

Transcription of Interview or Summary of Interviews

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

Questions	Interviewee 1		
Date of Interview	September 30, 2022		
Name of Interviewee (use initials if the person wants to remain anonymous; only person conducting interview knows the person's identity)	Michelle Alfano		
1. What age group/ generation are you in?	Preferred not to include in interview.		
2. Were you born in Canada or abroad?	No, I was born, I was born here. My mother came to Canada my parents came to Canada in the 50s .		
3. did your parents and grandparents in any generation immigrate to Canada?	So my my mother came in 1952 my father came in 1956. And uh they were among the first of their families to come. So their families came in the, I want to say the early 60s so the rest of the my mother's extended family like her siblings came and my father's one sibling came over and his mother came over in the 60s. So they were like among the first people to come here from their families.		

<p>4. Did they face any obstacles with the immigration or in Canada once they came here that especially stuck out?</p>	<p>Well I think they were really lucky. Part of the reason they came here I came to Hamilton specifically which is where I'm from is because there was already a network of families and relations that were here so when they came I'm pretty sure that the people the family and the relations that they had here help them get jobs um and they also like my mother stayed in the the uh House of like it was like I think a family friend she came with her two siblings so they had a combination set up and they probably got assistance with with getting with getting work. But also there was already a really tight Community like in Hamilton there are uh literally thousands of people that came from my mother's Village that were that are in Hamilton like hundreds and hundreds of of people from their particular Village. So I mean I can't speak for my mother I'm sure that there were problems but I know that because they had this network it was a lot easier for them for sure.</p>		

<p>5. When they came here did they bring anything important with them?</p>	<p>Well didn't have a lot of money. They probably brought things like um you know photos um kind of jewelry that you inherit when you reach certain milestones. like religious milestones, like when you're baptized usually gets kind of a gold medallion. Um yeah I mean things that were valuable. I I you know they didn't really have a lot you know they didn't have a lot of money. I wouldn't characterize them as poor but I mean they had just like a very simple lifestyle. So I think they brought kind of a minimum of of stuff with them for sure yeah.</p>		
<p>6. How do you identify it with the cultural background and Heritage?</p>	<p>Well I see myself as a Canadian of Italian descent. Um if I went to Italy they would not consider me Italian. Uh in fact unless this has changed I remember them kind of referring to Canadians as a "Americani." Like they don't even distinguish between Canadians and Americans. And they really they they don't really, with my limited interaction with My Relations back home are, they really don't consider you to be Italian because most of us don't speak the language as well. Well I don't speak the language as well as I could. Um and we're very you know it it we're just, I I do ident I do identify definitely as an Italian Canadian but I know that I am very distinctly different from people in Italy. I just I just think we have like a different mindset, a completely different mindset.</p>		

<p>7. Are there any Traditions that you still follow that have been brought back from Italy?</p>	<p>Yeah we um so Italians are very family oriented. I am very family oriented. I see my extended family at least once a month usually more because they're mostly in Hamilton. They still do um when my father was alive this was a very long time ago but he would he would make wine in the backyard. My, he would make tomato sauce and now my brother has retained that tradition. He still he still makes tomato sauce every two years or so. Um we uh you know not so much me because I'm not religious but my cousins my brother and my cousins they still you know they're still observant Italians, um still observant Catholics, so they baptized their kids they have communions they have confirmations they celebrate that. Um for myself I you know I've tried to retain the language I'm not very good but I've retained some of the language and um the cooking obviously I'm very interested. But I think the most important aspect is just kind of this sense of family and obligation to each other which I think is very strong yeah.</p>		
<p>8. Did you grow up speaking a language or dialect other than English or French at home?</p>	<p>Yes, until I went to kindergarten I spoke Italian. Kindergarten I spoke Italian and for a long time um while I was living at home I was only supposed to speak Italian. "Wow" (Kiya). Um but I mean as I got older that became more difficult to maintain yeah.</p>		

<p>9. Do you wish you tried to keep it up more?</p>	<p>I do but I mean it's hard. Like my brother and sister who live in Hamilton with my mother because they have almost daily contact with her their Italian is much much better. And my brother Works in an environment where a lot of Italian is spoken so their their language skills are really strong. But I left home when I was 19 and it's the kind of thing if you don't keep it up like if you don't speak it every day. It's very difficult to attain so I wish that I was a better um had better language skills but they're they're not great they're just like very basic like ordering in a restaurant kind of yeah.</p>		

<p>10. Did you grow up or live in an ethnic community of your own Heritage or of a different heritage?</p>	<p>Yeah for sure when I was the not so much in my neighbourhood in my neighbourhood it was a working class neighbourhood and there weren't that many Italians around. But when, nor in my grade school, but when I went to high school, because it was a Catholic High School, I had I was surrounded like we were probably the majority they were probably more Italian Canadian kids than there were of any other ethnic group. Like we were mostly Southern European some Anglo but like a huge concentration of Italian Canadians. Yeah tons of us yeah. "That's nice and I feel like it would be like more homey in that sense" (Kiya). Yeah you know what it was and I think you don't really realize that until then I came to Toronto and I went to school and then all of a sudden you're uh it's kind of like you're the different one, you know. I wasn't I wasn't accustomed to that. I was accustomed to being like surrounded by people that understood my culture and our parents have the same background. But then when I went to University I was more isolated and I knew very very many fewer uh Italian Canadians. And then I had to kind of like make a conscious effort to kind of immerse myself in the Italian Community. Like mostly through literary activities. Then I got to know people that were of a similar background.</p>		
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<p>11. Did you or your family ever exchange letters with any relatives that were left in Italy or did everybody all immigrate by the end of the 60s?</p>	<p>Um I'm sure that my mother did but, I I don't have that kind of relationship with my relations. And I don't have that kind of um connection with my Italian relatives. And now it's much more difficult right everything is like I mean in terms of like there's no Legacy of letter writing. It's all about you know like you're zooming or you're texting each other or you're you know connecting on Facebook or something like that. So I think that that's kind of a lost art you know it's I don't know I don't know anybody that does that.</p>		
<p>12. Where would you consider home?</p>	<p>I've been here 40 years so it this I this is my home now you know. Like I I don't I have lots of family in Hamilton but, I most of my close relationships are in Toronto. My you know your uncle's family the the Fujimoto's I'm very close to them. They're here so I consider Toronto to be my home yeah for sure yeah.</p>		
<p>13. is there anything further you would like to add to this story?</p>	<p>I just you know I'm just uh very pleased that you have an interest in this. Like I'm very excited by that and I I I just I just love when people are interested in Italian culture and they want to they want to experience it and they love the food and the language and the history. And I just I'd love to share that with people so I'm really glad that you asked me to do that. I really well thank you it makes me feel really good that you wanted to do that I appreciate it.</p>		

