

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW by Nadia Masi

Questions	Interviewee
Date of Interview	September 29 th , 2022
Name of Interviewee	Antonio Masi
1. What age group/generation are you in?	Baby boomer
2. What first brought you to Canada?	<p>His uncle had sponsored him and his family to immigrate to Canada, just like he made a promise to Antonio's father after he sponsored Antonio's uncle in Switzerland years prior.</p> <p>Came for a "better life", as there was hard labour in Italy where "everything was done by hand", the farm animals tha the had to take care of, was especially a lot for his mother since his father was always away for work.</p> <p>Emigrated 1967, ended up in Red Lake near Ontario-Manitoba border. Father worked at the mine in Red Lake until age 55.</p>
3. Were you already acquainted with anyone in Canada before you arrived?	<p>Not himself as a child, but his uncle and some cousins were already there, he used to get letters from Canada from them; lived in a tar-paper shack with uncle's family (six children at the time) until they could afford to rent a place for themselves.</p> <p>They couldn't speak English, difficult.</p> <p>His mother took care of the family despite the language barriers, had no financial hand-out from government, if one couldn't find a job then was cared for by a sponsor.</p>
Follow-up: What did your siblings and parents do for work when they came to Canada?	<p>Eldest Sister: dry cleaners</p> <p>Mother: bakery</p> <p>Father: mine, Campbell Red Lake Gold Mines</p> <p>"No glamorous jobs", but everyone was able to find jobs right away.</p> <p>Thankful for God for the move to Canada and the life that ensued.</p>
4. How did you get to Canada?	Took an eight-day ride on the boat, the Olympia from the Greek Line, from Naples to Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia (noticed the

	lights of Gibraltar), then took a two-and-a-half-day train ride and 100-mile drive from cousin to Red Lake in Northern Ontario. He got sick on the boat, experienced a shower for the first time. The journey was an adventure for him as a kid but tough for parents, but they knew life would be better in Canada (not so dependent on the weather to ensure enough food and income like in Italy).
Follow-up: What were the names of your family members?	Father, Vito; mother, Maria Giovanna; older sister, Vincenza; eldest sister, Maria; younger brother, Gerardo who was only 1.5 years old.
5. From which part of Italy did you come?	The south, region of Basilicata, in the Apennines, ancient name of the region/town was Lucania, at the “ankle bone” location on the boot-shaped map of Italy. Agrarian lifestyle, difficult depending on the year, and one of the poorest regions in Italy, lack of jobs available.
6. What do you remember of your first impression of Canada?	The ship and Halifax appeared huge to him; tried white, sliced bread that tasted like “cake” from the train when they stopped in Montreal [journeying from Halifax to Red Lake] as mother always made home-made food. The cold, snow, ice of Canada in Red Lake, March 27 th , 1967; the initial lack of sewer for toilets in Red Lake, only outhouse, “sparce” housing. He learned how to make the same home-made, “nutritious” food from life in Italy.
Follow-up: What was Red Lake, the Canadian town that you settled in, like? Were there other European or Italian immigrants that you encountered?	Yes, Polish, Germans, Hungarian, Ukrainians, Greek, Yugoslavian, other Italians, “town of immigrants”, everyone shared their cultures with each other, everyone was proud to be Canadian and liked the Canadian way of life but maintained their own cultures. Somewhat difficult because some physical altercations and teasing between nationalities; got name-called like “Tony-bologna” and he could not speak the language, he fought back sometimes because he was a “proud Italian”.
7. Did you bring any items of importance with you when you came to Canada?	Yes, tools like hoes, scythe, his father maintained a garden in Canada; kitchen tools like the pasta-cutting tool the “paletta”, a strainer, grater; everyone in the family helped make sauce, wine, other foods. Food was homemade.

<p>8. Did you exchange letters with relatives in Italy?</p>	<p>Not Antonio because as a kid, he did not keep in contact with friends back in Italy since it was a permanent move, but his father did because he could write, made occasional calls (was expensive) or sent telegrams, were simple “catchups”.</p>
<p>Follow-up: Would you allow for these letters, to be transcribed, studied, and made available to the wider community? Would you be willing to allow the photographs, family heirlooms, and other mementos to be studied and made available to the wider community? Would you be willing to share some of the photographs with us?</p>	<p>Yes, Antonio thinks it’s important to learn how people lived back then, he is trying to share heritage with family, his descendants know the Italian language and try to keep up with the heritage, his daughter is learning Italian.</p>
<p>9. Where would you consider “home” and why?</p>	<p>Canada is “home”, “allegiance” to Canada; will never forget Italian heritage, loves to visit Italy but would not live there again; cheers for both Canada and Italy in sports, the “World Cup”. Cost \$15 to become a Canadian citizen at age 20-21, been in Canada for over 55 years.</p>
<p>10. Looking back at this experience, is there anything you would have done differently?</p>	<p>No, “did what you had to do” to adapt to a brand-new environment (language, education, friends, etc. for oneself and to help the family). He was the first one in his family to graduate high school and get a college diploma, felt proud of his accomplishment and felt like he “honoured” his parents since they could not go to school. Considers university for his children to be honourable.</p>
<p>Follow-up: What were some of the jobs you had growing up in Canada?</p>	<p>Paperboy, construction, milk boy, furniture delivery boy, at the mine with his father as a teenager (shared the commute; liked job but not as a career); got Electronic Engineering Technician certificate but electronics progressed so quickly so later he got into and stayed in financial services as an adult (has been in this field for 35 years) and has his own business in the field with his eldest daughter.</p>
<p>11. Is there anything further you would like to add to this story?</p>	<p>No, he is simply grateful for his life and family (wife, children) in Canada.</p>