

NAME OF PROJECT: *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII*

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NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Felicia Battigalli

NAME OF INTERVIEWER: Joyce Pillarella

NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER: Adriana Rinaldi

TRANSCRIBED BY: Krystle Copeland

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PROJECT NOTE:

Please note that all interviews have been transcribed verbatim. The language in this transcript is as it was provided by the transcriptionist noted above. The project staff have not edited this transcript for errors.

ABSTRACT

Felicia Battigalli was born in 1912 in Montreal. Both of her parents were from Italy; however they met and were married here. Growing up, Felicia had one brother and one sister—who died at the age of 22 from meningitis. As a youth, Felicia attended dances at *il fascio* as well as local processions in the community. She took her first job at Imperial Tobacco and enjoyed this position more than teaching, which she thought would be her career originally. Felicia met her future husband, Annibale Battigalli as a pupil in his classroom at the Institute of Italian Culture and later became his secretary. She recounts his popularity with the local young women as a bachelor, and is still surprised that she was lucky enough to become his fiancé before the war started. They were an engaged couple when Battigalli was arrested at the Institute; two officers came into the office and told Felicia that he “would be back in a few days.” The RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) returned to the office the next day and confiscated all the papers, documents, and alcohol there. Felicia refused to let the police take her typewriter since it belonged to her. Annibale did not return and was taken to the internment camp at Petawawa,

from where he sent Felicia letters and cards. The Battigallis were married in 1943 after Annibale returned home. He then found it difficult to find work as an Italian Canadian, but secured a job at a firm as a chemist. Annibale passed away at the age of 79, however Felicia is happy to have the company of their two daughters, Lydia and Anita.

INTERVIEW

FB: Felicia Battigalli, interviewee

AB: Anita Battigalli, daughter of interviewee

JP: Joyce Pillarella, interviewer

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:10]

JP: K, today is June 20, uh, June 21, 2011. My name is Joyce Pillarella and I'm interviewing Felicia Delasago Battigalli.

FB: Right.

JP: I said it right?

FB: That's very good.

JP: [Laughs] Okay, we're off to a good start. Felicia, do you want to tell me, what year were you born?

FB: I was born in Montreal, on Aylmer Street.

JP: When?

FB: Nineteen-twelve.

JP: Nineteen-twelve. Wow.

FB: Yes, 1912.

AB: [Whispers] Tell her.

JP: And, uh, what month?

FB: Month, first of September.

JP: Okay, and you were born in Montreal?

FB: Uh, yes. I was born in Montreal. And my parents were married in Montreal.

JP: And tell me, where did your parents come from in Italy?

FB: Oh, Casacalenda.

JP: Okay, and so—

FB: Campobasso. Something like that. Yes.

JP: And they met here?

FB: They met here and they got married here.

JP: What church, do you remember?

FB: Well, I think it's the nearest church is Mont Carmel, I think it is. That's the nearest church because the other one is in, uh, on Dante Street, that's Mile End. Instead they got married on, uh, Mont Carmel, I think it's called.

JP: What was it like there at that time, uh, the Amherst, uh, the—

FB: Well, there was quite a few Italians there. There was, ah—like, as you said, where my grandmother lived. And then at the end there, there was Camblon[?], it was a rest—not a restaurant, a grocery store selling coffee and everything, you know and that. And then...what else there was? Well, um...it was quite crowded there...uh, a few Italians. And then my, uh, godmother lived on Aylmer Street too. My godmother. Her name was Fracchio[?].

JP: And did, did the neighbourhood feel Italian? Where you grew up there?

FB: Well, no because I must have been small when I went to Ville-Émard because I don't remember anything then. I just remember Irwin Street, Ville-Émard.

JP: Because your parents moved then from Amherst—

FB: From Amherst, they moved to Irwin.

JP: Okay, E[?] Street in Ville-Émard.

FB: And that's where we stayed in Ville-Émard. And then I was about six or seven when we moved on [Jacques] Hertel Street.

JP: Okay.

FB: That's when we moved then when I went to school there.

JP: Where did you go to school?

FB: On the Boulevard Monk.

JP: Was it a French school or an English School?

FB: No, we had to start with French. Start with French and then on my third grade we started with English. They built an English school. On, uh, I think it's called, uh, Ru—um, Springland or something. No, not on Springland, it was—oh heck.

JP: Holy Cross?

FB: No, Holy Cross that's where I was—Holy Cross I went when I was, uh, in my teens there. No, first I went on the Boulevard. We started with, uh, as you say, with French. And then they built a school on the side, there, street. I don't know what it was called. Raudot? And then we went to Holy Cross, after...we went to Holy Cross. When I went to Holy Cross I was, oh, in my teens. And we went to Holy Cross Church. And, uh, there I—it was English there. English, eh? English.

And then from there, I had to go, uh, on, uh, Church Avenue [long pause], where I graduated.
Church Avenue and Angell Street. Church and Angell.

JP: That's right.

FB: That's where I graduated. Where the nuns, the congregation of Notre Dame. Was my nun,
was Mother St. Thomas.

JP: So you went all the way to high school? You finished your high school?

FB: Oh yeah, I finished there, my high school there. Yes.

JP: So, what made your father move from Amherst to Ville-Émard? Was it work or...

FB: Well, because there was a *paesan* there, maybe Piperni[?] lived there, you see. Piperni[?]
lived at the end of the street. Eh? And I think it was him because Mrs. Piperni she was at
Delazzero[?] I think. And they said there must have been some kind of relationship...between
the, the women, you know. Because they said she was a Delazzero[?], Mrs., uh, Nucci
Piperni[?], her name was. They lived at the end of the street. We lived like on Irwin and they
lived right in front of the building you know, Domtar[?]?

JP: Yeah, and Irwin was, uh, right at the edge of, uh, Ville-Émard.

FB: Yeah, but then—

JP: [Unclear]

FB: —but cr—you cross the—there was the only house on Piperni[?]. The only house. And you know? And I think—I don't know if they have any more buildings there, but he was the only house there.

JP: And where did your dad work?

[00:05:35]

FB: My dad?

JP: You went—yeah, when, when you were living on Irwin Street? Uh—

FB: LaSalle, I think, that's why he moved there I think. I don't know. I think it must have been that.

JP: You—LaSalle Coke—

FB: LaSalle Coke, yes.

JP: —where they were manufacturing coke. That was a very difficult job.

FB: Mm hmm. And he lived—and yes, he lived there. And his boss was M[?]. M[?] was his boss, an Italian boss. And then what else?

JP: And then, so tell me about Hertel Street. What was it like? What were your friends—

FB: Well Hertel Street was only Piperni[?], she was like at the end, I told you, on the other side of Allard. Like this was Allard and there was this house here, the only house, Piperni[?].

JP: And then when you moved to Hertel, you were on Hertel near Jolicoeur?

FB: Yes, near Jolicoeur.

JP: So tell me what that area was like?

FB: Oh, that was all Italians. Oh, there there was next to us was, uh, [Giovanni] Zeppieri, Pellegrini. And then in front there—on the side—no, starting there there was Londe[?]. Then, um, on this side there was, what was the name there...

JP: Did you have family on that street? Were there, was there other—

FB: Delazzero[?], that was my cousin too. There was my other cousin, Louisa. There was Fiorini. Oh! There was a lot of them on Hertel Street. All Italians, there was quite a few Italians. Pellegrini. She lived like downstairs with Zeppieri. And Martellani[?] sometimes moved upstairs. And then what else do I know? [Talking in background] My cousin lived on Hertel Street. Fiori lived on Hertel Street. Oh I can tell you—Lande[?], on Hertel Street. Um, Paolozzi[?] on Hertel Street [says while beginning to laugh]. What else can I name?

JP: Your memory is excellent of that str—that whole—

FB: There were so many! [Laughs] And Cicchini[?]. The one who had the, uh, restaurant lived on Hertel Street with his mother.

JP: Do you remember the De Lallo[s?], also?

FB: De Lallo[s?], yes.

JP: Di Giovanni.

FB: Giovanni. Oh, well Di Giovanni, yes. They lived on Hertel. That's the one who had four or five daughters. I knew the first one, I knew Lucia [says Lucia with emphasis]. She was, uh, uh, going with us you know. I think she worked a little bit in the Imperial. I think so. Lucia. The other's Loretta, she married Attilio[s?]. Then what else do I know?

JP: And when you were there—so this, uh, uh, by this time you were what, about nine, 10 years old? More or less?

FB: Oh yeah, about th—

JP: You were doing grade school and high school?

FB: Oh well, nine or 10, I must have going to French school at the beginning.

JP: You were still at French...

FB: [Unclear]

JP: Where did you—[laughing in the background] sorry?

FB: First we started from Hertel Street, I started with the French...on, uh, Boulevard Monk. That was—and I was bap—not baptized at—my first communion was at that church there, Notre-Dame-du-Perpétuel-Secours.

JP: Oh, on Monk. Yes.

FB: On Monk.

JP: Yeah.

FB: That's the one I made my first communion. And then what else can I tell you?

JP: And where did you play with your friends?

FB: Oh, well with my cousins and with the English there.

JP: Oh.

FB: There were a few English. We played and—

JP: With the French too?

FB: Oh, the French...yeah, sometimes we had, there was some French. One family was French. We played sometimes, you know. That time we were about six or seven years old, you know, we were young...when I lived on Hertel Street. And there were some French too. They—and another thing happened this French...party that used to come on Hertel Street, she didn't like Italians. And 20 years after I met her somewhere and I said, "Are you the one who lived on such

a street?" She said, "Yes." And she didn't like Italians, you know. What happened? She married an Italian! I said, "You didn't like Italians and you married an Italian!?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Oh, *c'est bon mari.*" She says, "*C'est bon mari.*" And she was against the French. Are you taping all that?

JP: [Pause] Yes.

[Fades out at 00:10:07]

[Fades in at 00:10:08]

JP: [Long pause] Okay, um, tell me about your, uh, family. Felicia, did you have brothers and sisters?

FB: Yes. I had, uh, one brother and one sister. And my sister passed away when she was 22 years old. She was ready—she was engaged, she was gonna get married and she died, she had meningitis. It was that year of—she was only 22. Yeah, she had meningitis. She wa—and I slept with her and everything and, uh, I was afraid when I got married, I was afraid that I would have passed on. Because I slept with her then, you know, old fashioned. I had to sleep with her, you know, we had a double bed. We didn't have single beds like they do now. They have single beds. So I was afraid that one of my daughters would get it. Thank God until now, she's, she's okay now. The other one is okay.

JP: And what about your brother?

FB: Oh, my brother was okay. He lived till he was 79, eh?

AB: Nicola.

FB: Seventy-nine he lived, my brother. He worked too. He worked at Murray's Restaurants. Yes, it was right in front of Simpsons store. He worked there for a long time. He was—he started making coffee, then he was promoted and he li—he worked there...a long time he worked there.

JP: Your memories of when you were uh, a young girl, up to 18 years old, were they good memories at that time?

FB: Well...

JP: Were they, um...

FB: Schooling. It was lots of schooling. My father, my father wanted my brother to go to school a lot, you know, but he didn't like school. And my father says, "I'd sell the house if you want to go to school...and college," because you know a boy, he has to. But he didn't want—he didn't like to study. He—I had to, to sign [laughs] the thing there saying that he had studied. [Laughs] "You sign," he said to me. "You sign for me." So I had to sign that he had studied. He didn't like school. No.

JP: Did you participate in, um, were there any activities in, uh, the neighbourhood for the Italians because there was no Italian church at the time?

FB: Well, uh—

JB: Or were they just—

FB: Well they started—

JP: —people coming together?

FB: —well when my husband came, then he was a professor they started Italian, uh, evening lessons. You know. I think it was once a week then. Well, I used to go to Saint-Jean-de-Matha. And my cousin went on Hamilton because on Hamilton it was French-Italian and my husband was English and Italian. Italian-English. Whatever you call it.

JP: But at this point, when the Italian lessons started in Ville-Émard, it was before you had met him as your husband? He was just a teacher in Ville-Émard, is that right?

FB: He was a teacher.

JP: He was just a teacher there. You hadn't met him. He wasn't your husband at this point?

FB: Oh, no!

JP: We'll talk about that after—

FB: It—a long time after he was my husband!

JP: Okay, okay.

FB: Oh no! It was, uh, first of all he, um, how would you say? He organized the Institute of Italian Culture, here with the Consulate.

JP: Okay.

FB: Called [Giuseppe] Brigidi. The Consulate then was Brigidi. And this Brigidi was a young Con—uh, Consul. And he tried to organize the Italians, you know, together, and my husband organized insti—

JP: Annibale Battigalli.

FB: —yeah, the Institute of Italian Culture. And those there were for English and Italian. And one of the gir—and one of the tea—uh, I mean, pupils was Mrs. Jensen[?]. She was the wife—I think, he was the uh, I don't know...one college I don't know if it was—I know, wait he was, uh, the principal. And she wanted to learn Italian. Because she went to Italy...every year.

JP: So you—so your husband Annibale...Batttigalli, he showed up in Ville-Émard as a teacher?

FB: Oh, but that was in later years.

JP: [Unclear] until later. Like in the 30s?

FB: Oh, dear! Oh in my later years because I was working, I remember I was working.

JP: So tell me about what happened when—what was your first job, so we can go into that period? What was your first job that you had Felicia?

FB: Well my first job was at the Imperial.

JP: And what did you do? Where—tell me about that job.

FB: That job? I told you, it was uh, in premium department.

[00:14:59]

JP: Okay, and—

FB: And, uh, as I say I started on the counter, you know, counting cards like everybody. And then they promoted me. They made me head of the, uh, department. That's how—I was in charge of all the stock. Stockings and pens and pencils and umbrellas, cameras, everything. I was in charge. At McGill College. And at the corner there was Woolworth there, and we used to go and have lunch there. You know. And the girls were nice to us because we were steady customers, you know.

JP: And this premium department, were premium gifts that the cigarette companies would include? Ri-right?

FB: What happened is that the government—that's why they cl—well then the Imp—there's no more Sweet Capital cigarettes now either. But it happened they stopped because the government wanted the Imperial to pay taxes on the gifts they were given. So they stopped. And then there's no more Sweet Capitals now. And then they had the hockey contest, the Imperial had. We had to go, uh, on Craig Avenue. Well there we stayed on a couple of years there. And then I finished with that. [Unclear]

JP: What did you want to become after school?

FB: Uh, well I was gonna be a teacher, as I said, but then...I had a nice job. Which my job, I didn't like, um, how would you say? Teaching. Because you know what happened? When I was on uh,

Holy Cross School, every time there was some teacher sick, the Principal, Mr. Shaw, was the Principal, he'd put me in charge. He says, uh, "Phyllis." "Ms."—well he says, "Ms. Battigalli. Go and teach, you know, there." So that made me—I said, "No, I'm not gonna be teacher no more." It was too hard.

JP: So you decided to stay—

FB: You know every time there was a teacher sick, he'd call me. You know? Because I didn't have to do maybe the lessons, you know. His name was Mr. Shaw, the Principal.

AB: [Whispers] Ask her how she was a secretary [unclear].

FB: Yeah. And my teacher was Miss. M[?]

JP: So at this point you're, uh, you're a young woman in her early 20s. That would put you into the—we're talking 1930s. And you were working for the premium department of Imperial Tobacco, downtown. Um, they were very happy with your work because—

FB: Oh, yes, yes, we were very well treated. You know what they had? We had, uh, the staff and then they had hired a lady, a little short lady upstairs to make our tea at 10 o'clock. And if we wanted soup, she'd open our soup [starts laughing while talking] and she'd get our soups ready. And we had that. Oh, it was a nice job! I said, "Is this what they call work!?" I liked it.

JP: [Laughs]

FB: Oh, I liked it because I went home, I didn't have to, you know, to say, "Well, oh dear, the principal is coming tomorrow. We better be careful we have to go through all our studies." Instead I finished at five and I was finished.

JP: That was it. So—

FB: I had to do just my balance, you know, like so many, uh, packages of cigarettes, you know, a day. It was just like a store, but me it was, uh, the package of the cigarettes and the stock I had.

JP: Right.

FB: Like stockings, pens, uh, umbrellas, cameras and what else? Cards for one. And three for a pen. Four for a camera. Five for an umbrella. Twenty-five for a wrist watch. So—and Christmas, you know, at Christmas we were jammed! We were just like, as if we were gonna have a big sale. That's when I was—they took me for just for two months they said, it was just for two months. So then they kept two girls. So I was lucky they kept me. I was just lucky.

JP: That time period, uh, at this point you're 18, 19, 20, in your early 20s. Um, did you do any social activities in Ville-Émard with any—

FB: Well social—

JP: —of the clubs that were there—

FB: Well they started, uh, an Italian society. And then I don't know what happened. They made me, uh—even to go to Ottawa and everything and then it didn't turn out, I don't know what happened. They were going to make like an Italian society, something like, like they have in

Mile End, *la Società Casacalendese*, you know, they had that. My, my mother's cousin was, uh, the President there. Mr. Tozzi. Pietro Tozzi was the President there. But I don't know what happened it didn't, it didn't come out.

[00:20:07]

JP: Did you ever go to the Sala Mazzini that was—

FB: Mazzini? No, we went to the other one.

JP: Why?

FB: Mazzini, no. Well, there was a wedding there.

JP: Tell me about [unclear] Mazzini.

FB: There was a wedding, my cousin Felicia got married there. I went there there, but I mean only when there was weddings. But if there were dances I'd never go there. Because it was— what's his name? Uh, [Antonino] Spada.

JP: And when—

FB: He was in charge. Spada was in charge of Sala Mazzini.

JP: And what did they call the Italians that went to the, uh, that were—

FB: Uh, well they didn't say much you know. They just say Spada. You know they, uh, they didn't quarrel. They didn't do, uh—you know Spada was Spada. And the other one, you know, it was *il fascio*. [Says with emphasis on *fascio*]

JP: And that was, ah—tell me about the, the, um, the, the *fascio* clubhouse? It was the Casa D'Italia—

FB: Well, the—

JP: What did, what did it look like? Um, what—

FB: Well, they done sometimes some dances. They had dances. We went. I remember. And, you know, we had our—well there were no fights, nothing. I mean, you know, they kept us okay.

JP: What did it look like inside? Was it a hall, was there a kitchen, were there chairs, tables? What, what did—when you walked in what did you see?

FB: Well, it was just a hall then. And then they had—it was on Springland at the corner of, um...

JP: [Knocking noise] Was this the microphone? [Asks someone else in the room]

FB: It was at the corner of, um, Springland and Hertel. It was just at the corner there. I don't know if it's still there.

JP: It's still there.

FB: Well there. That was our hall, called *il fascio*.

JP: And who, who used to go there?

FB: Well, my cousins and all the young people that—oh, Mariano[?], oh, uh, oh dear, my cousins. Uh, Bruna. Oh, all, nearly...all the young people [unclear].

JP: And did they have, um, even the, the clubs for the little kids and...

FB: They had, well they had for kids they had, uh, schooling for kids. You know. But they were for small ones, eh? Little ones. I remember there was even a parade once they had. The little kids were in the parade.

JP: Were they dressed in, uh—

FB: No.

JP: —the uniforms or...

FB: No, I don't remember. I don't think so. No, I don't think they did. I think the, uh, the older ones did. I think they were. And the girl was [unclear]. She was even when they made a profession—uh, procession, uh, St. Antonio. Well she was in with *il fascio* where the little girls, you know. It was cute that.

JP: Um—

FB: But nobody bothered us, *il fascio* or Spada. No, they...

JP: Were the, uh, the people who weren't fascist, what were they referred, ah, to? How were they called?

FB: Oh, well they were called—nobody called us *fascio*. Nobody.

JP: No, but I mean like if you had the—

FB: Like Zeppieri was *fascista*. They called him *fascista*. And, uh, your granddaddy there, uh, there because he used to have his blackshirts, you know. And he used to be proud of himself, you know. Cro—I remember crossing the streets, you know, with his blackshirt there, he was short. But I mean, you know, it's—everybody minded—there was no quarrel, nothing. I mean you didn't know there was uh, how do you say, a different...

JP: That there was a difference. You didn't feel it as a young person?

FB: No, you didn't. No. No.

JP: And did they have any processions?

FB: Even like before they made Mazzini, they, uh, Spada, he asked all the Italians if they wanted to give money, to make Mazzini their own, you know. But, uh, they came to my daddy and I said to my daddy I said, "Don't you give any money." I said, "Because you know, if they don't pay, you'll have to pay some of it." So he didn't, I don't think he did. [Laughs] I don't know if he did.
[Unclear]

JP: Was your father a member of the club on the Casa D'Italia? The *fascio* club?

FB: Oh, well the *fascio* club, I don't know who belonged. I mean, as I say, we didn't know what went through.

JP: Because yeah your perspective as a young girl was a place—

FB: Yeah.

JP: —you went for dances.

FB: [Unclear] Well, dancing I don't think there was any. [Pause] I don't remember any *fascio* dancing there. I remember weddings they had there. Weddings—but I mean Spada, uh, he might have had his crowd, but I don't remember any.

JP: And did—at home when you grew up, did you—or whether at home or even in the neighbourhood, were, were the Italians very present? Because like you were saying to me, you saw my grandfather crossing the street with his blackshirt and it wasn't a parade day, it was just—

FB: Oh, but they just—

JP: —a casual—

FB: They—

JP: So were they quite present?

FB: They—

JP: Were the men walking around in blackshirts, casually?

FB: Oh, oh! No, they didn't bother. No, I don't remember anything like that. Nothing!

[00:25:33]

JP: No, but I mean would you see them casually walking down the street in a blackshirt?

FB: Oh sure we saw him. He used to cross there and he was proud, you know, across the street there. And we'd say, you know, [unclear]. No, nobody said anything. They didn't, uh, how you say, criticize him or anything. No! It was just part of himself there, just walk across there. Oh yeah.

JP: And what about the processions. Do you remember the band of [Emanuele] Cosentino?

FB: [Long pause] N—

JP: Or the band of [Dieni] Gentile or the band of Cosentino? Like—

AB: Gentile.

JP: —uh, coming to Ville-Émard, playing with the processions?

FB: I thought it was Gentile.

AB: Yeah.

JP: Yeah, but before that it was Cosentino.

FB: Oh, I don't—

JP: But it was also Genti—you remember the band of Gentile then?

FB: I remember Gentile. I remember him. He used to come to Ville-Émard. But Cosentino maybe came before, uh, you know, a long time before. But uh, me, I remember Gentile from Mile End. He had a Casa D'Italia in Mile End. That was *la Casa D'Italia* over there. Us, we called it *il fascio* here. Just it was not, uh, I mean it was just a temporary thing.

JP: And what were the processions like?

FB: Oh they were nice. We all looked forward. I remember my daddy, when he heard about it he went to buy a flag and an Italian flag. And it was such a long flag, it was from upstairs to down almost. A big flag! Oh, because the procession passed on our street. And he invited my godmother. That's the one who lived on Aylmer Street. My godmother. Her name was Antoinette Fraracchio[?]. And anyway, she came, she was on the balcony watching the procession, they came on our street. So my father with this big flag. Oh my God. My mother says, "Where the heck did you get that!?" [Laughs] It was a big one! You know, it came way down, almost people could almost touch it! Well he put it like upstairs, eh? Oh dear. Well, that was—we lived upstairs then. On Hertel Street. And then we went downstairs after. Oh well.

JP: The, the Italians were quite present, they didn't have, you, you would—

FB: Oh, they were all nice the Italians—

JP: But they were present in the neighbourhood, like you had even a bakery I believe, right? You had, um...

FB: Oh, we had a bakery.

JP: Roma Bakery?

FB: Yes. Yeah. And then we had [Nicholas] Cicchini's store. Well if you go to Cicchini's there, you go there you see all the ladies talking about what they saw and oh the news, Felicetta[?] is going to get married, oh! And, and what's his name there, uh, the barber wanted to come and serenade me, and they knew everything and I didn't tell nobody! Everybody knew I was gonna get married. And oh, all that. Oh, I mean it was nice, it was like a little—how do you say? Com—you know they go to Cicchini that was there, the ladies used to get—well there was no TV, eh? There was no TV, nothing. So naturally they went there, you find out and who had the best stories. Was who had the best.

JP: And [long pause] your husband...Annibale, at this point, he was, he was a teacher right?

FB: Yes, he was teaching.

JP: Before you met him? He was teaching—uh, tell me about where he taught—

FB: Oh, well that is a long story!

JP: —where he lived?

FB: Because, well, what he taught—well first of all he, at the Institute of Italian Culture [someone speaks in the background], that was like for the older people, eh? For the English to learn. Well, I didn't go to that one. It's when he started in Ville-Émard. Well—and I went to that one, Saint-Jean-de-Matha. And my cousin went on Hamilton there was the, the name was a different teacher, was Di Bernardo. Yeah. And my husband was English. And the other one too. Was French and Italian.

JP: When did, uh, when did he arrive from Italy?

FB: Oh! [Makes gasping sound] Oh, that is a story! Well, you see that, that thing there, it's, um...

AB: [Unclear]

FB: Uh, what year is it marked there? 1934? So he must have been here—

AB: Thirty-five.

FB: —two years before at least. The, the thermometer there. See, that—

JP: So—

FB: —is from the pupils that he taught, in, uh—

AB: Thirty-five.

FB: —Institute of Italian Culture.

JP: The Institute of Italian Culture was downtown?

FB: Down—oh yes.

JP: Right.

FB: That was older—that's for older people. [Unclear]

JP: He arrived here in the 30s?

FB: Me, oh [unclear] in the 30s, oh I don't—

JP: No, I'm asking did he, he—because you said that was, uh, given to him a few years—

FB: I didn't go to the one, uh—

JP: No, but when did he arrive from Italy, in, uh...

FB: Oh, well dear—

JP: More or less in the 1930s?

FB: At least.

JP: Nineteen-twenties?

FB: Oh must be, 1930s maybe.

AB: [Unclear]

[00:30:46]

FB: Because you see I didn't know him until he well...

AB: When you were living on Hertel.

FB: ...till about, oh...

AB: They needed a secretary.

FB: Thirty—

JP: So, um, so he came here from Italy, he was teaching at *L'Istituto...*

[Whispering in background]

FB: Institute of Italian Culture.

JP: The Institute of Italian Culture downtown.

FB: Downtown—

JP: And then he started teaching—

FB: The Consulate.

JP: —Italian and English—

FB: The Italian Consulate was Brigidi.

JP: Okay, so the Institute was part of the group with the Italian Consulate.

FB: Yeah, cons—yeah, that's right. Yeah. He had like the uh, professor—like my husband was for English and Italian. And Di Bernardo was French and Italian.

JP: And then they also placed him in—

FB: And they got a—oh yeah, they got a trip. The best pupil got a trip to Italy.

JP: What was the—what did the pupil win?

FB: A trip to Italy.

JP: Trip to Italy. And it was all expenses paid?

FB: [Long pause] If there was a—

JP: They, they had all the expenses paid by the Italian government?

FB: Well, I think so.

JP: Yeah.

FB: I think so. I think so.

JP: [Clears throat] And these were for students that were in the Italian schools, right?

FB: In the—even in Ville-Émard, what's his name won? I think Fiorini won a trip to Italy in Ville-Émard. And I don't know who else? Fa—Fiorini, I know one of them.

JP: And, um—

FB: That was Brigidi who organized all this. He was a young, uh, Consulate. And he was the best one, you know. He organized all the Italians. You know, tried to make, ah—I mean it was very good. And then, ah—

JP: What was good about Brigidi? Because he organized it, but, um, was he successful in your eyes in terms of bringing people together—

FB: Oh, yes—

JP: —bringing the community together?

FB: —he was successful until the war came. Naturally. Sure, he was successful. He's the one who organ—um, I mean he made my husband organize this Institute of Italian Culture. I mean he's the one or else who would have? And it was paid by the Consulate. They, uh, they had, uh, a hall on I think it was Bishop. In a big hall and a big apartment downstairs. Well, just near the Consulate.

JP: And—sorry.

FB: In Ville-Émard well they, that they started I think a little bit after. That too organized for the, you know, he's the one too who made do that.

JP: And he was teaching, was it, once, twice a week?

FB: Well it—

AB: [Unclear]

JP: In Ville-Émard?

FB: In Ville-Émard, once a week. Yes, only once a week, not every day. [Woman's voice audible in background] But the other ones, uh, uptown I don't know if it was, uh, I didn't go to that one. Because it was mostly you know, for the English too. Us, it was to learn Italian. Only Italian, eh.

JP: So when he came here, Annibale, I mean he was an educated man. He had an education, he obviously he was able to, uh, to teach. And then how did it come about that you met him?

FB: Oh, that's a long story! I went to school and then, um, I became his secretary when they wanted somebody for the Institute. So I worked there. Here I got all the news, you know, girls were calling him, um, for dates, this and that. Oh! He had girlfriends by the galore. And, uh, I had that. And then—anyway when the war came well... And I had to have all these names there. "Oh Ms. Lemieux called you today. Oh, Bouchard called you today. Somebody called you today." So, he'd be invited out all the time. And in Ville-Émard, in Ville-Émard it was worse. All the ladies who had daughters would invite him! J[?] was one of them. "Oh, Battigalli, *come stai?*" And you know, she'd go and meet him, you know. And, uh—

[00:34:59]

JP: He was sought after.

FB: "Come and see, come and have supper." So I said to him, "What did she give you?" Oh, he said, "A *frittata*." I said, "*Frittata*?" She'd done everything to meet him and then another once was T[?]. And another lady was—they invited him, you know! I mean he was you know...

AB: Free.

FB: He was free, eh? He could do—

JP: He was an eligible man.

FB: —what he wanted.

AB: An eligible bachelor.

FB: Yeah. That's why I don't know how I got him! It was—if it wasn't for the war.

JP: I'm sure you charmed him.

FB: I don't know! [Laughs] Charmed, I don't know—

JP: I'm sure you charmed him!

FB: —if I charmed him! But he had—if I tell you all the women he went out with— sometimes you know, when I'm alone—oh, I hope you're not going to put that down. When I'm alone—

JP: Should I stop?

FB: —I say to myself, I say, "Am I really married to that man?" You know, when I think of all the names I have in my mind! That, you know, so-and-so wants you, so-and-so wants you. So, and so well he was a bachelor then. I, I mean I didn't care! He was a bachelor. And when I told my sister about it, you know, I told my sister, I said, "You know," I said, "I don't know what they find about him." I said, "They all invite him right and left." I said—and do you know what she said? She said, "He might be your husband!" And you know two years after it happened. And when I got married, I was you know with my husband and my sister was in my mind. So my husband said to me, "What were you thinking...when you know." I said, "Well, I was thinking of my sister because she, two years ago she said you would be my husband." [Long pause]

AB: She passed away.

FB: That's a story, you know.

JP: Yeah.

FB: That's a story. And I couldn't think of nothing else but that, you know. I was—you know, so she—and then because I told her, I said, "Gee, he's invited right and left." And so, I had no chance at all.

JP: Wow.

FB: [Laughs]

JP: So—

FB: So, you want to know all the story, I have a lot to tell you! [Laughs]

JP: What, what year did you get married in?

FB: Nineteen...forty-two, is it?

AB: Three.

JP: Oh, your daughter's saying 1943.

FB: Forty-two or 43.

JP: Okay, so you got married after uh, after the war.

FB: Yeah.

JP: After he—

FB: I was engaged before though.

JP: You were. Okay—

FB: Um—

JP: —so, but, so now it's the late 30s and, um, I just want to get a feeling of what was happening in the neighbourhood just prior to the pick up and also what was happening at the office there at the, uh, *L'Istituto*. Um, was there—did you ever— in—we'll do the neighbourhood first and then we'll go to the office and then we'll talk about your husband and the internment. But, um, in the neighbourhood first of all, were there any, um, uh, parades?

FB: My neighbourhood in Ville-Émard—

JP: Yeah, in Ville-Émard.

FB: —you mean?

JP: Were there, uh, any parades of, of, um, men with blackshirts going through the streets—

FB: No, no, there was noth—

JP: —or anything?

FB: No, there was—

JP: There was no, um—

FB: No, dear no, there was noth—

JP: Oh.

FB: Everybody you know, they—well until I was there, everybody was quiet. They—I mean the people went to Spada, people went to, uh, *il fascio*.

JP: Would you have had friends, for example, whose parents were—went to Spada's place and—

FB: Oh, I know Miozzo[?]-

JP: [Unclear]

FB: —I know Miozz[?]-

JP: Would the friends still connect?

FB: Oh Miozzo[?] and that, he went to, uh, the other, to Spada. Some of them went to Spada, yeah I know that.

JP: But, but the children, if you had—did you—were you friends with other girls whose parents may—were not going to dances let's say—

FB: No.

JP: —or were not part of the *fascio*?

FB: No.

JP: They were all pretty much—

FB: [Unclear]

JP: So was the community separated, separated?

FB: No, we—no, we were not.

JP: It wasn't, eh.

FB: No, we were not!

JP: Nobody cared?

FB: No! No! If someone was a *fascio* they came to school. Some they—that they were not even, uh, maybe going to Spada. They came to school. Like Mariano[?], she was not, uh, *il fascio* and she came to night school. Mariano[?], Mariano[?] she lived on Springland. And she was like for Spada. [Noise of truck in the background] And she came to our—

JP: She came to the same Italian school?

FB: Sure. We never, we never, how would you say, um...

AB: Differentiated.

FB: Uh, made a difference, you know, we never did.

JP: And did—but you, were you a student ever of, uh, of, uh, Battigalli, of Annibale?

AB: [Whispers] Yes.

JP: Were you ever a student in Italian school? Before you went to work for him—

AB: [Whispers] Yes.

FB: —as his secretary, were you ever a student?

FB: In the night school.

JP: In the night school.

FB: That's all.

JP: Of your future husband?

AB: [Whispers] Yes.

FB: Oh, I never knew he was gonna be my fut—

JP: No, but you, you, you attended as a student?

FB: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

JP: What did you learn in class, what did he teach?

FB: Well, he taught us how to talk nice in Italian, you know. Like the, the real Italian grammar because me being *Casacalendese* we didn't have their, like their—

AB: Dialect.

FB: —a little dialect, eh. Instead there we learned—and then my next neighbour, Zeppieri they were Romano, eh; they were Romano like my husband. So I wanted to talk nice like them, you know? So, I talked a little bit. I improved my Italian.

[00:40:36]

JP: Did they ever teach in class about, uh, Italy and history and...

FB: Oh yes, sure, sure.

JP: Did they, did they ever use, uh—

FB: Oh yeah.

JP: —the songs like the *Faccetta Nera*?

FB: Oh yeah, *Faccetta nera, bell'abissina* [begins signing song and humming tune]...

JP: And *Giovinezza*?

FB: Uh, we used to sing, yeah.

JP: In class?

FB: Yes, we did. Yes. And nobody, I mean nobody came to break windows or some—nothing, no! They left us and we left the others alone. I mean, it was, I mean I don't remember anything bad around there, no.

JP: And the, the school books that they, they, they gave you in Italian school were they from Italy?

FB: [Pause] Well...

JP: Do you remember that, like did, did they give you books in Italian school?

FB: I don't know—remember if they gave us books. They must have. I mean bec—well it was really conversation.

JP: Okay.

FB: You know, conversation to talk nice, you know. Like, uh, not the broken Italian. Well, like some of them that came they were *Marchigiani*, some were, uh—no, *Marchigiani*, *Albanese*.

AB: *Calabrese*.

FB: We had *Marchigiani*, *Albanese*—

AB: *Calabrese*.

FB: —*Foggiano, Foggiano*. Fiorini was *Foggiano*. Uh, we had all different nationalities, you know. But, uh...

JP: And at the, um, at the Cultural Institute—

FB: Oh well there I didn't go. I want—I would have liked to go there, but I didn't like to because first of all, I would have had to go from Ville-Émard there and then after there they used to go for tea and that, you know and I said oh well.

JP: No, but your [unclear]—you're working there as the secretary. Who, who—would they uh, would you see the Consulate on a regular basis? Who would you see in there as a regular basis?

FB: Oh, uh, you mean in the Consulate?

JP: When you were—no, when you were working at the Institute as a secretary—

FB: Yes.

JP: —what, uh, the, the movement in there, who would come in and out?

FB: Well the peop—the students that, uh, you know, they had to pay. I had a thing, thick like that, and we had, uh, honorary President, it was [unclear]. He was our honorary President. And the ones I saw was the people that came to pay for their, uh—was only five dollars a month I think it was, or 10 dollars a month, something like that. And we had uh, sometimes two girls came once. They were *Des Trois Maisons*[?]. They were French. They came another time, well it was somebody else who took them, you know, sometimes it was uh...

JP: And Consul Brigidi would come—

FB: Oh, he was—

JP: [Unclear]

FB: —he was very nice. He was—I was invited to his house once. Not only me, the head of the things we were invited to his house. Oh! He had a lovely home.

JP: Where did he live?

FB: On, shh [makes sound with mouth], I don't know, it's a small street just near the Consulate. And it was like this. And you went in and it was up and down. I think, I don't know—

JP: The Consulate was what on Stanley or...

FB: No, not Stanley.

AB: Stanley.

FB: It was around there, but it was a street like this. I always want to think the house. It was a house—on a side street. Near Sherbrooke there.

JP: Oh, okay.

FB: I don't remember the house. Maybe if I went there I would rememb—if it's still there!

JP: And what did he, um—so what happened that day? Like you went to the house, he invited people over?

FB: Oh, he invited the people because there were, like the Institute we were forming like the Institute. He invited the professors and the, you know, a few. And we were there and the wife was very nice. It was really nice that. It was our first time. I said, "I wish someday I would have a house like that." Oh, it was nice.

JP: And then, leading up to the-then when did you—you got engaged with your husband before...

FB: Before, yeah.

JP: Before 1940.

FB: We were going to get married that year, but then the war came and...

JP: So what happened, uh, when he was arrested? Do you remember at all?

FB: Oh, well, yeah. They came in the office—

JP: Do you want to tell me that day?

FB: They came in the office. Two men came. And they said, "Come with us." He said, uh, they said to me, "He's gonna come back. We're gonna bring him back." So, they took him and...they seized all the things they had.

[00:45:04]

AB: He was an agent.

FB: Another, another—the next day they seized everything. His wines. He had a big, big thing of wines. The mass wines. And Asti Spumante. The vermouth. It was a big thing and they took that away. Oh awful—

JP: Okay.

FB: —that was.

JP: So—

FB: That was, I hate that, that—

JP: But your—I, I think what we have to just establish first 'cause at that point your husband was, uh, your future husband rather was not only an Italian teacher, he was also an importer?

AB: An agent.

JP: An agent.

AB: Of Martini and Rossi.

JP: Okay, your husband was an—

FB: Agent of Martini and Rossi.

JP: Okay, thank you [unclear]—

FB: He was agent.

JP: He was an agent, uh, of Martini and Rossi.

FB: And he sold mass wines.

AB: And she was the secretary.

JP: Okay. And...you were the secretary for the office, for the distribut—for the, uh, for the agency?

FB: Yes.

JP: And wha—how long, um...before the war—

FB: Oh...

JP: —had your husband been—was it like for a couple of years?

FB: Oh, a couple of years, oh, yeah.

JP: Yeah.

FB: A couple of years before. He was agency.

JP: Oh, we have to just stop one second 'cause there's water on. [Long pause] Okay, we're just gonna stop one second. Anita is there something I had to as—

[Fades out at 00:46:23]

[Fades in at 00:46:25]

JP: Okay, Felicia, do you want to tell me what was it like the first week of June? Leading up to the arrest, like the week before? What was the atmosphere like? What was the mood like? What did you hear, what did you feel?

FB: Well, we felt that something was coming. You know, they felt something was coming, but we were not prepared. I mean, you know, not prepared for what happened. I mean, you know. They came in the office and they seized everything and you know...

JP: And the week before was there any she—like because at this point, uh—

FB: Well it was—

JP: —your husband had the importing company, and they were importing the mass wine. They were importing the, uh, Martini and Rossi. The Sasso oil...uh...

AB: Asti Spumante.

JP: Asti Spumante. You were, you were—

FB: [Unclear]

JP: —working as a secretary for this office. So your, your husband was doing that at the same time—uh, rather your husband to be—at the same time he was also teaching and he was part of the, uh, Italian Cultural Institute. So these are two prominent places to be in?

FB: Well yes, well, ah—

JP: So—

FB: —everything—

JP: —was there, was there, uh—

FB: Well, naturally there was—

JP: —lot of activity? Accelerated activity, like were there more phone calls, did the Consulate come by?

FB: Well, no, no, uh, no there was like how you say, uh, scared, everybody was scared. You know, see what's going to happen? What's going to be—

JP: What were people saying?

FB: Well, they didn't know what was gonna happen, but after...what [loud noise in the background], you know. Then everybody got scared, you know. I mean, the ones especially the

ones who had businesses and the ones uh, you know [sound of truck or bus fades away]. So that's...

JP: Were people throwing away documents, hiding things, burning things?

FB: Well, maybe some of them did. But not everybody. I mean, uh, you know, some of them had nothing to do with it and still they got, uh—

AB: Taken.

FB: —involved in it without knowing what was going to happen to them. Look at [Vincenzo] Poggi. Poggi, I mean, he was, he had a French wife, and she never wanted him to mix with Italians and they went to get him. And that's [Camillo] Vetere again. That's Vetere. Vetere done, uh, he betrayed. They say he betrayed the Italians. Vetere.

JP: Uh, the stories about Camillo Vetere that you're talking about, uh, betraying the Italians, um, how did that come to you? How—

FB: I don't know how it came, uh, somebody I don't know, somebody said some—I don't know if I was somewhere and somebody and we learned that it was Vetere who betrayed all the Italians.

JP: And June 10, 1940. You woke up that morning, can you take me through the day? [Sound of plane overhead] From when you woke up that morning to going to work? [Pause] Okay, on June 10, 1940...that day that you woke up, you got dressed, you went to work. Can you take me through the day? What happened?

FB: Well, what happened, I don't know if it was like the day it happened. Well, I was in the office, two men came and they came to get him.

AB: Did they identify themselves?

FB: And they said, "Oh, he's coming back." They say to me, "Well, he's gonna come back." And then the next day they came and they raided everything. They took—another—one man came and he took everything.

[00:50:05]

JP: The men—

FB: Like the wines and everything. Who was—it must have been the government or something or the Mounties. I don't know. Must—I know the Mounties came to get him! [Long pause] They came to get him.

JP: The men that came in were they dressed in a uniform—

FB: No.

JP: —or plain—

FB: No.

JP: Did they identify themselves?

FB: Oh, well no.

JP: They didn't tell you—

FB: And I don't know if they even went to [Antonio Domenico] Sartori because Sartori was on the same, uh, building and the same floor. I don't know if they went to get him too that day. I know they got him, my husband. And I don't know if they went—

JP: Who was Sartori?

FB: Sartori was at the end of my—our building, Stanley you know—Castle Building the name is, eh? Well, we were 808 or something and he was at the end with, uh, Sartori and Corbo. Corbo, they had the office together.

AB: Travel agency.

JP: They were notaries?

FB: Uh, he—no, Corbo was a notary and Sartori [Anita speaking in background, unclear] was an agency for travel agency. They had the office together. Now, I don't know if they went to get him the same day. I don't know that. I mean we were all upset, you know. We thought they were gonna come back, but he didn't come back. They didn't. No.

JP: When they took away—

FB: And they, they must have gone to his apartm—uh, his room, wherever he lived. He lived on Bishop, so there they must have gone there too. To—I didn't go there. They must have raided

there too. Take what he—no papers and everything that was around. You know, papers and everything. [Anita whispers in the background, unclear] That was the next day that they, they took him the first day, these two men. And they said, "Oh, he's gonna come back," they said. And never saw him.

AB: You were engaged at that time.

FB: That's the worst part.

JP: You were engaged at that time?

FB: Yeah, sure I was gonna get married that year. But then, I don't know, that happened and then well, he came—

JP: What was, um, Annibale's reaction—

FB: Well—

JP: —when the men came, did he—was he calm? Was he upset? Do you remember his—

FB: Well, he just you know, two men to take you. Said, said, "Come with us, we'll just..." I don't know what they said to him, "We'll just talk to you," or something. That was the worst part of the day, the worst part.

AB: 'Cause he was a Canadian citizen.

FB: Like you know, you're—

AB: He was a Canadian Citizen at that point.

JP: He was a Canadian Citizen your father?

AB: Yes.

JP: And, um—

FB: And the next day another man came and he seized everything. He looked at all the papers and he seized everything. Everything there wa—looked at all the papers, you know.

JP: You w—so, that night [coughs] you closed the office? You closed the office?

FB: Well, I just closed the office.

JP: You just waited till...

FB: Yeah. And I went—

JP: ...you didn't come back and—

FB: No, I didn't go back. No.

JP: Were, were you given any instructions—

FB: No.

JP: —of what to do? Did anybody call you from the Consulate Office—

FB: No, no, no, nothing.

JP: —to say what to do?

FB: No, nothing.

JP: So, you went home...

FB: That's all. Went home and stayed—

JP: And who did you tell the story to, did you tell your parents?

FB: Well, I told—well my father. Told my father. [Long pause] Oh, the train.

JP: Yeah. [Sound of train in background] It's okay.

[Fades out at 00:53:31]

[Fades in at 00:53:32]

FB: ...he'd come home maybe in a couple of days or something, but no. They—

JP: Did your—what did your father give you as advice? Did your father know what was going on?

FB: Oh well no, my father, no, we, we told him after. Well—but I suppose everybody knew after, you know. Ze—the took Zeppieri in Ville-Émard. They took quite a few in Ville-Émard. They took Zeppieri was nothing, Zeppieri was, he had [coughs] a grocery store, but he was a *fascio*. He was for *fascio*, you know.

JP: [Coughs]

FB: He had—and then Martellani and then there was Villani, there was, uh, the ones you said there...they were all, uh, they took them.

JP: So the next day you went back to the office?

FB: Oh I, I think, I don't know if I—I think I went, I don't know if I went the next day. I must have gone.

AB: That's when they were seizing everything and you kept on to the—they wanted to take your typewriter. Tell them about your typewriter.

FB: Oh, yeah, I told them that the typewriter was mine.

JP: Oh, when the men came—the RCMP came back?

FB: They were taking—

AB: This is the whole thing and he said, "This is my—that's my typewriter. You're not taking [unclear]."

JP: And they took everything in the office?

FB: [Long pause] No.

AB: Yeah. They took everything in the office, and he said, "That's my typewriter." [Sound of plane overhead] And they said, "Okay."

FB: That was—

JP: They, they—so they grabbed the documents, Anita and they wanted—

AB: Documents and—

JP: —but she didn't let them take—your mother didn't let them take the typewriter?

FB: No.

AB: She said, "That's mine."

JP: It was yours.

FB: So—

JP: And they let you keep it.

FB: I think so. I don't know, did I keep it? I don't know, I think I must have. Oh well, that was the worst day. I don't like to talk about it.

JP: Okay.

FB: It's awful.

[00:55:22]

JP: So did you start learning more information afterwards? Like how did you start in the, in the subsequent days, like did you keep going back to the office and at one—

FB: No, no, I didn't go back. No. No. I didn't go back.

JP: You locked the door and that was it.

FB: That was it. No. We locked because all, all that floor nearly was—like because I see Sartori, Corbo, there was the Consulate, Dr. [Vittorio Vincenzo] Restaldi and us. At the end like, at the end was the Consulate, Dr. Restaldi and ours.

JP: So that whole floor was emptied out?

FB: All—well, there was at least uh, five or six offices closed. All Italians.

JP: And...how did you start learning about what was going on?

FB: Oh, well we got—

[Joyce and Anita both speaking in the background, unclear]

FB: —an, we got a card. Got a card. From him from Petawawa and say he was there and they didn't know what was going to happen. There might some of them, might have been, uh, they were, uh, sent somewhere else. So we didn't know whether from Petawawa or if they would have been transferred somewhere else. We didn't know. Because they said there might be transfers. So, luckily they stayed there and after a couple of months he came out. But yet all the, all the...how you say, was taken. I mean everything...was taken from him.

AB: He lost his company.

FB: You know.

JP: What happened to the company?

AB: Dissipated.

FB: [Long pause] Nothing. Got nothing. They seized everything.

JP: They seized everything.

FB: They seized.

JP: And it had to close.

AB: Yeah.

FB: Close. Sure.

JP: And—

FB: When he came back he didn't get—he wanted to have the agency, but no. Because I mean you cou—you know, it was seven months. Seven. Well, you know with that well, I suppose somebody else got the job. I don't know. Because they didn't know them too, you know, they thought maybe he was gonna be interned maybe for years. You don't know. But he lost that. He lost the agency. Yeah.

JP: All because the suppliers—

FB: And he worked hard for that, he worked hard for that. Because uh, you know, [Anita speaking in background, unclear] he had all the mass wines to the churches. The mass wines. That was a big seller. And the vermouth, and then the Asti Spumante was well known then. And uh, you know everything was [long pause] went off. So that was...so when he came out he had to start all over again and then with the Italian name, couldn't get a job. You know, the war was still on. So...

JP: How did he change? How did his personality change when he—

FB: Oh, well you know I often tell my daughter [Anita speaks in background, unclear], if I had been in his place I would have gone. I would have been really—he went through a lot. A lot. You know, my husband. I don't know how he came through it.

JP: How did he—

FB: Because he worked so hard for everything, to organize things, to, to, uh—with this, uh, agency he worked so hard. He got so many, uh, customers and everything. And then all of a

sudden you come out and you have nothing! He had to start all over again. Nothing was open, at least he could say, well you know, I'll start where I started a little bit there. No, he had to start—and the war was still on. So with an Italian name...

AB: He found a job.

FB: So, he got a job. He even uh, applied for a job to be a principal in Hudson [Anita speaking in background, unclear], and he got the job, but then...uh, he—we even bought a little house there and we were gonna move there. And then when he said, uh, to Burrows, where he, uh, worked, he went to tell them, say, "Well, I'm gonna move, I got a job, you know, as a Principal." Well, they said, "Is it money?" You know, he said, "Well, you know..." So they said, "Well, we'll give you a raise." So they gave him a raise, so he didn't accept the other one because it was a year after year contract. You know, like it was one year. And then being the war, I was scared. I said, you know, "They might take you for a year, and after you might get laid off." Instead with Burrows, look, he's been there 20 years. That's what he got. As, um—

AB: Painting.

JP: Those paintings on the wall?

FB: So he stayed there, and there he was like, uh, in charge of—

AB: Chemistry.

FB: —I think it was in the chemist or something like that he was doing. So he stayed there. So, I mean you know it was a hard time.

[01:00:32]

JP: How did it affect him, when he came out, um—

FB: Oh, when he came out, you know what happened. When he came out, I knew he was gonna come out because, uh, what's his name, uh—they—he came out, this friend of his—

AB: [Regolo] Gagliacco.

FB: —Gagliacco came out and he said to me, "He's gonna come out in a week or so." So anyway, he came out, and I knew he was gonna come out someday. So when he came out, he comes to the house and my brother goes and answers the door. So my brother comes and says to me—and he was white, white—he says to me, "It's for you." I said, "For me?" So I go to the door here, it was, you know, it was my husband. Terrible. [Becomes very emotional] It's sa-sad.

[Long pause]

AB: But it was a happy event. It ended in a happy event.

FB: Oh, well happy. He was very good. I don't know, I said to her, "At what he went through..." And you know he was born as, um—first he was 10 years old he lost his mother. Twelve years old he lost his father. And then he beca—he worked at 16, he started to work in an orphanage.

JP: [Says quietly] Sixteen years old.

FB: And that's where he got his education. And he learned all about, uh, school. He got his, uh, education there, became a professor there. And he said to me one day, "I almost became a brother." I said, "So did I. I was going to be a nun." [Laughs] I said to him, "True! They wanted

me to be a nun." In the school there, Mother St. Thomas wanted me to be a nun. She gave me all the dowry. No, I had to have so many sheets, so many towels. [Laughs] I almost did! And he said, over there he was gonna be a brother too. I said, "Well, would we have met after all these years!?" [Laughs] Him a brother, me a sister. [Laughs]

JP: [Laughs]

FB: Oh, that's fun. Oh, I hope you didn't type that.

AB: [Laughs]

FB: You didn't put that—

JP: Do you want us, do you want us to take it out?

FB: No...

AB: It's okay, it's okay.

FB: Uh...

JP: Um...

[Fades out at 01:03:01]

[Fades in at 01:03:02]

JP: —frame it.

AB: When were you notified where her husband was? Like—

JP: Okay, okay.

AB: [Unclear] her fiancé was?

JP: And—okay.

[Whispering in background]

FB: What were you notified? What?

AB: When, when did father tell you that he was at camp Petawawa? Like did he send you a letter? Did he call you?

FB: Oh no, they don't call. They sent me a card.

AB: A little card saying that your—

FB: A card. Uh, you know, a card—

JP: What did it say on the card?

FB: A card. Oh, well, you know, I forget now. It was so long. I just feel—

JP: But you found out—so that was the first time you found out where—

FB: At Petawawa.

JP: —your fiancé was?

FB: In Petawawa.

JP: Was through this card?

FB: When I—oh, yes, with this card. Because uh, some of them, uh, went somewhere else I heard. I don't know now. But he was in Petawawa. It said where he was—

JP: And—

FB: —in Petawawa. And he—they did move him somewhere else.

JP: Did you hear any stories, like, in the neighbourhood? Like when you would go to Cicchini's or to Zeppieri his wife was there? Did they talk about—

FB: No.

JP: —that their husbands, uh—

FB: No. Well I didn't go much to Cicchini, I used to, uh, deal with Zeppieri all the time and there her husband was, uh, interned too. So—

JP: Did she tell you anything? Did she give you any news? Did she know—

FB: Well, no she got news from her husband, you know. And then we sent parcels together. You know, we sent them like uh, *lenticchie*, *lenticchie*, things like that. We sent them parcels once in a while. And her husband was in too. And, uh, so, uh, you know, we were—she lived next door to me and her husband was taken too, Zeppieri.

JP: Did you talk with the other women who had a husband interned?

FB: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. There was—

JP: And did you exchange—

FB: Gagliacco, Gagliacco, had her husband. Uh, Mrs. Lattoni, you know her husband was a lawyer and they took him. Why? He was not even going to the—he was a lawyer and they went to get him. That's Vetere for you. Vetere is the one who really done that, you know.

JP: And did the women—

[01:05:14]

FB: And uh, Mrs. Gagliacco and Mrs. Lattoni, they went to see them at Petawawa and they wouldn't tell us the way. They said, "Well, maybe we shouldn't have gone." It was so maybe sad. They wouldn't talk. If she was living, I would say go to her. That Gagliacco she lived on Oliver[?] here. And Mrs. Lattoni lived on Roselawn[?]. Her husband and her. Now I think they're both dead. [Truck noise in background] They have children though, Lattoni had two boys, but I

don't know if they would talk about it. I don't think their father would, you know. He was a lawyer.

JP: So...

FB: So, they—like I talked to Gagliacco, she had their husband there. Mrs. Zeppieri had her husband there. I used to be near her house. She had a, a store you know. And sometimes I used to go and help her. And once, um, uh, her in-law died and she said to me, "Felicetta, would you like to come and take care of the store." Because, uh, well the nephew, died you know. And she wanted me to stay there, you know, for—'cause she had to go to the funeral. And I had all the boys come in to buy beer. [Laughs] I was there, the boys come and "*Une bouteille de bière s'il vous plaît.*" [Laughs] And they all came. She says to me, "You sold so much beer." [Laughs] Because I was there, "Good job." I said to her, "I'm not gonna stay in the, in the butcher shop alone," I said. She says, "No, I'll leave the butcher, like in front." He stayed there and watched me because I wouldn't—didn't want to stay there alone, eh. You know, I mean, she was, she had the grocery store. She had—

JP: And was there—

FB: And her husband was there. Petawawa.

JP: Did she have any problems with the grocery store? For example did the French people—

FB: Oh, no they didn't! No!

JP: —stop shopping at the Italian stores?

FB: Well, shopping now dear, that I cannot tell you. But the beer, she sold beer, eh? And you know, the French they just had to go there and buy beer. She sold beer. And, and then the butcher was a Frenchman. So I said to her, "Well if the butcher is there, I'll come. I'll take, I'll take your place." But I'm—so the butcher was there watching me, so wasn't bad, you know.

JP: It sounds like you had limited information because you had this card that came in. Some of the women wouldn't talk about—

FB: No, they—

JP: —going to Petawawa.

FB: No, they—I mean, you know, everybody—how would you say? They—well, you know, like Mrs. Zeppieri told me like what she heard, you know. And I would say to her—she was my next-door neighbour, and her husband was with my husband. And there was Martellani and there was oh, quite a few from Ville-Émard, you know.

AB: [Unclear]

JP: Pardon me Anita?

AB: She got a card, postcard from Petawawa saying that he was there, and, uh, you know if you want to communicate with me, you can, and he would send cards. He would send letters and then she would write back.

JP: Um, but aside from those cards, it sounds like there was very limited information—

AB: Yeah.

JP: —that was exchanged amongst the women.

FB: Yes—

AB: No—

FB: Yes.

AB: No. Yeah, no—

JP: Why do you think it was so quiet? Why do you think people didn't want—

AB: Well everybody was in shock.

FB: Well, uh, well quiet because, I don't know, um...

AB: They didn't know exactly what happened I guess.

FB: You know—

AB: It was like a total shock to them. Why were these innocent people taken by the RCMP?

[Long pause]

JP: Um...so it didn't make it—it must have made it even more difficult because not only did you lose this man—

FB: Yeah.

JP: —but you did—uh, you didn't even get information. You weren't—

FB: No.

JP: Did the police—did the, uh, the government, the police ever contact you and say—

FB: No, no, no, no, no, no—

JP: Give you information?

FB: —nobody.

JP: Nobody—

FB: No, contact! No, nobody.

JP: Did you ever try on your own to get information—

FB: No, I didn't.

JP: —from any institution?

FB: No. I tried even, uh, even Mrs. Zeppieri and then Mrs. Gagliacco and all them. Mrs. Gagliacco she was, uh, my daughter's godmother. Well, her husband and he was...nothing and they took him. So what else? What could we talk about? I mean they were there. She went to see them. She—her and Mrs. Lattoni they went to see—uh, they went to Petawawa and they wouldn't talk about it. They said they wished they hadn't gone. They felt bad. I was supposed to go too, and when I rea— when I wrote to my, to my boyfriend then, that uh, "Could—you want me to come?" He said, "No."

JP: He didn't want you there?

FB: No.

[00:01:10:14]

JP: Did he ever tell you afterwards why he didn't want you to go?

FB: Well, because the, the way these people felt bad, maybe the—*come si dice?*— the—

AB: The way he was dressed and he had [unclear]—

FB: The way they were dressed and the way they were—you know they all looked sad. You know, I mean, it's—it made them um—they wouldn't talk about it. They wouldn't talk. They said—

JP: Anita—

FB: —they wish they hadn't gone, they said. They said that. I wish—because it—like I would have even asked them like something, you know. They just said that. They just said oh, we wish we hadn't...

AB: He was a proud man and he didn't want to be seen in a uniform with stripes and, uh...

FB: You know, imagine Lattoni, uh, uh, I mean a lawyer. [Anita speaks in background, unclear] He—I mean this man, he—you know and Poggi, Poggi, my gosh! You know, I'm telling you it's somebody has been treated. It was...it was like a—

AB: No, they just exchanged cards and letters and—

FB: So we—

JP: That's a really good point, I never thought of that. [Someone whispering in background] The, the fact that they were wearing prisoner uniforms.

FB: Oh, they had a big round thing they said, round. And they said, "If you move they're going to shoot them." They were so scared.

JP: Really?

FB: Imagine? Yeah. I mean, at the beginning I suppose it was strict you know.

AB: At the beginning they were scared, but then later on they found out that they were treated very nicely. Like, at the beginning they were all scared like any prisoner would be because they don't know why they're in there and whatever—

FB: I suppose even then they were scared.

AB: —but then later on they decided to find out exactly the whole thing. Uh, then maybe were more relaxed and they said they were treated very good, very well.

JP: What did you find out afterwards about what, uh, your husband or your father did at the camp while he was there? Did he tell you about anything like what he did—

FB: Well, everybody, everybody had something—

AB: He said—

FB: —to do. Everybody—like he was in charge of the—

AB: Kitchen. He said—

FB: Kitchen.

AB: —he had food around. He was able to have this food and that food and get the meat. And so he was called a storekeeper, so he was able to bring in the food. But even though when the food came in, they were always short of the food. If they said there was, you know, 12 dozen of eggs, instead there'd only be six dozen of eggs because the people that were delivering them would steal them before they got to—

FB: They stole, they stole, they didn't give them the right amount.

JP: So the men were short changed—

FB: Yeah.

JP: —on the quantity of food—

AB: Exactly.

JP: —that was coming in—

AB: Yes.

FB: And it was hard for them because the people complained and it was not their fault, it was not the cooks fault, it was the—they, they were not given the right amount. Like they were supposed—like my—some amount of uh, how you call it, um...

AB: [Unclear]

FB: Beef, you know, those things of beef there. It was supposed to say 12, they only got maybe 10. Just two of them maybe [someone speaking in background, unclear] the drivers must have taken it. And all the food was not taken the way it was.

JP: And, um—

FB: Short.

JP: [Pause] Wow. And what else did, what else did he do? So, he was—your, your father—was a storekeeper at the camp?

FB: Yeah.

AB: [Unclear]

JP: And he was in charge of the invent—the food inventory?

FB: Yeah.

AB: Yes, he also he had a garden and he would—he had a garden and he would plant vegetables and he would go out and take care of the vegetables. Uh, his tomatoes and, uh, green beans and stuff like that. And then he would—they would have movies and the, there were Germans there ahead of him. And they were—the Germans were asking him to teach Italian—

FB: They were friendly, they were friendly.

AB: And the Italians were picking up, like my hus—my father was able to pick up German from the Italians, he was picking up German, so he wanted to learn German. So, they had classes. Apparently there were doctors there. Some of them that went in as doctors were doctors in clinics. And it seemed to be like a little community within Petawawa.

FB: At the beginning, it was bad they said.

AB: Yeah. But then—

FB: But after you know the...

JP: And do you have any anecdotes or any stories to share about uh, life at the camp?

FB: No, about tomatoes that's all I—

JP: Do you want to tell me that story?

FB: The tomato, she'll tell you the story.

AB: You tell her the story.

JP: You tell us the story Felicia.

FB: About the tomatoes?

JP: Yes.

FB: Oh, well this friend, Sartori...went to Annibale, and said, uh, "Annibale, could you give me uh, a few tomatoes? I would like you to give me just a few tomatoes. I want to make a salad or something." So my husband said, Annibale said, "*Mais non. Sono andato stamattina e non c'era niente. Erano tutti verdi. Non, non sono, non sono mat—non sono fatto ancora.*" "Oh, non, non, tu non ancora darmi un pomodoro." [Laughs] He was saying, "*Tu non vuoi darmi un pomodoro.*" And he was saying, "*Mais non. Non sono ancor—non son—sono ancora verdi i pomodori. Sono andato stamattina.*" So anyway after—*mi dico, "Perchè non vieni con me a vederli i pomodori."* [Laughs] So, *andato a vedere i pomodori ed erano tutti... pitturate verde!* [Laughs]

[01:15:35]

AB: Red.

JP: *Rosso.*

FB: *Rosso, rosso.*

JP: So they had painted his tomatoes red.

FB: Red. [Laughs]

JP: As a joke.

FB: As a joke and they all laughed but my husband said, the way he said it, you know, it was funny. Said, “Come, *vieni a vedere.*” “*Mais non, sono ancora verdi!*” “Oh, *tu non vuole darmi un pomodoro. Tu non volle. Lo so, lo so.* [unclear].” “*Mais, sono andata stamattina e erano tutto verdi.*” “Oh, *tu non vuole darmi un pomodoro.*” So they go uh, there and *erano tutto pitturato rosso.*

JP: They played jokes and pranks on each other the men then?

FB: So, well, they had to—

AB: To keep them sane.

FB: —they had to—

AB: To keep them sane.

FB: —they had to because I mean, or else eh, it was very gloomy at the beginning they say. Like when Gagliacco and Lattoni, Mrs. Lattoni went, that was nearly the beginning where there they were all sad, you know. They were—you know, you're taken there you know, and you say, What the heck did I do? You're like prisoners. I mean, you know. And some of them had to saw wood. They all had a job to do. Some had to saw wood. Some were in the kitchen. Some uh, had to clean the bath. The toilets. Some had—they all had jobs.

JP: Were they paid for—

FB: And the ones who had—oh, I don't think so. I don't, I don't know now. That I can't tell you dear, I don't know. And, uh, I don't think so.

AB: They were paid—

FB: And so, [unclear].

JP: You have a list, Anita?

AB: Yeah.

JP: What's the list that you're looking at?

AB: It's the list of the kitchen staff and others. [Reading from paper] To be paid out of the canteen profits for the month of June 1941. [Pause] And the canteen profits for certain people were given from three dollars to four dollars.

FB: Oh, I didn't know that.

[Long pause]

AB: I wonder if that's a week?

FB: That I don't know.

JP: It doesn't indicate what, um...

[Long pause while rustling through papers]

AB: A week or a month. I'm not sure.

FB: That I don't know because after when he came we didn't discuss anymore.

JP: Yeah, what happened?

FB: No. No, we didn't. No, uh, no, we just—

AB: It's a sad—

FB: —dropped, dropped. We nev—I never asked him about it and he—oh it—I don't know, you know. He went through so much I mean it's...it's, uh, terrible.

JP: When he came out, after he came out, did, um, some of the men that he had been interned with, did they come over to the house? Like in the subsequent years?

FB: Well, Gagliacco was. Gagliacco was there.

JP: And would the men talk about, uh, the camp amongst themselves?

FB: No, no. I don't know, I don't think so. No, I don't. Because when he came he used to come after mass because one of, um, Gagliacco, one like his wife was my other daughter's, uh, how do you say?

AB: She was your maid of honour.

FB: Not maid of honour, baptized.

AB: She was also your maid of honour.

FB: Oh, yes.

AB: And best man and best woman.

FB: That—

AB: Best man and...

FB: Yeah. And, uh, they, but they never talked about it. You know, they talked about the jokes, but they never, you know, said the real—and my husband we never, never, never touched the subject because I—the way I had it you know, it was—because maybe they remembered the beginning. The beginning they were treated like really like, you know... [Whispering in background] Strangers.

JP: And how did you get the impression, was it that you shouldn't talk about it? Was it because of the way your husband ignored the topic or the reaction—

FB: Well, he never, he never talked about it. I mean I never—

JP: So you knew—

FB: —touch the subject.

AB: Well they had—

FB: They never, never—

AB: They had other things to think of. They were thinking of—

FB: —only about the joke about the tomatoes he said.

AB: —their marriage. What—the future. Nothing before.

FB: No, he doe—

AB: The future. Life, future.

FB: And I never asked him either.

JP: What happened? He came back. What about the office, because there was rent to pay while he was gone?

FB: Oh, oh, well—

JP: Did he just close down the office? [Unclear]

AB: [Unclear]

FB: Oh, well—

AB: [Unclear]

JP: And so—because there was nothing left there?

FB: No, no—

JP: And—

FB: —nothing.

JP: —all the things that they took that were the property of your husband or your father—

FB: When he went to take the—

JP: Did anything—was anything returned?

AB: No.

FB: No. When he take the va—when he—

AB: They took all the wines and everything—

FB: When he went to take his *valise* there the wines were all gone. Were empty. Empt—they emptied it. There was nothing in it when—it was emptied. Oh, I'm sorry. [Sound of truck in the background]

JP: Um, so they took everything. The—so I guess the lease must have just—

AB: Expired—

JP: Expired.

FB: Well [unclear] just left everything I suppose. I don't know. Unless the gov—

AB: I guess they realized nobody was there, so nobody was going to pay somebody. Because the place was empty somebody preoccupied it I guess.

JP: Was there furniture left? When you left, when you left—

FB: There was some furniture they took it—

JP: The files were taken—

FB: —they sold it.

JP: Everything.

FB: Yeah, sure.

JP: So—

FB: They seized, they seized.

JP: They seized everything.

FB: Papers too!

JP: When—

FB: Papers too! I mean uh, like copies of, uh, different things. They co—they took that too. Yeah, they seized everything. They seized. And so they closed it. So, you know—and we had, uh, a case of, uh—he had, uh, tried to get, how would you say? Importing some, uh, statues or things of—from Italy and it was in somewhere stored and he didn't get it. Like I mean they took that.

[01:21:30]

JP: So they took even the stock?

FB: Oh, yes, everything. They took stock. Everything.

JP: Did he ever try to get anything back?

FB: No...well, he tried to get his *valise* back but when he went it was empty. But he didn't get nothing else back.

JP: Well, what was in the *valise*?

AB: Wines.

FB: The wines.

JP: The wines.

AB: Some wines.

FB: It was a big, big—

AB: [Unclear]

FB: —*valise*, it was not a small one. It was a big, big one. It had all the mass wines and the vermouth. Different vermouth and the Asti and uh, [unclear] all kinds of wines.

JP: And—

FB: And the mass wines. All that was—they must have, oh they must have, uh, how would you say? Drank it all. Maybe they thought he'd never come back, you know?

AB: They celebrated—

FB: They might have said, "Well, he might be there a year or so." So, they, they took it.

JP: And so then how did he put himself back on his feet? What did he have to do?

FB: Oh well, he had to start from scratch.

JP: And you, like you said, when he came back it was still the time of war. How were Italians looked at, at that, in that period?

FB: At that time? You couldn't get a job, if you had an Italian name...like Battigalli, eh? It was hard to get a job.

AB: But he managed to get a job at Burrows and [unclear].

FB: He got a job at Burrows, you know why? Because the head one was an American.

AB: Italian.

FB: And an American, he was not you know, nothing to do with the war. So he got the job there and see he was there 20 years. That's what he got.

AB: Twenty-five years.

FB: He got that 20 years.

AB: Twenty-five years.

FB: Twent—how much?

AB: Twenty-five.

FB: Twent—well, 25 he got that. And he got that because it was an American. But it if was—

AB: When he retired.

FB: —if he, if he was, ah, like French or that he wouldn't have got the job.

JP: And did you continue to work afterwards?

FB: No.

JP: After you got married?

FB: No, I stayed home. I stayed home.

JP: And where did you live when you got married?

FB: Oh, me? Oh, on [unclear] Street, that's my love nest there. Oh, you haven't got that down?

AB: It's okay.

FB: On [unclear] Street, I lived.

AB: Her first—

FB: At first, that's where my two daughters were born. On [unclear] Street. I had uh, Lidia first and after 15 months, here I go again, I get her. [Laughs]

[Everyone laughs]

FB: I said, oh, I said to my husband, I said, "Oh, my gosh." I said, "You know if we go on like this we'll have lots of girls." I said, "Because you were with a lot of women." So, anyway from there, we lived there one year and a half. Oh, not even that. Because when we moved here, they both were in a carriage. And we moved here, and we haven't moved. So that's my story.

JP: That's nice.

FB: That's [unclear] was my love story.

JP: [Laughs] Um, your husband what was he doing at um, that company?

AB: [Unclear] chemist.

JP: He was a chemist.

FB: Yeah.

AB: 'Cause his father—

FB: And, and as I said, he, he applied for a job after, you know. He said, for this uh, to be a principal, I told you that story before—

JP: Yes.

FB: —so I'm not going to repeat it again. And, uh, you know he was gonna take—another man would have said, "Oh well, you know, I like to be a principal. You know, it'd be nice." The girls used to come home from school. "Ma, are we moving today?" I said, "No, we don't know yet." "Ma, are we moving?" They had their big box there near their bed there. Ready to pack. [Laughs] Was so funny. And we bought a house too. A little house and we painted it all up, because we were gonna move there. And then all of a sudden well, it happened like this. Well, Borrowes said to them [sound of traffic in background], "Well, is it because you know, uh, more money?" So my husband says, "Well, no." "Well, we'll give you a raise." So when he heard that and the other one was only like year—I told you before that. I'm repeating myself.

JP: No, no, it's fine. It's fine.

FB: And then it's—like it was like a year contract. You know, like, and then it was still the war and I was scared. Because we were right at the corner of Mcnaughton and Main, eh? And the school they just had to cross the street. There was the school there, St. Thomas School. And I was scared you know, the French, I was scared. I said, "You know the war is still on." And you know the French they might throw stones at us, I don't know.

[01:26:13]

JP: What happened with the ethnic relations at that time, between the Italians and the English, and the Italians and the French? During that—

FB: Oh, well, I moved here and nothing, you know.

JP: But like the fact that you had this fear—

FB: Oh—

JP: —what was it based on? Was it based on things you had seen around you happening—

FB: No, no, when we moved here—

JP: —things you read?

FB: No.

JP: No, but the fear you had with being—and also—

FB: No, no fear when—

JP: —the discrimination.

FB: —I was here. No, here, here. No fear at all. Over—even in Ville-Émard there was nothing. I mean nobody, how would you say? The French, you know, they didn't—well they might have said, [unclear]. I don't know what they called us...

JP: Fifth column.

AB: Fifth column.

FB: Fifth column, yeah. But I mean there was no uh, how would you say? Bad feelings.

JP: Did your, did you or, uh, did your husband rather have to go and report to the RCMP—

FB: Oh, no.

JP: —was he considered an—

FB: Oh, no.

JP: —enemy alien afterwards?

FB: No.

JP: So he had no reporting to do?

FB: Oh no! Because he was a Canadian. I mean after all he was Canadian. I mean, [Anita speaking in the background, unclear] and, and then he didn't do—I mean, uh, the be reports. He didn't do nothing wrong, he worked for the Italian Consulate teaching and he taught, uh, nothing like [unclear]. It was opened it was something—even Mayor Houde was there. At the camp. Even Mayor Houde, they took him. Because why they took him, because he didn't want the Canadian boys to go to war. He didn't want them. He says, “No.” So they took him in too. And my husband taught him Italian.

[Long pause]

JP: Um...

[Whispering in background]

[Fades out at 01:28:13]

[Fades in at 01:28:14]

AB: —something about coming back, what did...

[Long pause]

JP: Um, what happened to the Consulate Brigidi—

FB: Oh, I don't know what they done dear, that I don't' know.

JP: All contact is, uh—

FB: I don't know if—

JP: —is lost.

FB: I didn't go back there. I didn't go back and see nothing. Oh, I don't know. I suppose they, he had two to go back to Italy. I don't think uh, I suppose so. He was a nice young, young Consulate. He was good for the Italians, you know. He, he liked to organize things. He was very in [emphasis on “in”] the Italian community. He was very good. But you see the war—

JP: Was he present at events, did you ever go to events like when then unveiled the Giovanni Caboto statue in Atwater or when—

FB: No, no, Caboto, no.

JP: —came to Montreal?

FB: No, no.

JP: Or when—

FB: I went to the societies, the Italian societies. I used to go sometimes, for balls. Uh...

JP: Did your husband want to go back to Italy after he came out of the internment?

FB: No, dear, no. He never said so, no. No.

AB: He wanted to get married.

JP: [Long pause] But not to go back to Italy—

AB: No.

JP: —he just wanted to get married?

AB: He wanted to get married and settle down.

JP: He still had faith in staying in this country—

FB: And you know, I never thought really—

AB: He bought a one-way ticket.

FB: —between you and me, I never thought he'd be such a good husband. Because as I say, I used to take all the messages, all the dates you know he had. And I say today it's Lucien, another day it's—and he was invited, it wasn't him that invited. It was the girls from the Institute, you know. And one girl she was French [Anita speaking in background, unclear] and she was the only daughter of a doctor. And she even invited him at their in, I don't know some place, like she had boats and everything. Which—and I thought he was going to marry her. A Lemieux[?]

JP: Was it mostly French girls that were inviting him?

FB: No, not only the—

JP: Italians also.

FB: —French. Italians too. In Vil—when he came to Ville-Émard, I told you that story before. All the ladies who had daughters, “Oh, Annibale, will you come for supper tonight?” Or you know, they'd go invite—he was really well liked. That's why I don't know how I got him, really. You know, I was really lucky because I even tell the children, I said, “You know I used to take all the messages.” You know. He was invited here and there. And you know—and rich people too. Rich. It's a wonder he didn't marry a rich girl. He said to me, “I would never marry a rich girl,” he said. I was not rich. I—

JP: Why, why?

FB: —being rich.

JP: Did he tell you why?

AB: He didn't want somebody superior than him.

FB: Yeah. And he was a very good husband. You ask her what kind of a husband. His children oh, my gosh. He didn't want to leave them in the country. Oh, no, you're not the children—oh he was such a, oh, perfect husband! I didn't expect that because I said, he's gonna go out with some of his uh, you know. They—some called after we married. They called here.

JP: When was your uh, father uh, when was, when was he born, what year?

AB: Nineteen-oh-two.

JP: Nineteen-oh-two.

AB: February.

FB: He was a very good husband. I, I—

AB: February 10.

FB: —uh—and it's a wonder you know he didn't come, uh, really, uh, Alzheimer or whatever you call it. [Anita speaks in background, unclear] With all he went through. All what he went—dementia is the word, eh?

AB: Senile. Senile.

[01:31:49]

FB: Senile. It's a wonder because he had a very—from when he was young. From 12 years old he was left an orphan. And imagine all that time to work. And I said to my daughters, you know, I said, "I don't know how he went through all that." And at 79 he always said to me, "You know I never thought I'd live this long." He thanked God. He thought—he would have, uh, lived a little longer if they would have put, uh, a something, you know—

AB: A pacemaker.

FB: —for his heart, but he didn't want to. He says, "Well, I don't want to, it's only for a couple of years." And I says, "Well, why don't you try it?" [Unclear] he didn't want to. Or else he would have lived maybe uh, three, four years more. I don't know. He died at 79. So, it's a long time I'm alone. So, but I have two daughters, so.

JP: Did you—

FB: But he really was good. Really, I, I didn't expect him to be a perfect husband. I never, never. With all the dates and everything. Gee. Some try to, to phone him after, too. I don't know—

JP: That's crazy.

FB: —I was lucky. I was just lucky and I thank God. Sometimes you know, when I'm alone, I said you know, you're dreaming, you're not married to him. You're just dreaming. You know. I think that. [Laughs] Crazy you know. And I say to myself, you're going dementia you better uh—

JP: No. [Says while laughing]

FB: Your daughter if she hears that she's gonna say, "My mother's gone daft." [Laughs] I oh—

JP: Did you—

FB: —I look at the picture you know and I said, oh you're there dear, you're there. Oh, sometimes you know. When I think of all the things that like you know, like before you came I thought of all the dates that he'd had you know and everything. I says, "I can't tell her all those things." I said, "She's going to be bored!"

JP: No, not at all.

FB: Oh, dear. It's funny.

JP: Did your husband wear a blackshirt ever?

FB: No, no.

JP: For, uh—

FB: No, no.

JP: —when he was teaching—

FB: No, no he didn't.

JP: —or any [unclear]—

FB: No.

JP: And did he have anything like in the office that was, uh, um, any allusion—

FB: No, he didn't!

JP: —to the *fascio*?

FB: No, he didn't. No, he just taught the Institute of Italian Culture. But there was no blackshirt.
And no—

JP: Did they have to write the, uh, the fascist number on the paper when they did
correspondence with Italy? Or—

FB: Well, no, I don't think so. No. No, it was just natural. I mean there was no, uh, how would
you say? It was nothing like that like showing that he was, uh, *fascio*. No. That's what I say, you
know, it's the train. [Sound of train in background]

JP: Anita, did your father tell you stories later on?

AB: Uh, I think only when I was older. I sort of asked questions, you know, how long were you
there? And even so I never got the whole story straight. But then he always would say to me,
“Well, there's a file there. You know, later on when you have time you can look into it.” And
you know, and then I saw all the stories; the letters he wrote to her and she wrote to him. And
uh, it's quite interesting. And then I read books on you know the, uh, the barbed wire and
mandolins and, um...

[01:35:11]

JP: And the stories—but he, he never, he just sort of gave you bits and pieces at a time?

AB: Yes, because it wasn't a happy event I guess. He didn't want to, he didn't want it to be you know, he did—it wasn't a story he really wanted to tell. You know, the reason we didn't really know why and because we were too young, we didn't know why they were taken. We didn't know the difference between you know, the Germans and the Italians and whatever, the whole story behind it. So, but you know, he just—and you know they would tell us that you know, he was in internment for six to seven months. And, and that was it.

JP: And when you found out more, how did you react—like what was your reaction to it?

AB: Well, uh, we sort of less found out more about it, but we sort of less started to read up on it and find out that you know the Japanese were taken and the other Italians and then the other people. Some were taken to New Brunswick. And, and the government never did anything. Never you know, apologized to any of us. To the families or anything, and you know, and—

FB: No, [unclear].

AB: —this was like nothing was ever done. And a lot of people were hurt from it.

JP: And how did, did you—were you aware at all of any of the um [clears throat], attempts by the Italian community to—

AB: No, nothing. Well, we were never—

FB: No!

AB: —in an Italian environment. So—

JP: Right.

AB: —around here were always like more towards the English, French or whatever. You know. So we never sort of less associated with the Italians as to say why didn't they do this or why didn't they—I mean why didn't the government do anything about it? And—

JP: But nobody ever contacted you—

AB: No.

JP: —even back in the 80s? Or—

AB: No, no, nothing. No.

JP: Nothing.

AB: Nothing. No. No. We were just—

JP: And how does, how does that make you feel, like both of you? Like how does it make you feel...

AB: Well, you feel hurt but you say, like an innocent person is taken into, into a camp you know, and, and being treated like a prisoner for what reason? They didn't have a good reason to base it on. And they still don't and it's never forgotten by the...the siblings and the, the family around. Uh, but, uh, the government couldn't care less.

JP: What do you think they should do?

AB: Well, uh...

JP: Or should have done?

AB: They should have apologized at least or you know find out who was left. Uh, may—half the people maybe are all dead and buried that they don't want to do anything. They'll wait until they're all gone. And then, you know, it's too late. But even a [Felicia speaks in background, unclear], a public apology in the newspapers, maybe, in all the newspapers, you know. Or...

FB: They were going to, but then they, they were going to, uh, do something but then they said they were going to do something else. They were going to make a, a monument or something—

AB: They never did.

FB: —put the money somewhere else or something—

AB: They never did anything.

FB: —and they never done anything. They said they were, we were going to be rewarded. They said that. They were going to be rewarded. And then they dropped it. And there's not many left. I mean, lots of them that we know, they're all gone. They're all gone.

AB: Well sure.

FB: I mean they're not all 99 like me. And the ones that were taken, they were older than me. So, you know, where do you think they are? They're in heaven. They're there. What can you do, I mean you know. It was an awful thing. But here when we came here, and even in Ville-Émard

you know there was nothing like, uh, people used to, uh, how would you say? Mix up, and nothing was, uh, you know, taken seriously. Say, well, I'm not talking to her she belongs... Oh, no, no, there was nothing like that.

JP: It sounds like, it sounds like, um, the way the government interpreted what was going on and what was actually going on in the streets are two different stories. Because like you were saying, you were on the streets, you had friends, you attended the dances at the *fascio*, you didn't feel any, any um—

FB: There—

JP: —tension. But yet, um, when we look at uh, official reports, we see—we don't, we don't get that aspect of the story...at all.

AB: Maybe some of the families that, uh, had their fathers taken and they were like a family already, uh, married with kids and that. And it was hard for the mother, who maybe the father was the breadwinner and could not, you know, give any more money and they had to try and survive. And the mother never worked—

FB: That was—that's bad.

AB: —the kids were young and how could they survive? And this was hard for them. And this is where maybe they found it harder. But—

FB: Sure they found it hard the ones that had a family.

AB: Family. The ones that had a family. And—

FB: And took the fathers—

AB: —mother wasn't working and they had to pay rent, they had to bring up a family, feed the family—where do they get their money?

FB: Like me too, supposing I had been married. Supposing I was on Charmandie[?] there, married, maybe with one daughter. I would be left there paying the rent and everything. How could I?

AB: She didn't work, [unclear].

FB: I would have had a little money, but maybe to pay one or two months. But then the salary, no more salary, no money coming in.

AB: They never tried to help.

FB: I mean a good job I mean I didn't, but lots of people were not in the same. They were in a worse situation.

AB: Like [unclear] for instance.

JP: My grandfather, yeah.

AB: Grandfather.

[01:40:35]

JP: But, is it or is there anything that, uh, you want to add, that I didn't ask you or something that should be said?

AB: Anything you want to add?

JP: Is there anything I missed? Any story, anything you want—anything you want to say that uh, if a young person is, is listening to you, that, that there's something that they should learn from this?

FB: Well, I don't know. Really.

AB: Don't trust anyone. [Says in a loud voice]

JP: [Laughs]

FB: No, no what is that—

AB: [Unclear] the RCMP. [Laughs]

FB: No, that, no, that you, you never know what's gonna come. [Joyce and Anita speaking in background, unclear] You never know, you know, from one day to another, you never know what's gonna happen. Well, you know here too, one day one—like me I was okay there and all of a sudden I have this pain here. I have a hard time to walk. And another one she saw a girl there on the street, she went to the hospital, I said, “You never know, one day tomorrow, you don't know.” *Un jour à la foie* they say in French. *Un—*

JP: And from that experience, from the internment experience—

FB: Experience, uh—

JP: How did it shape you? How did it change you?

FB: Well, it changed me that, sometimes there—I see things happening before they come. You know. Like I say, I said to my daughter, something, and I say, oh you know, and then it's happening. I said, “You know I saw that.” I, I say, “You know, it's gonna happen.” Like there's, ah, wedding supposed to be in Las Vegas, and I said to her, I said, “That wedding is not gonna happen.” And there's two cases already going out of it. So I said, you see, something is going to happen. I said, “There's not going to be—the wedding might be maybe just them.” You know. Things happen. You never can take things uh—

AB: Changes from day to day.

FB: Say, you know, if you're happy one day—you might be very happy, the next day you might get a big bang, something might happen.

JP: And you feel it's also because of the way—

FB: The way things happened to me. Yes.

[Fades out at 01:42:44]

[Fades in at 01:42:44]

JP: I want to thank you so much.

FB: Yeah, yeah.

JP: I want to thank you.

FB: So the—

JP: Thank you Anita.

FB: Oh thank you for coming! It was nice to—

JP: [Unclear] Felicia.

FB: —review but some of them were sad, you know. So...

JP: No, that's okay. It's a bit of everything.

FB: So that's it. That, uh...

AB: Would you like a cup of tea or coffee or something?

JP: No, I'm good. [Says as tape fades out]

[Fades out at 01:43:01]

[End of interview]