



common
ground
COMMUNITY STORIES

new bedford
whaling museum

SOUTHCOAST Artists Index

This story was collected through our partnership with the SouthCoast Artist Index, led by Ron Fortier.

These transcripts were produced using the Zoom transcription feature.

Interviewer Name: Ron Fortier

Storyteller Name: Ralph Hickok

Ron Fortier

Hi, this is Ron Fortier, your host of the In Focus Podcast brought to you by the artist index.com. And today we have a very unique guest and I will let them introduce themselves to you and spell their name as has become diriger on this show. Because you never know what the last name if there's a story there, sometimes it's a hit and sometimes it's a miss. So with that in mind, could you please introduce yourself? And spelled your last.

Ralph Hickok

Name. OK. Thank you, Ron. My name is Ralph Hickock. That's HICKOK. And I once had a bank teller think I was trying to pass myself off as Alfred H Scott. So there is a story.

Ron Fortier

There because I sweat these out all the time. But you never know. Some of the stories are like James Bobrick. OK, Jim bobrick. He's everybody thinks I'm from down South because my last name is Bob Rick. You know, like Bobby Joe, Billy.

Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah.

Ron Fortier

Lee. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's.

Ralph Hickok

Jim Jim is a neighbor of ours. He lives a couple houses of the Spectrum City.

Ron Fortier

That's crazy. Now you've had a long and storied career.

Ralph Hickok

Well, long anyway, yeah.



Ron Fortier

Oh, come on. There's a lot of stories in there in that. And with that, let's let's start from from day one. We got time.

Ralph Hickok

Well, yeah, quite a few stories. Well, as as I mentioned, this happens to be the 56th anniversary of the day I started working at the standard times, November 25th, 1963. I had been in Ohio working for a small newspaper in Ohio and I left there the day JFK was assassinated and. And ironically, I I had left Massachusetts for Ohio the day he was inaugurated. So I well not really, but I I haven't moved very far since then.

Ron Fortier

You feel somehow LinkedIn some. Odd way. Yeah. Yeah and. Going back there, they still producing the Evening Standard back then or was?

Ralph Hickok

It well, it was an evening paper. Yeah, at that time. There had been before I got here, there was a paper called the Morning Mercury, but that that shut down, I think in 19411942 and I originally started at the Standard Time just on the copy desk to kind of learn the ropes and then I became they had decided to revamp their Sunday magazine. And they. Me, editor of the Sunday magazine, which was called the Southeastern Air at the.

Ron Fortier

Time and the one it was all printed. In sepia color well.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, it was a roto revert group. The group me to say and I'm only drinking water, I swear.

Speaker

OK. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

Maybe I think we need to strengthen that rotogravure, right. OK.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah. Thank you.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, it's generally me in your seat doing that. So anyway.

Ralph Hickok

And I think it was the best job in the newspaper business. I, you know, I it was like putting out a weekly newspaper. Really. And I got to interview a lot of interesting people, artists, musicians, performers, authors, and I pretty much did what I wanted to.

Ron Fortier

Who was some of the notables, rather by me asking. That you interviewed for the Southeastern magazine.

Ralph Hickok

Well, they weren't all for the southeastern because I also, I was also assistant Sunday editor, but I interviewed people like Johnny Carson, Joan Fontaine. Myrna loy. Oh, so there's so many of, you know, I can't.



Ron Fortier

In 63 was or at least in in the mid 60s was the Zeiterion still a performing arts or theater?

Ralph Hickok

At that time it was shut down but but at some point somebody revived it as a movie theater. I think it was still called the state at that time.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

And but it was in pretty bad physical shape. I I went down there a couple of times just out of curiosity, you know, to see what was going on and and and there were leaks, you know, it was just. Yeah. Yeah, right. Yeah. It was kind of a sad place, actually.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. And Plaid seats. Most memorable time that you know, cause you are in walking history right now. Believe it or not.

Ralph Hickok

Well, you, you know, I I told somebody the other day that I'm I realize that I'm an old timer in New Bedford now because. When I walked down Union Street, I I don't say what was there before that. I say what was there before, what was there before that, you know.

Ron Fortier

So you know where everything was? We have no idea where. Anything is. Yeah, yeah, yeah. What? Why, New Bedford from Green Bay, WI to New Bedford. It seems like some sort of a weird trajectory.

Ralph Hickok

Well, I I went. Actually, I went to Harvard after graduating from high school in Wisconsin, and then I went to Ohio, worked for a small newspaper there. But I wanted to get back to the East Coast. And actually I I was on the Cape on vacation and I went to the Cape Cod standard times for a job interview. And the the person I talked to there suggested I should also try the New Bedford Standard Time. So I got a job. I was, you know, and I tenant newspaper man, there were a lot of those around these days.

Ron Fortier

Now are you published?

Ralph Hickok

Well, yeah, I've I'm a sports historian. I've written several books about sports. My most recent one was called Vagabond halfback, the saga of Johnny Blood McNally, which is the biography of A. Very interesting guy who played for the Packers back in the olden days and. Was quite a character. When I I I wrote him a letter. He was in living in St. Paul, MN at the time I wrote him a letter about told him I wanted to write a book about him and told him a little bit about my background because I'd already published a book. So I I mailed the the letter. From New Bedford on a Tuesday, I remember this very distinctly. It was Tuesday in February 1972. And on Sunday afternoon, I got a phone call and uh, he said Ralph uh, this is this is uh, John McNally. You know me. It's Johnny blood. And so of course, I was delighted that he called, called so soon. And then he said I'm. I'm parked in front of the newspaper office, but it's all locked up because it's Sunday. How do I get to your house from here? So. So then when I I asked him sometime later we we got to know one another and I said Sean why why did you? You know, I know other people who wanted to write your biography. Why did you pick me? And he said, well, there



are two reasons. First, you're from Green Bay. So I didn't have to tell you about Green Bay and the Packer history and so forth. And 2nd, I'm a big Moby Dick fan, and I wanted to visit the Whaling museum. And you gave me an excuse to do that.

Ron Fortier

Wow. Serendipity with purpose. That's that's interesting. How many other books have you published and other other sports figures? Have you been, you know, 0?

Ralph Hickok

Well, my my most of my books have been reference works, there's. My first one was who was who in American sports, which is kind of 1500 obituaries or thereabouts. And then I did the new Encyclopedia of Sports for McGraw Hill and a big fat book called The Encyclopedia of North American. Sports history for facts on file and who's who in sports champions, which was Houghton Mifflin. And the Pro Football fans companion. And then most recently I I can't really call my fellow self an an author. I guess really a compiler. I put together a bibliography of of, I think, just about every book ever written about American football. Wow.

Ron Fortier

And you did that. The old fashioned way. Before the Internet.

Ralph Hickok

Ohh no no, this is very recent this.

Ron Fortier

OK, but that was very real, OK.

Ralph Hickok

Is this this? Is this is published earlier this year?

Ron Fortier

OK, alright. So you're still you're. Still at it. Oh yeah.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

OK, alright, that's excellent. That's excellent. Have you ever heard of and this is just for? My curiosity, gunner Mcgonigal. No. That's a great name, but.

Ralph Hickok

OK.

Ron Fortier

No. Supposedly the Fall River Mason who? Invented the catchers Mitt unawares.

Ralph Hickok

Oh, no, no, I don't.

Ron Fortier

Because he used a Mason's knit because they used to throw bricks and they used to, they actually look like and I'm the least sports guy. Mind you, guy, you ever want to meet, but I guess they look like what the old first baseman's glove look like. And because of the smacking of the hardball.



Ralph Hickok

Oh, that's interesting. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

He supposedly developed that and I I was there was one of those book of facts that I read that in and.

Ralph Hickok

No, I've never, never heard. Wow.

Ron Fortier

I I was just sort of curious about that.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, I I got to write that down. I might have to add it to a future edition.

Ron Fortier

Beside the newspaper, you were also a part of the of SCA correct the southeastern advertising.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, that's right. I I left the standard times April of 1973 and became chief copywriter at at the Southeastern Advertising Agency and.

Ron Fortier

How long was was that for now?

Ralph Hickok

It was just short of 1/4 century actually. I was there for like 2024 1/2 years I.

Ron Fortier

Think so? You were there through the whole transition of of Milton. Oh my God. He was like my uncle and I'm blanking out of his. Last name. Ohh.

Ralph Hickok

Oh, George. George. George. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

My God, it's like that's horrible. Cause I remember the two people in town. I never wanted to really. I was always interested in advertising but really wanted to be a painter and a painting instructor. But when I found out I couldn't do it, I backtracked a little bit and I always thought I always wanted to have an office like like Milt George or a an office like Billy Cabral, who was in the middle of what is now the Webster. Bank building was the First National Bank there. He was the promotions guy. Yeah. And it just seemed like it was such a fun kind of a job to have, you know, all these trinkets in the office and stuff.

Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah.

Ron Fortier

But you were there when he transitioned over to the the travel and tourism industry.



Ralph Hickok

Yeah, pretty much, yeah. When when I started, SEA was in the Vera building, and that was a whole bunch of little offices in the second floor.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, that was one of my dad's accounts as well. That's I. Think that's how he met Milt?

Ralph Hickok

Yeah. OK. And I think Milt started there with just his office and then an office for Ruth Shackell.

Ron Fortier

Who remember with the?

Ralph Hickok

Who be started as the secretary and became a vice president and then office for John Kerrigan, who became art director and events. Actually, I think I think we had like 7 or 8 little offices in there. Steve Cook, Steve cook.

Ron Fortier

Of course.

Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah, sure. And so so Steve.

Ron Fortier

OK, quick was the layout. The layout guy was oh. Yeah. Yeah, OK, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

So it's kind of weird because you, I mean, to get to, if I wanted to see Milt, you know I'd, I'd get walk out of my office and walk down the hallway and walk into his office. It was like going to see a lawyer or something. Yeah. And then soon afterward, in September of 73. We we SA bought the building at the corner of 6th St. and Union and moved in there. Yes, right, right.

Ron Fortier

The Old Dartmouth club. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

And so we moved and when we first moved in there, there was a dance studio on the third floor and shortly after schools let out, we could hear the the young dancers on on our ceiling. It was kind of funny, but they we soon took over the third floor. I don't think we needed the space we just wanted. To get rid of. Damping feet.

Ron Fortier

Exactly. Exactly. Let's let's go into that, that Fazio life for the advertising. What were some of the biggest accounts that you you had handled the biggest campaigns?

Ralph Hickok

Well, we did quite a range. We did a lot of travel tourism that was through what was then known as the Bristol County Development Council. And we also did some high tech stuff for isotron mics, for example, was one of our big clients and that's a, you know, very specialized. Technical kind of thing. So it was really quite a range that we did, I isotronics. Makes packages for hybrid micro circuits, which is, you know, pretty esoteric kind of stuff. And but we did, through the Bristol County Development Council, we did the whaling museum and Battleship Cove.



Those were the we did that.

Ron Fortier

Right. So what's up with your invention? Right. Right.

Ralph Hickok

We were asked to do a project for the the Nations Bicentennial, and that was it, but we actually did it in 1975 to kind of get it going. Yeah, that was.

Ron Fortier

Now you also did. The New Bedford Fisherman brings out the best.

Ralph Hickok

In seafood? Yeah, right. We worked with Clem.

Ron Fortier

Daily come daily. Now there's a story. My dad. Well, you you know my daddy. Was he? He ran Rollins. Clean sweep, janitorial service. So I go downtown and for me, it's like, yeah, I've been in that office. I've cleaned that office. I cleaned that office because, you know, my brother Jim and I, you know, we were the.

Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah, right.

Ron Fortier

Free help. And and that's how I got to know Mel, George and Clem Daley was also one of my dad's accounts. And I remember being at the University of. Miami and this woman named Marilyn, another painter, comes bursting into my my studio, screaming. Ron Ron. New Bedford's on fire. I said, what are you talk? Thinking about because you know, we weren't that tuned in with media and she had a television in her studio, which was kind of of of odd. And she says Walter Cronkite said that New Bedford is burning and I said. What? So I went down. To history and I saw, you know, Walter Cronkite reporting on the devastation. So I called my mother using a pay phone because, you know, no cell phones. Who could afford a landline down in Miami? As a student, and she said, what are you all excited about? I said, mom, about the Cronkite is, you know, she lives in Dartmouth. Walter Cronkite said the city's burning. She said no down. If I know, I don't smell any smoke. So I I caught up with my father and he said, oh, yeah, he says that was horrible. He says. I just left Clem Daley's office. He said. And all of a sudden I felt something and I was lifted. He, he said his feet were on the curb.

Ralph Hickok

Ohh wow.

Ron Fortier

His his backside was to the entrance of Clems building. Yeah, he felt his feet leave the curb and felt something push him across the street when all hell just broke. His claim was lucky to to to.

Ralph Hickok

Oh, wow. Yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

He was in the building.



Ralph Hickok

Where? Where was Clem? So I was trying to remember this the other day where his office was.

Ron Fortier

It was on, you know, where the. Tia Maria's in. It was in that neighborhood right there. OK, I believe.

Ralph Hickok

OK.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, I believe.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah. OK. That sounds about right. I I was just thinking about Clement trying to remember where his.

Ron Fortier

It was in that neighborhood. Yeah. And another old timer in advertising and. I'm I was thinking of of, I don't know why I'm thinking, Mcsorley. That's in Greenwich Village. But did you?

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, I met Jackie Gleason there. That's another story.

Ron Fortier

That's another story. But where is the the Cuffy Paul Cuffee memorial? There was an Irish Tavern there. Mcsweeney's.

Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah, actually, yeah.

Ron Fortier

I can't. Yeah. All of a sudden it just flies out of the head. But I worked at Gulf Hill power and on Sundays we would pick up our our product.

Ralph Hickok

Remember the name.

Ron Fortier

They would drop it off there. Yeah. And then I'd have to go in there and pick it up. And that was kind of an interesting thing, you know, 1415 years old, going to this bar with all these grizzly guys there and O'malley's Tavern. O'malley's. Yeah. O'reilly's. Exactly. Yeah. So that was, like, the first place that I thought of. And that place was totally wiped off.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah. Yeah. He came to me. Oh, yeah, yeah. Let's go on. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

The mat it was, it was. Kind of crazy. And you know, I was working on my masters thesis, which was tentatively called Fire and ICE. It was about the 1861 Arctic. Killing expedition disaster where these these vessels were locked in, in ice and then some of them caught fire and and and just it was just all kind of a weird vortex of things that. Were coming together. So high points and low points. So to speak.



Ralph Hickok

Well, I think the Americana Trail was certainly a high point. That was we we won. I say we the the Bristol County Development Council won a lot of national recognition for that because it was a it was a regional thing which was very unusual at that time. Instead of focusing just on their own turf, the Americana Trail actually covered from Mystic, you know which is 2 states away to Plymouth?

Ron Fortier

To the SOB's that grabbed the. Charles W Morgan.

Ralph Hickok

Exactly. And so that was, I don't want to say revolutionary. But it was certainly something that was very rarely done at that time.

Speaker

Right.

Ralph Hickok

And so they won in a some national awards for for the region of their regional approach. That was a big, big thing at the time.

Ron Fortier

Right, you. You were well ahead of the curve on all that stuff.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, I think I think we were.

Ron Fortier

And then also fulfillment, informational request fulfillment, Yankee magazine.

Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah, Yankee magazine. Someone living with another one that I wasn't really part of that that was, you know, that was.

Ron Fortier

The the bingo cars. Yeah. Southern living. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, yeah. He has a burning question. They asked me this months back when I was writing an article about I was trying to find. Of just photographs of my stepfather's fishing boats going back into the. I guess late 40s all the way until some huge North Atlantic storm and 68 broke his back in three places and that was the end of his career. He survived. He was a tough little guy. He died four days short of his 100th birthday last May, but the fisherman on you know, the. Blue and gold, yeah. Who was the model for that?

Ralph Hickok

I have no idea, Clem Daley did that illustration. Yeah, yeah. See, claim. Claim kind of drew on the the resources of SEA a lot. And because he just didn't, you know, he was a one man shop really. So I'm sure that we did a lot of other versions of that sketch for various materials, but but Clem did that original drawing. And the the slogan. Actually, I came up with in, you know, when we we were kind of helping Clem with some of this stuff like I I did a lot of copywriting for Clem because he didn't. I mean he could write copy but sometimes he'd want you.

Ron Fortier

Right.



Ralph Hickok

Something a little fancy or something like I would do it.

Ron Fortier

Right now you guys are also ahead of the curve there too trying to get. The fishermen united which? Could be akin to, you know, herding cats. Back in those days.

Speaker

Yeah, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, it was. We actually. We tried to talk them into a real branding. Program which they just wouldn't go for because it would have been too expensive, but it was the the the Seafood Producers Association actually had a lot of money in a promotional. Fund of some kind. I I don't. I guess they've been putting money away for years, for promotion and never did anything with it. And finally, they decided that they wanted to spend some and they they went to Clem and then Clem came to us to, you know, give them some ancillary help.

Ron Fortier

With it was Stanley Nicholson, too. I think it was. Part of this, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, Stanley Mickelson. And there was a guy named Jimmy. What was his last name? Jimmy. I can't think of his name. But he he was, I think he really kind of spearheaded it. And he had been a he was an interesting guy. He had been a fisherman and, you know, kind of worked his way up to the ranks. Until he became. I think he was in charge of marketing for the Seafood Producers Association. I'm not. His name will come to me eventually, but. But but yeah, they for a while there they became very active, no.

Ron Fortier

See my my my point in time when I have my little agency, I represented the New Bedford Seafood Co-op and with Jerry Wheeler.

Ralph Hickok

OK.

Ron Fortier

There made some strides that couldn't be done when you guys would, you know, with the new seafood producers because the mindset was slightly different. Because I think when you guys were working on that, you had the dragon and versus the scallopers it was.

Ralph Hickok

That stuff going on.

Ron Fortier

A lot of that cultural kind of thing and only focused on on today and and totally short sighted on on on, on the. Future, they just blowing trip by trip back. My hall back, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, exactly. You know, I think people forget that the the scallop industry was really going downhill for a long time because of the overfishing and and they, the fishermen just really refused to acknowledge that that was happening. And finally. You know, they they well under pressure, they finally. Came to realize it and to do



something about it. And you know now scalloping is back in a pretty big way, but there there was a time in the the 70s and early 80s when it was, it was really.

Ron Fortier

In trouble they they just seem to have all running high and then all of a sudden it was. Volume or whatever there was a I think it's a classic tale now. I think it's a scalper out of menemsha. The guy became very greedy or whatever the term you want to use, he added on more shocking houses and he. He the last trip he was so overloaded, he flipped over and I think the majority of the crew was killed and it was basically because of the glut, you know, trying to do that when you arrived in town was the seafood the the scallop festival, a thing yet or OK.

Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah. Ohh yeah yeah. Oh yeah, yeah, it was. In fact, at the Standard Time we put out a A scholar festival edition every year, and that was my baby from. Well, I think from 1965 and I think the scallop festival ended maybe 67 or 68, but we we put out a tabloid in which. About the Scala festival and yeah, that was quite a big thing, but I believe at that time the scallops were actually donated. To to whoever ran the festival, because the the price of scallops was.

Ron Fortier

So low I heard they were \$0.27 a pound and primarily.

Speaker

It wasn't.

Ron Fortier

Bought for cat food.

Speaker

Yeah, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

Let's let's.

Ron Fortier

Could you imagine?

Ralph Hickok

We'll be.

Ron Fortier

That if the other thing that that jumps in my mind to from that same time period was the the Lions pancake breakfast, those were the two big events about those type of things, you know, and that's what the whole purpose of not just these podcasts, the, the, the, the, the whole overarching you know, the umbrella of the artists index is.

Ralph Hickok

Oh, yeah, yeah, I forgot that. Yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

To get these memories down and and make these connections because these are these are things that when we



go they go with us and things remain alive or remain. Important, as long as there's someone there to recall them, you know, and a lot of employers, for example, get rid of older workers not understanding the value of institutional memory.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, right. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, right. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

And that institutional memory is, is is super super important Now what was probably one of your your your most favorite projects or or or books or whatever that that that you've worked on in all these years?

Ralph Hickok

Well, the experience with Johnny Blood was Johnny Blood. McNally was certainly certainly stands.

Ron Fortier

Seen the character.

Ralph Hickok

And he we spent a period of, I think about five years he would come to New Bedford and he'd stay at the skipper typically. And we'd, you know, I'd interview him after hours and we'd chat and and we went on a couple of Rd. trips, which were pretty funny. We we went to the the we went to the 10th anniversary of the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton. OH, he's a charter member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. So we went there so I could interview some people, including Red Grange and George Halas, you know, and one of the people I had to interview was Art Rooney, the owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers. So when when we got there, we found out that art Rooney was going to be in town only for a very short time, he was going to fly in on Saturday. For the the induction ceremony. And then he was going to go. Back to Pittsburgh. So so I said that John, you know I I don't know. I'm not going to have time to interview Rooney. And and he said, well, there's a reception for members of the Hall of Fame. You can interview him there. So we went to this reception on Saturday afternoon and we get to the door and there's a big sign that says Hall of Fame members, only green badges only. And I'm wearing a yellow badge, a media badge and. So the security guy puts a hand in my shoulders. I try to go in and he says I'm sorry, Sir, you you can't go in there. It's green badges only. So Johnny blood turns around to the guy and he says you won't let my son come in. With me. And the guy says, look, he says, well, Mr. McNally, I'm sorry, but, you know, I have orders. And he said, well, if my son can't come in with me, I'm not going. Do you want to tell George Hallis and Red Grange and Ernie Nevers that the reason Johnny Blood isn't here is because you wouldn't let his son in? So the guy said, well, all right, you go ahead. So. So I went in and I interviewed art Rooney. And as the thing was breaking up, the Commissioner of the National Football League, Pete Rozelle, came in the back door and to say thank you for coming and so forth. Johnny Blood nudged me and he said you and Pete Russell are the only guys in here. Aren't wearing green badges.

Ron Fortier

The the, the, the IT it helps to have friends in. High places. Right. He seemed like a character.

Ralph Hickok

He was a character.

Ron Fortier

And he was back in the day where? It was like hockey before helmets.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, they he played for a team called the Duluth Eskimos in 1926. They played 29 football games in in less than



four months and these they played. Every they played one home game to start the season. Every other game was on the road. They went from Duluth, MN to New York City to Florida to California, and they would they would take two showers after a game one shower with their uniforms on to wash the uniforms. And then they they beat the water uniforms and get into cabs to go to the train station to go to the next stop and.

Ron Fortier

So is there a such thing As for the love? Of the game, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

I'd say a lot. Most of those guys probably did play for the love of the game. In those days. I mean when when Johnny blood scientist, first contract he he got \$75 a game and that meant that if you were hurt and couldn't play, you didn't get your 75 bucks. It's.

Ron Fortier

No, it would pretty good money back in.

Ralph Hickok

The day it wasn't bad. Yeah, wasn't.

Ron Fortier

Bad when most people would make 75 a month maybe.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, of course it was. You know, it was short. It was like 3 months. You got that so. But they would the Duluth Eskimos, once once played five games in eight days in an 8 day period. You know? So it was crazy and they were on the road in between. But when another this is a typical giant, he was, he was known for imbibing alcohol, and when Curly Lambeau, who was the owner coach of the Green Bay Packers, wanted to sign him because he was a Wisconsin boy. So he he had a meeting with John. This was in 1929, and Lambo said I'll I'll pay you \$110 a game if you promise not to drink after Wednesday. And John said make it \$100 a game and let me drink on Wednesday. So Lambo just laughed and he said OK, I'll give you \$110 a game and you can. Drink on Wednesday. So wow.

Ron Fortier

It it that kind of character I mean? Where did that come from? Is it was that the America, the you know, the Great American myth, the the men of Steel, the all that?

Ralph Hickok

Stuff I I don't know. John was a.

Ron Fortier

And where did blood come from? That's the other one. Well, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

He he had an interesting college career. He went to know after he went to a little school, St. John's College in Minnesota. And then he that's where he first played football. He never played football in high school. And he wanted to find out how good he was, so he decided to go to Notre Dame. St. John's was just a two year college at the. Time. So he went to Notre Dame, thinking that he'd play football there, and he ended up getting thrown out a Notre Dame for a Saint Patrick's Day incident that involved tipping over a street. So he still had some college eligibility left and he he went back to Minneapolis and he decided to try out for a semi Pro Football team there, which probably paid you like 5 bucks a game or something like that. But he didn't want to lose his eligibility. So he



had to assume a name. His name was John Victor McNally. Junior was his real name. So he and a friend, Guy John, had a motorcycle. This was 1924. He and his friend got on a motorcycle to go to the tryouts and they went by a movie theater. Where Rudolph Valentino was starring in blood and sand, and so John saw the Marquis and he said that's it. I'll be blood and you'll be sand. And he played under that name for 15 years. The National Football League, Johnny.

Ron Fortier

Blood. Johnny blood. You know, one of our old neighbors. #36. Jet stream Smith.

Ralph Hickok

Ohh yeah.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, of the Chicago Bears. Was that of the fabled. I mean, he was like 10 * 11 times all.

Ralph Hickok

America. Yeah, he yeah. Jet is still, you know, he's he's still a neighbor we.

Ron Fortier

I mean, yeah, it's. And and by the way, Ralph and and I lived on the same street, so that was an interesting neighborhood. You didn't you didn't know who you going to bump into there.

Ralph Hickok

Ohh yeah yeah. Jack came here to play for the New Bedford sweepers, of course, which I think was 19656465.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, and even in his 80s, he still, until he had that incident, he was still maintaining his physique, playing racquetball, pretty amazing.

Ralph Hickok

Course he worked at probate court for. Many, many years. Yeah. You know, security guy.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, it was. Also, when you got called that he you know if he was on on shift, he was like well I. Know him. So yeah, right. Yeah. It's funny if you asked Johnny if he had to do it all over again. Did you ask him that question? If he had to do it all over again, would.

Ralph Hickok

He have done it the same or differently. No, I I don't think I ever asked him that. I'm sure he. Would have he he was a. He was very much his own person. You know very much a free spirit, but he. He he said he did say once that he something to the effect that he thought if if you had to, if you had to work to make a living, you should do something that you really like doing and that he. He he spent a lot of time trying to find what it was and then finally he realized it was football.

Ron Fortier

What? What did he do when he?

Ralph Hickok

Retired he he did. He worked as a traveling salesman for a feed company where his father had work. And he actually had he came from a fairly well to do family and he actually had an annuity and. He spent some time,



frankly, just loafing after. After World War Two, he served in World War 2, and then he. He spent a year on Guam just reading books and and thinking about things you know. And he he was a very bright guy, exceptionally bright and very well read. And big reader.

Ron Fortier

So he was one of those larger than life characters.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, he really was.

Ron Fortier

Other than sports books and and advertising, Ralph, what? What? What else have you dabbled in, in writing?

Ralph Hickok

Well, I did write a book about Fairhaven, which was because of milk. George Milk started something called the Fair Haven. Heritage Foundation, I think, which was in the Congregational Church over there. It's it's sort of like a fair haven hall. Of fame. And so he asked me if I could write a book to raise money for it, about some of the people who are. Who were in the Fair Haven Hall of.

Ron Fortier

Fame, was it? I don't. I didn't know that. The the name of the book that was his.

Ralph Hickok

No, that. Yeah, that was his. Jack Radcliffe actually put that together. Yeah, I know. This is called Fairhaven. A lens on history. And I kind of resisted doing it because.

Ron Fortier

OK. Jack, right quick, OK.

Ralph Hickok

You know, I just saw, you know, writing a whole bunch of biographies just, you know, but then I finally, I said to, you know, I think there's a way I can organize it. So that I can tie these people into U.S. history and world history. And so that's what I tried to do in the book. So there are chapters about industry and one chapter about artists in fact. And you know, which includes William Bradford.

Ron Fortier

In fact, we were just standing at his memorial, you know, at the end of. Middle St. as it takes that that that curve and and it's amazing the amount of history in in that small town alone.

Ralph Hickok

I kind of knew that early, I guess because when I worked at the Standard Time. De facto publisher lived in Fairhaven, **** early, who was the. The executive editor, that one.

Ron Fortier

That name I remember.

Ralph Hickok

And **** lived in Fairhaven and Earl Dyas who?

Ron Fortier

Earl J. Dyes.



Ralph Hickok

Yeah, Earl, you know, wrote his look at the arts column. He and I became quite friendly. Earl, in fact, took me on a tour of Fairhaven and which ended with a tour of Fair Haven High School. And he, he told me a lot about it. I think we probably spent 2-3 hours. You know, he just drove me around various points and, you know, told me about the history and. So so I I kind of got absorbed in the history of the area and. In Fair Haven, you.

Ron Fortier

Know. Yeah. It's Milton and I were plotting and planning to do something called New Bedford Firsts. We were speaking with Gus less steady. They both.

Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah.

Ron Fortier

Departed and the amount of firsts that occurred in the city just categorically was unbelievable. Just the American flag. First, the first city to fly the American flag in front of a public school building. The first flag to be flown on an on a vessel on a merchant vessel. The first flag to be illuminated well with Mr. Theodore. He was my neighbor when I was. A kid in.

Ralph Hickok

Dartmouth. Oh, yeah, I know Joe. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

So just that category alone and there was so many other categories, it was, it was amazing, but then that was milk. I mean that was his true love. He really was.

Speaker

Ohh yeah.

Ralph Hickok

Very much. Now one you mentioned the book. I didn't know that when he he was putting out a new edition he and Jack and and one I suggested to milk and he kind of rejected it or anyway it never got incorporated in the book but the the man who founded Alcoholics Anonymous.

Ron Fortier

As Bill Wilson.

Ralph Hickok

Got his first drink at the Grinnell mansion.

Ron Fortier

Those girls could party. I heard that even in the days of blackouts and stuff that that mansion on County St. was ablaze with.

Ralph Hickok

Light. Ohh, I believe that.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's a I remember I read Bill W and it was. Yeah, it's. Just so I mean and then at the same time you've got all this? That's going on. And you've got Roberts parliamentary rules of law, so.



Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah, that's a classic.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. Yeah. And and that's, you know, the the city for so many years. You know, in Museum de Fundum, you know, by the we seek we seek by the light, we spread the light, we spread the light, but they kept the bushel over that light for a long time. For some reason there was this thing. They lost this verve. They lost that that thing that, that, that the city had that was made it.

Ralph Hickok

We spread, yeah.

Ron Fortier

So unique from so many other cities, you know, and Fairhaven let's, you know, was one of well, New Bedford and Fairhaven were both the children of Dartmouth, you know, larger and but.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, right. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

So what else have you done?

Ralph Hickok

Well, I have a lot of children and grandchildren, which.

Ron Fortier

Well, that's.

Ralph Hickok

Important. Yeah, they are. They will be seeing some of them on Thursday, Thanksgiving.

Ron Fortier

That's that's. Yeah, that's good. That's good. Now you you had posted something on Facebook about, you know, we're getting down to the end of this to to, to wrap this up shortly. But about your your family heritage to Hickox coming over on what they one of the passengers as they referred to.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, my my sister. I actually I will this to my sister, Beth. My my younger sister unfortunately passed away this year.

Ron Fortier

Ohh so sorry.

Ralph Hickok

But she did a a tremendous amount of genealogical research and and yeah, the the first Hickok came over from Stratford and Avon in 19 and 19 at 1635. And the name in those days, of course, orthography wasn't fake. Shakespeare himself spelled his name in several different ways, but the the name at the time was Hickox. It was like HICOCES or something like that, and he was one of the founders of Farmington. An Ellicott. And it it struck me recently that I I have kind of brought my family back to its ancestral roots because. You know, at at some point about 18 somewhere in the 1850s. My family had gone from Connecticut to Vermont. My branch of the family



has gone from Connecticut to Vermont to upstate New York to Wisconsin. And I came back and now my oldest son, Evan, lives in Pittsfield. And a short distance from there is a Granville MA which has a whole bunch of Hickok Graves dating back to the like the 18th century, and my second son Daniel is in Springfield and that's. I think about 25 miles north of Farmington, CT, where the original William Hickox.

Ron Fortier

So do you do you get any? Are you related to Wild Bill?

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, very distant. William Hickox had two sons and we're we're descended from one of his sons. And while Bill has descended from the other son. So, yeah. So we diverged, you know, very early, but.

Ron Fortier

It's like once removed there. Yeah, yeah, at at the, you know, at the end of all of this, I always ask this of the painters, the artists. When it's all said and done and it's time to cross the threshold, what would you like to be best remembered for? What would you? How would you like to be remembered?

Ralph Hickok

Oh boy, that's a tough question. I I think honestly, I'd, I'd like to be. I have amazing children, really. And I think I'd like to be remembered as their father most of all. And and I I have marvelous grandchildren as well and. I think that's kind of my my pride in in the world, right?

Ron Fortier

Now to live to live on through.

Ralph Hickok

Them. Yes, exactly.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, anything left undone left unsaid. You know the bucket list, whatever.

Ralph Hickok

Well, I'm still writing. In fact, I just, I just started writing. A book called Growing Up in. Green Bay, which is. UM. Going to be about my child. My, my father worked for the Packers, for the Green Bay Packers. He worked for the newspaper, but I really grew up with the Packers. I went to all their home games. I was in the press box. I met, you know, players and coaches and Green Bay. It's really unique place, especially when I grew up because. The the players were so close to the community, you know, it's not like in New York. You live in Manhattan and you never see anybody who plays for the Giants or live in Boston, but in Green Bay, you just you ran into these people, you know, they were. It was a small town. It was 50,000 people and. So it was really a different time and you know really unique place to be at that at that time. And so I'm. I'm kind of trying to write about that. I've just, I've written the first three sentences.

Ron Fortier

Maybe they still get of all the newborns little pack of hats, or is that just for special occasions?

Ralph Hickok

No, I think I think some people do. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, they didn't have that stuff when I was a kid.

Ron Fortier

The the the contrast between there and here, what would you say those those are?



Ralph Hickok

Well, it's the Midwest. In general, my experience of it, you know, having lived, I've lived in Wisconsin and Ohio, I, but people I think are outwardly much more friendly there. You know, there. I remember going there one time I I returned periodically. To visit family and one time I'm. And I was. I was staying at my mother's house and I just went out for a walk and I ran into the mailman and the and the at the corner. And the mailman stopped. And he said, oh, you must be Millie Hickok, son. You know. And I mean, he chatted with me for 1520 minutes and never met him before and and.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

But that's kind of superficial, you know, that's surface stuff that.

Ron Fortier

No, it's it. It's. It's funny cause you know, my wife is from Detroit, so therefore she speaks much better than I.

Ralph Hickok

OK.

Ron Fortier

And her mom was an English teacher on top of. All of that. And so she, you know, she noticed right away the speech or the lack of good speech here, and it is also culturally. In these other places, people look you in the eye. Here they have a tendency of of of not making eye contact.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah. Yeah, I think maybe that's. True, there's any kind of.

Ron Fortier

Weird thing of all the changes that you have seen in the city of New Bedford since 1963. You know well from your arrival you've seen the highs and lows in some cases, some of the highs would be. Were formerly lows, but they were lower. But you know, cause we we we love to disparage as much as we love, to praise the city. What? What do you think is some of the best, the the best changes that ever.

Ralph Hickok

Happened. I think a really big thing was getting you mass Dartmouth and I say that because I know that. Many, many students who went there were the first people in their family ever to go to college, and I think for many of them they they wouldn't have gone to college if that school had not been there. And and I think BC is also a very big thing, those two institutions. Are really remarkable. I think I I have a daughter. Who got married quite young and had three kids and. Decided she wanted to go to college. At I think she was 35 or 36 and she was able to go to BCC raising three kids. Working full time went to BC for two years, transferred to Bridgewater State. Got her degree there. And I mean, it's incredible that she could do that, you know, I mean, a lot of it is her, her perseverance and her will. But. But BCC made it really possible for her to do. She couldn't have done it. Without BC.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, student population is very much like that. I taught there for 17 years our history and a third of the the class generally were people that fit your daughters profile. They were the Reid doers recover, reclaim, you know, whatever the reward was the for their lives and you know, restart, you know.



Ralph Hickok

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. Then you had the ones who there was no other place to go. And they appreciated that they had this place. And then then of course, unfortunately there was always that third where they had to be somewhere because mom and dad had to say, well, they go to BC, it's better than not going anywhere. And you could tell through the demographics that the caliber student was was. Was unbelievable and their grades ranged exactly in that that order from from from those of your daughter silk down.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, I believe that. Yeah. My, my. Yeah, the, the, the daughter whom I speak. Colette. Said she she was appalled at that. These kids didn't have a lot of, didn't have study habits like they. You know, she said she worked so hard, she she, by the way, she had a 4.0 average there. She was qualified to be the valedictorian and. And she was just amazed that she saw these younger kids who just weren't working as hard as they could, you know?

Ron Fortier

I had a an adult student come up to me after a class. And she had witnessed one of the students giving me an excuse for why he didn't turn in his paper, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. She waited till everybody left and she came up to me and she said, look. We're adults, you and I. Who's the one that gets in their assignment all on time. You. In fact, you're always the first one. Yes. And three children 4 if you include my husband. OK. And I work 40 hours a week and and I managed to do it. And what's that little slot problem?

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, exactly. Yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. After she told me that all of a sudden it was like, you know, OK, no holds barred. She's absolutely correct, you know, because they they, they would try to give you those big doe eyes and everything.

Ralph Hickok

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

Like that. And it was it's. It was a. You're right, the education. But on the same and the same. The same token if you look at the alum from the smti SMU days that were in textile engineering, they all have southern addresses and it's not because they moved there to hire, they were exported out there.

Ralph Hickok

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Ohh yeah.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, to. To fuel the competing textile industry, which eventually led to the demise of industry.

Speaker

Yeah. So.

Ralph Hickok

Oh yeah, no question, yeah.



Ron Fortier

It's sort of, it's sort of crazy. It's sort of crazy, Ralph. Final question before we we sign off here. Of all the artists that you're aware of here in the city that you've had experience with in the meeting or. Or their work. You know whether alive or dead. Is there one that that that jumps to mind?

Ralph Hickok

Well, one that comes to mind currently is Allison Wells with her her gallery downtown. I I kind of met Alison by accident, and I was. I've always been very impressed with her work and I don't have a lot of money. If I told her one time, if I had unlimited wall space and an unlimited amount of money, I'd buy everything and create my own gallery for work. So she's the one who, really.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

Strikes me there was one years ago when I was at the standard times. There's a guy named Joe Alexander who was a young artist who who was just kind of starting out and he.

Ron Fortier

OK.

Ralph Hickok

He did a a show somewhere. I can't remember where the show was, and it was the sort of thing that Earl Dyas would normally have covered, but as it turned out, I I went to the show and I gave him a nice review and. And every time I saw him after that, he would thank. Me for that. And I mean, I'm. I'm talking years later I'd run into 25 years later and he'd say, you know, that review that you did of of my work was so wonderful. You.

Ron Fortier

Know do you know? His work is still around. There's there's Richard. Connor has his work and he'd love to speak.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, I know it. Yeah, in. With you? Yeah. I I did talk to him at some point. He was showing his work down at that space downtown.

Ron Fortier

Ohh did you? Yeah, which became one of the several restaurants that pass through there. He also has a a space now on Hatch Street, so he's now.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, right. Oh OK. I wasn't aware of that.

Ron Fortier

Doing he's representing 3 estates, which brings to to to the forefront of a whole nother crisis that we're. Undergoing is that you have these dead artists who are leaving behind these works. They were all functioning, profitable artists to varying degrees, some of them full time artists. And I mean full time because that was their only source of.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, right.



Ron Fortier

Income and now they pass and left behind these trailer loads of work and their families don't know. What to do? Man. Well, yeah. So I'm trying to get Richard on on the show and and discuss that I already had written an article on him on. For article magazine.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah. See, I I really, I can't say I followed Joe Alexander, but I when I did see that the work that I was amazed at how at the different phases he went through, I mean he was like 7-7 different artists in a lifetime, you know, he.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. Didn't he have his studio in the Bristol Building on the second floor?

Ralph Hickok

That could well be and and.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, I know there were a couple of those back then. In fact, you know, at some point in time, I don't know if you remember Francisco Rapoza or Louis, Louis, Sylvia or any of those. We'll we'll have to have you come in. Cause I tell everyone this is not a one.

Speaker

Ohh yeah yeah yeah.

Ron Fortier

Done, because there's just too much information to squeeze in the 45 minutes to an hour and then as we as we start to converse, then we start there are there are key points that I start noticing and it's always too late like. Right now. So I'll have to have you come back and talk about those guys because that. Is one of the the driving forces is to. Resurrect these people.

Ralph Hickok

Now one I did a feature story about was Walter Owens ohh his caricatures you know.

Ron Fortier

I've worked with him. Yeah, I worked with him because. Ray Basselin was my boss for a short while and they were great friends and I think Walter was a Superintendent of Arts at one point, and Ray also was. I don't.

Ralph Hickok

Oh, OK.

Ron Fortier

Know if.

Ralph Hickok

I I think Walter was in a Kushner maybe or.

Ron Fortier

Who came in first? He he was at the high school, I think for a while. Yeah, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

Or he was teaching OK. Yeah, he had. I remember. And he I think he had an exhibit like at the old YWCA. And I



think that's I I saw the exhibit and interviewed him.

Ron Fortier

I tell you, there's a lot of a lot of stuff that we're looking for and and this is going to be the final portion. I remember Joe Thomas from spinner publications telling me. And I I fondly remember Moe and Margie from the morgue of the standard times. That's what they call the library, where all the clippings were. His heart sank head and have the storage space, nor the money to afford it when he saw. That whole mortgage dumped into a dumpster and so many Sylvia's photographs and all kinds of. Things like that.

Ralph Hickok

Yeah, now.

Ron Fortier

Is there an archive of your work? That's what I was leading.

Ralph Hickok

To it. Not really. I have some clippings, you know. So I think it would be on microfilm. Really. Now, Janet Davidian rescued a lot of stuff.

Ron Fortier

OK.

Ralph Hickok

Janet was a librarian who had become city clerk. I think it.

Ron Fortier

Yes, I remember. Her actually, I think her name is. On somebody's birth certificate I remember seeing, yeah.

Ralph Hickok

OK, yes. And she went and I have wondered about that recently about what happened to the stuff that she rescued. I have no idea where it went, but yeah, that was unbelievable. And that more was. It was so well organized, and, I mean everything was there.

Ron Fortier

And then you know, if Margie and Moe would tell you a dependent on your political leanings, how much was in there and what. Was in there. Ohh Ralph, thank you so much. Ralph Hickock, thank you so much for dropping by. This is Ron Fortier, your host of the In Focus Podcast, brought to you by the artist Index.

Ralph Hickok

Hello. Thank you.

Ron Fortier

Com till the next time. See you. Bye.