but it was not just him. It was other people doing stonework in other companies but all of us looking good because you had to go by that pattern. You look at one and you not looked at them all. You look at one and they are different and then you look at the next one or the end of the wall that is different. It is not, say, well they are all same size or most all the same size. They are not.

Philip Coyle: Help me understand that. You said, were you given a pattern or?

(152) **FT:** No, I call them a pattern but they was given us sort of like a measurement. As I told you, they tell you, "we don't want it bigger," the rock had to be at least...it had to have the length one and a half times longer than the height. If worse, twice as long looks better, if worse three times as long looks better but they don't want big enormous rock too. I mean a big one in the middle and a bunch of small ones around. The smaller was from 6 inches high till 18 inches long...no less. That is what I was telling you before now how they do it.

Philip Coyle: Well we might as well get that on tape. You were mentioning that currently some of the practices have changed. And you were mentioning the 421 overpass at Deep Gap. So maybe you could talk about that.

(167) **FT:** And the walls on Smoky Mountain. They there they change the size of the rock. It could be smaller, could be 4 inches high, and I am not sure, but I think that they are 8 inches long. Really, for a wall that size they wanted before big rock on the Parkway and now they come with the small size and it looks more or less like a fireplace, not a real Blue Ridge Parkway old job. And uh, but the people, they like it...but it is not the right..it is not what they taught us to do before.

(180) **PC:** Well you were mentioning that one of the changes is that the masons are no longer stonecutters.

FT: No, they know how to lay it—put it in place but the stone has to be cut by the shop and when they have to cut one length they use a saw. They do not use tools like we used before. It is slower, but that is the way that they know how to do it.

PC: Maybe you could talk about the tools that you used before? What were the tools that made up your tool kit?

(188) **FT:** Well we have a hammer, a punch hammer they call them. A punch handset or a pigeon tool. And after you come up with an air drill a drill that runs by air makes a hole on the rock and after you put steel wedges and you put two feathers on each side and a wedge in the middle, and if you have 5, 10, or 20 wedges you hit one wedge at a time, slow. You don't hit one wedge all the way down because the rock will bust, but if you hit one at a time one behind another and come back and do that a couple times the rock seems to break pretty straight. It is a lot less work for the stonemason to cut it and it is a lot easier to do it. If you have to saw the same kind of rock it, take you a half a day and you can do them in 10 or 15 minutes.

PC: Just cracking the rock

FT: Cracking the rock and after the stonemason or I find the crack and shape, you have to finish cracking and shaping it to go into the wall, but it is a lot faster that way.

PC: That word that you were using I did not understand... "Widge" did you say?

FT: Wedge, they have wedges that are steel or wood to split trees or wood or stuff like that.

PC: "Widge" spelled like that, W-I-D-G-E [Really, I think he means just "wedge"]?

FT: Yes, and these were small pieces, about three or four inches high and you put two, they call them feathers, two little bitty pieces of steel on each side—flat--so that when you hit the wedge you don't crack the rock right on top.

PC: It drives it right down into it and...

FT: And it is best way

(223) **PC:** And so you were always using...one of the things about the Blue Ridge Parkway when it was first built anyway and I don't know if it continues today, but they used local stone or tried to use local stone.

FT: Yes, and I don't know before, but since 1961 back this way here, the stone supposed to be no farther than 50 mile radius. But at that time you could go open up a quarry just any where mostly. Today people don't let you...their lands, the government block their lands so that nice stone can come out or dirt, and now they have agreed to use stone from Everton, Georgia. Pure granite, and it come from there. It is a little over 50 miles radius and cost a lot more, but really it is the only way right now.

PC: Well I imagine that granite might be easier to... well it is ironic because they don't crack it anymore they cut it because they have mechanical high speed saws, but how was that old rock to work with, the rock that came from within 50 miles of the Parkway? Was it high quality rock or was it...

FT: Yes. Yes. It cannot be really...they don't want a no soft rock, if possible. I don't see too many places where they use limestone on the Blue Ridge Parkway. But it was local granite they call it. Like the one Grandfather Mountain, they call it fine granite, real good stone, real strong and it looks good—green color.

PC: It cracks easily.

FT: Uh huh

(254) **PC:** Did you...have you talked about your father?

FT: A little bit my father come in 1941 in 19...He come in November, a little before Pearl Harbor. So he work here 6 months and when back until to WWII. After the war he went to uh...my uncle took him somewhere here between Virginia and North Carolina to the Parkway and work there two weeks and after my uncle, his brother, took him back to West Virginia, because he knew quite a bit about coal, striping coal and he is still there.

PC: So you have been living or working with your uncle?

FT: Yeah, really I work all the time with my uncle. When he don't have a stonework job ready to start, then I would go find my work somewhere else, but I come back when he called.

PC: He must have become like a father figure to you.

(276) **FT:** Well it was. He was a man with a lot of...how do you say. He looked like he was happy all the time. He was...what he do he want to be done right. I have understand that he have argues, arguments with the Park Service and with the Federal Highway Administration because those guys they started the book and they was telling him how to do it by the book. And you cannot go by the book when you cut stone. You can get an idea, but the book don't explain to you everything. And I heard that he was pretty hard with them, when it come to argue he was pretty hard with them, but oh he loved to work on the Parkway.

PC: When was this going on?

(291) **FT:** When Nixon got in 1969-70? Around there. He froze the federal funds so the Parkway don't have money to keep on and oh boy... he said "and I vote for him and now we don't have work", he should have left the money for the Parkway. This road had to be finished." That was when we were working on Grandfather Mountain and they stopped

us there for a couple years or longer than that. He wanted to finish the Parkway. He said, "I start on it and I want to finish before I die." And he did.

PC: Just barely right? If he died in 1987 then that was right when they finished right?

FT: Yeah.

PC: Did he make it to the inauguration?

(305) **FT:** Yeah, he come late. [Laughing] What is the name of that lady who use to be the secretary of the uh....

PC: Yeah, you are thinking of Elizabeth Dole.

FT: Elizabeth Dole, she came up a there and told them Joe Troitino was not there... he come late. [Laughing]

(315) **PC:** So what did he think about the Linn Cove Viaduct?

FT: Oh he, when they a see... he went to Spain the last time in 1952. And he went for Christmas and he was there in part of 1953 and he already heard something about the way the French was building the bridge, but "I don't know if I trust those people." That is the way he said, "I don't know." And when he find out that they were going to build the viaduct the way he applauded, "Oh boy," and "I am glad that those guys did something right." But, it was hard to do that job the way that they done it. The first time I don't believe that they could do the way they was saying, and I was there when they placed the first ones, and when they placed the last ones, too.

PC: Is that right?

FT: Yeah, the way they was, they bring them... they don't have nothing under them. Maybe a pier holding them and the est on cables and it was kind of a funny at first, to tell you the truth. But it is still there and pretty strong. He likes the Viaduct, oh yeah, yeah.

PC: Now did he have his own contracting company or...

(345) **FT:** Yes. He started, now this is what I heard I don't see this, but he started as Smith & Troitino. There was an American guy and him, he was a foreman. And a little before WWII they was start building a few bridges around the Pentagon and he already got those, the stonework by himself, then it was Smith & Troitino Construction. And later on Smith and Troitino they got apart, they went different ways, and he start with this guy Brown. Pete Brown. And it was Troitino & Brown and they have their office in Asheville for many years. After Brown, we wanted to retire, and Joe bought Brown's part and he keep on going. It was Troitino and Brown but he keep on going, you know. He had Troitino Construction, Troitino & Brown, and after he put his sons in and they make

Troitino & Brothers, most of them were on the Parkway or around Washington D.C. They made a lot of walls and bridges around Washington D.C.

PC: Yeah, I lived in D.C. and now that you mentioned it they do seem similar you know.

FT: If you go, this is where I work most, if you go to the end of Constitution Ave. and the river, Potomac where Roosevelt Bridge crosses the river...we put the stone in the bridge on the entrance. We were there for three or four years.

PC: Now were you part of Troitino Brothers or...just a separate thing?

(390) **FT:** I just work for them. They pay me by the hour and I just work for them. After 1990, 1989 or 1990 this my brother-in-law and this other guy we start our own small company. TC & S Stone Contractors, and that is how I have been doing till now, since '89 or '90. And we have done a few works here on the Parkway, but most of the work that we done was on the Foothills Parkway in Tennessee, which goes from I-40 to a little place they name Cosby, Tennessee and after that jumps on the other side to where Dollywood is...Pigeon Forge. That's were we stayed, in Pigeon Forge. And it goes on to Warren, Tennessee. It's not finished. But they start on one side...Like on the Blue Ridge Parkway. And they start on the other side. And that's where we've been working. Other guys worked from that way but I started from the Parkway and that is where we have been working. We come and do this over here on the office and it was two years ago and they have a lot of repairs, and we were repairing through here...

End of Side One

PC: Tape one of the interview with Frank Troitino on June 30th 2003. And you were saying in Spruce Pine

FT: Yeah, they was repairing around there on the Parkway, so that was the past summer. We work for...since Joe started going down...we work for these guys that at that time it was Rubel and Genero and Espina Stone Company, and Espina Stone Company, they still do work around here and they needed help in two tunnels. They call them Wild Acres and Rough Ridge, on the other side of Mount Mitchell, and we brought the stone from Tellico Mountains, Tennessee—Robbinsville--to put on the tunnel.

(446) **PC:** So you are actually doing a lot of the repairs [Troitino: now yes] sort of an ongoing tradition in a sense that you are fixing some of the pieces that have been destroyed since they were built.

FT: I tear down some old that my uncle built, and then some people ask me "If your uncle what would he say" and I say, "he probably whip me" [laughing] but if that is progress, he don't care, he say it is OK.

(452) **PC:** Now does your current company use cut stone? Do you go with the modern way or do you still crack the stone?

FT: Let's put it this way, because they now do not give you much time to do the job. The sooner you finish, the best for them. But, they don't get as good of job or work as if they give you time. And we come up, before these guys use the little rock, we come up with the idea to saw the rock, but in big pieces. And uh because you do not have enough handwork to do it. People no want to work on the rock, people don't want to learn how to cut the rock. They just place and that is it, it is a lot faster. We were doing that, cutting the rock, but into big pieces. And we cut it the length we want to and put it in the wall, because of the help. We do not have help.

PC: Well maybe I can ask you about your life back in Posada, Spain a little bit. Did you already know stoneworking when you got here or did you just apprentice?

(465) **FT:** Well, I knew. I worked in stone there to follow the tradition, but stonemason work was more abundance than any other, pay a little less but you have work. So I learned over there to how to lay it and place it in the walls and how to cut some of it. I knew how to square rock, but I don't know how to get the rough off of the face because you do not have to do that there. I learned to get the rough off here in this country, but that was the only thing that I learned. Well I had to learn how the government wants it: Class B, the sizes of the rock and how you could place them in the wall. The minimum from one rock to another where there is a jump had to have four inch and we do not have that in Spain because we do not have that big rock where I am from. In other places they have big quarries, but that is when they teach you how to, I don't know how to call...how to smooth the rock. They have good masons there and they smooth the rock by hand, they don't have no saws or no polishers—it was all by hand, but I do not know how to do the stone to be polish; I know how to do rough.

PC: Well what is the trick to, you said when you got here to leave that rough face exposed, what is the trick to that?

(489) **FT:** The trick, see in Spain we split a rock and if it had rough on it then fine, if not don't. It will be OK. But right here I have to learn with the old guys. My uncle had old guys...good masons and I had to look at them how they do it, the style that they want it done. He started me because I was the youngest at a \$1.75 an hour and the good masons was making \$4.32 an hour, but he told me I have plenty of time. [Laughing]

PC: Well he was right, it is true.

FT: Yeah, one way you are fine. But, OK, see I made cement many times because it was hard to find a labor. It was only union and it was hard to find a labor to do the cement, so I was the youngest so they put me as a laborer.

PC: So you wouldn't even work in the stone cutting.

FT: No, I was making cement and go help them cut the stone or placing it and then mixing the cement again and in and out.

PC: The gopher as we call it

(505) **FT:** I guess [laughing] so um, wait a minute, I think it was in August 1962, I am not sure but I think that it was in August 1962 they send me to this job... wait a minute, let me see if I can remember the name, putting stone around a building a block from the Capital, I know that it is Independence Ave, but I don't remember the street. It is one block from the Capital and at that time they name the building Sam Rayburn, the Senator from Georgia, and we put the stone on.

PC: That is the Senate Office building, isn't it?

FT: Yes, the Senate Office Building, and that stone is irregular, cut but irregular, you do not see one square corner on that stone, every stone have a three or five or six points. I had to use a false square. A square that you... you take out a square at an acute angle, and it is still there. And when they got that job they send me there. Uh! there they had to pay me \$3.50. Boy, I was rich.

PC: And no making cement up there I bet either.

FT: No, no, no. [Laughing] Just place the rock and help cut and go up on the building and a place it.

(528) **PC:** I have heard some people say that some of the masons on the Parkway would sign their work, that they would lay rock in a certain way that was distinctive of themselves as individuals. Did you ever hear anything like that?

FT: No. Maybe they put their name behind the rock, on the inside where you don't see it, but no. Because again the Federal Highway Administration or the Park Service gave them a measurement—not exactly that it had to be that size, but the difference is why all... If you look from far away it all look the same. That is why I don't see it that they have their own mark on the wall.

(540) **PC:** Did you work with Italians or were they separate companies, or how did that work?

FT: No. I work with Italians, but I was in Washington D.C. My uncle hired a few Italians. On the Parkway, no. I don't work with no Italians. See, at first, they told me that there were quite a few Italians working on the Parkway. See, Italians they are good stonemason for real fine work. Real fine. Rough work like this they do not care about it—they know that they could do better.

PC: So maybe the Troitino family, I guess you could say took over a little bit of their work?

FT: Yes

PC: Were the Italians here first?

(557) **FT:** No, on the Parkway the way I understand was more working at the same time. My uncle use to talk quite a bit about this guy, his last name was Franciscos. He is a French, that is how my uncle pronounce them. And they were the one's that build a bridge over the Linville River at Linville Falls and it was fantastic job. They done real good. They even have a stone...they have a ring stone from the bridge and under where they pour concrete at that time they put stone. If you go under you see it. Nice working people, I mean they knew what they was doing. He was from, Salem Virginia or somewhere.

(569) **PC:** I was just thinking about...it is a legacy this stonework. I know that it was for you and your uncle, and his company it was a job, but it has become a trademark, the stone work for the Parkway and for the Smoky's and for Skyline Drive and it is something that ties all those parks together and with Washington D.C., if you think about it. I think a lot of the visitors don't fully appreciate it, you know? So what would tell visitors, or what would you have the Blue Ridge Parkway tell visitors to help them appreciate that work?

FT: Well see...well do you mean to appreciate the rock? You mean the place I like?

PC: Yeah, for example.

(573) **FT:** It is like that Linville River Bridge, that Viaduct. This was here over 70. On the Parkway over 70 [stone bridges]. A few of those tunnels... see some of the tunnels on one side they go straight with the slope with the cut and the other side the wall is making a radius. I think that people they see it, they don't know what it is for. They see it there and don't know what it is for. Why they do it that way and it is a lot of...lets say the radius. They don't go to far with the wall, because it would hold a bunch of stuff if it would fall or slide like this and well the cupola, the biggest the better because if it is small some people try to turn it over, try to push it down the mountain or whatever, and if they are big they cannot do it because they are to heavy they cannot do it.

(598) **PC:** Let me ask it in a different way. Sometimes the Blue Ridge Parkway puts these interpretive signs and then they have a story about the history of the Blue Ridge Parkway; the Troitino legacy does not have a sign yet as far as I know.

FT: Well, I don't know. See there was quite a bit people working on the Parkway, not just the Troitinos. So I don't know. They done a lot of work, as before I told you in 1969 they figured out they done 75% of stonework on the Parkway, and to my thinking, and I know they done since then the rest of the stone on the Parkway. So that is a lot more than 75%, but again a lot of other people did a lot of good work too.

PC: Well, I don't think they are going to put up a sign for you anyway, because they are to cheap [laughing] but if they were going to where would you have it put?

FT: Well, see that is something that I am going to tell you what I think because as my uncle he done worked most everywhere I don't know what he like best but for me I been longer on Grandfather Mountain, so I say around Grandfather Mountain. There is a lot of stonework, the rock came 600 feet from the Parkway or maybe a little farther but just right there you could see the quarry from the Parkway and I would say Grandfather Mountain.

(623) **PC:** Tell me where that quarry is I cannot place it.

FT: OK, do you know where 221 goes under the Parkway? They call them Pickens Height. As 221 goes beside the entrance of Grandfather Mountain bridge. If you are on the entrance and you go on 221 to the Parkway you go under the bridge and keep on going on 221 for a quarter of a mile maybe and there is a dirt road, or it use to be dirt I guess it is still that way, to the right and you follow that dirt road and you go a quarter or half mile and the quarry used to be there on the left. If you go there you see an oval if you look up you see stack rock and Stack Rock Bridge on the Parkway then this next going North the stack rock bridge is a little before the Viaduct.

PC: Well now we have a good place for the sign what would you have on the sign, what would it say?

FT: No, I don't know I have no idea. I wish my uncle were here, he tell you, but I don't have no idea. I guess the sign would say that there was a few Spaniards working here and Joe Troitino, cause if you say something like he is the one that done all this stuff than... His name is fine as the leader or whatever and he got the stone from here or whatever, I have no idea to tell you the truth. If he were here he would tell you.

PC: Well let me ask you again about other things that you would like on this tape, we are coming to the end. You do understand that this tape is going to be transcribed and archived in the Blue Ridge Parkway but I want ask you about the village in Spain, can you describe it, what was its setting, what was the feeling when you went into the town?

(663) **FT:** Well I was born and raised in that little village with 32 neighbors. The neighborhood would have maybe 4, 5, or 10 people so uh and we were poor.

PC: Was this a Basque area?

FT: No, it is Northwest of Spain above Portugal all right and so our, not our own land but uh; the village land they have a place and everybody works it and everybody owns it and everybody can say that it is mine. Everyone have a place there where you could go...feed cows there or whatever

PC: A commons

FT: Yes, a common place. It borders this other Province called Orense. I am from the Province of Pontavedra in the village of Posada. And a real poor place around there, not just Posada it is the whole region. Let's say like right here, New England. There the whole region was poor and they tell me that other places they was poorer. I went two years ago, after forty years, and my God that place change. How am I going to say? Before everybody tried to dominate the land for potatoes, beans, corn, today the government is helping the poor people. They give them um health insurance—medicine, and after I don't know when they started if was 60 or before or later they give them a pay, like social security, if they been working on a farm. So, as I told you before, the village was 42 neighbors, today are 5. Why, because everybody see another opportunity in another place, Americas and East of Europe, back that way. They have more work, pay better, but they still send money to the father and mother, uncle and aunt they can do it while they not there. After they not there and the government pay them a little bit and the whole thing is wild. They live a lot better; they have a something to spend before they don't have nothing to spend. And it's come a little bit at a time. All this after Franco died and when they take over Spain, and they start coming up. Now it is another thing the people are wild. I am going to say before it was 99 and 1/2 percent go to church on Sunday, today if they go it is 30 percent at the most of them... Wild, they uh, it is a lot like here now or worse a lot of news, a lot of movies and you can even look at the screens outside.

PC: Is it near Santiago de Compostella?

FT: Yeah. It is... well, as a mater of fact I land at the airport in Santiago, it is the closest one. And I have a nephew, he is there in Spain right now, but he teaches in Madison County and he been there for I don't know for 15 years at least in Santiago, study and he went to university there.

(740) PC: This Posada makes me think that it was a stop over place on the pilgrimage rout to Santiago.

FT: No I don't think so, I mean I never heard of that. It was a name Posada. Yeah, there is a lot of people that think that, Spanish people that think that, but after they see the route how they was traveling, Posada was not on the way.

PC: Well, thank you very much this concludes the interview on June 30, 2003 with Frank Troitino at the Asheville headquarters of the Blue Ridge Parkway. My name is Philip, Ted, Coyle.