

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

**DATE OF INTERVIEW:** May 18, 2011

**LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** Hamilton, ON

**NAME OF INTERVIEWEE:** Chester Capponi

**NAME OF INTERVIEWER:** Nadia Mior

**NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER:** Vikki Cecchetto

**TRANSCRIBED BY:** Elissa D'Souza

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## **ABSTRACT**

Chester Capponi is the son of internee, Girolamo (George) Capponi, who was interned in Petawawa by the Canadian government for over two years during World War II. At the time of his father's arrest Chester was a teenager. He describes the day his father was arrested and imprisoned at the CNE (Canadian National Exhibition) grounds. After his father was transported to Petawawa some weeks later, the family's main form of communication was through letters, which were screened and censored. He outlines his father's attempt to persuade them, through his letters and during their visits, that he was fine. He notes how throughout this traumatic experience, the Canadian government never provided the family with information about the reasons for his father's internment, or if and when he would be released. He recalls his father's ill health after being released, and his subsequent death six years later. Despite their struggles, the family was able to attain income and survive through a rental property that they had. After graduating with a degree in pharmacy soon after his father's passing, he describes his journey towards attaining his own pharmacy with the help of his mother, and his eventual success. Some years later, his mother would eventually pass away due to a tragic car accident.

## **INTERVIEW**

**CC: Chester Capponi, interviewee**

**NM: Nadia Mior, interviewer**

**VC: Vikki Cecchetto, videographer**

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:09]

NM: Okay, this is Nadia. I'm at Chester's house in Hamilton. Could we get your full name please?

CC: Sure, Chester Capponi.

NM: And you were born in Hamilton?

CC: [Nods] Born in Hamilton, yes.

NM: And what neighbourhood did you grow up—

CC: Barton and Sherman area. Actually I was born on...Case Street, which...at the top of Case Street was the police station. [Laughs]

NM: Oh.

CC: The local police station. And uh...I was born next door to Roma Bakery, which is famous today in Hamilton...Roma Pizza.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: So that's where I born. And each day I'd go over to get fresh bread, right out of the bakery.

NM: Oh!

CC: It was...excellent, wonderful. [Smiles slightly]

NM: That would be great memories.

CC: So then, actually, uh [looks off to the side in thought]...maybe when I was five years old we moved to high-class area, just south of Barton...right near the stadium...

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: ...um...Ivor Wynne Stadium.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And that's where we lived...

NM: [Unclear]

CC: ...till my dad died.

NM: Mm hmm. Now I understand a family member was interned.

CC: Yes, my dad. [Nods]

NM: Your da—your father. And what was his name?

CC: In Italian it's...Girolamo Capponi, but he went by George.

NM: Now do you remember the day that your father was arrested?

CC: Yes I do. Um, I came home from school I guess at four o'clock from St. Anne's. We lived on Prospect, which was...10-minute walk.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And...I walked in the house and I saw my mom crying. And I said, "What, you know, what happened?" She says, "They took your dad away." [Voice breaks, face saddens, brings hand to mouth]

NM: Oh.

CC: And the house was in, in turmoil. They had pulled all the drawers out. [Gestures to indicate opening of drawers] I don't know what they were looking for. [Shakes head and holds hands out to the side] Maybe a picture of [Benito] Mussolini.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Well, my dad was [laughs]...far from a fascist really or a fascist...supporter. Anyway, it was really a bad day and, uh, I said to my mom, "But wh-why was he taken away?" She says, "I don't know. They took him to jail." Well like the word jail [shakes head and rolls eyes]...is very [folds arms over chest]...you know, traumatic.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And, um...we didn't hear about my dad till they told us you could go down to the CNE [Canadian National Exhibition]...where they were [gestures with hand]...enclosed. And I think the building was the, uh, Cow Palace. I remember that [shrugs] because it was agriculture, right?

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And what a lovely place to intern them, you know. And they were allowed maybe twice a day to walk. It seemed to me there was a walkway up above [makes circular motion with finger up in the air] that they, uh, they were allowed to exercise. [Nods] And we were allowed to go down—well, you know, we'd go down and visit him maybe two or three times a week...down at Toronto Exhibition. And we'd stand there...in the...spectators looking on and never ever...never ever [shakes head] giving evidence that that was our dad up there. And he wouldn't wave and we wouldn't wave at him.

NM: Wow. And how long was he in Toronto before...

CC: You know I don't know maybe a week or two. I, I don't remember...that, but next thing he was in Petawawa. We never got anything, like from the government saying...you know, he's, uh, guilty of...whatever. My dad didn't belong to any clubs. He was a loner.

[Phone rings in the background]

[Cross-dissolve between clips 00:03:33]

NM: So your father was taken to Petawawa...

CC: Yes. [Nods]

NM: And, uh, so from there what, what do—

CC: I don't know what the first contact, it was probably a couple of weeks before we even knew, but via the grapevine, you know, "Oh, they're in Petawawa." "Where's Petawawa?" Like [scoffs and rolls his eyes] that could be—

NM: Far, far away. [Laughs]

CC: —a thousand miles away. Um...and we would get letters, but they were censored. And as I told you before his, uh, POW, Prisoner of War number was 714. [Shakes head] That stays in my mind, like and it's 70 years, right? Yeah. [Nods]

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Still, 7-1-4. It was embedded in my mind—

NM: Oh.

CC: —just, you know. And, um, he would write very...plain letters that he's okay and he's working in the kitchen. Good place, right? [Laughs]

NM: Oh yeah. Yeah.

CC: To eat well. [Laughs] And, um, he wouldn't, he wouldn't talk too much, but he was very concerned about us. And he would always say he's fine, even though he wasn't.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: You know. I'm sure...he was suffering. All of them were.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Being away from their family, like, and like what's the reason? Well...you're...a threat to the country. What threat? [Laughs] You know.

NM: Yeah.

CC: Like my dad had only gone back to Italy twice. He came over when he was 17 years old in 19...13, I guess. Because at that time Italy was with the Allies.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Alright, so we were okay. [Nods] Um, and he came over as a young man and, um...he worked at Stelco...

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: ...as all of them did, you know.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: But, uh, it was traumatic being in the, in the camp. And as far as any affiliation with [makes a face]...you know, fascism or anything, my dad like [shakes head and makes a face]...you know, give me a break. [Scoffs]

NM: Mm hmm. [Laughs]

CC: Like, what do I want to be involved in that, I'm Canadian, you know. And he only went back to Italy twice.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: His mother was dying a second time. And at that time [frowns], I think he had difficulty...coming back to Canada because Mussolini wanted like—let's see in 1938...he would have been 40 years old. They wanted him in the army.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And he had, I don't know what kind of problem, but he did get back to Canada [nods], 'cause he was Canadian citizen, right.

[00:05:57]

NM: Good.

CC: So, um, Petawawa...

NM: Did you get to visit him there?



CC: Yes we did. I don't—I'm not sure if it was once or twice, but I think it was around Christmas 'cause it was cold. I could remember that. We were on a train.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Like I don't even know if the train exists today, but—to get up there. And, uh, I can remember, it was my aunt...and my cousin...and my mom and myself, and we went into a little, like a sentinel [gestures with hands to indicate type of building]...building.

NM: And how old are—were you again?

CC: [Makes smacking sound with lips and looks up in thought] Probably—

NM: At that time.

CC: —fourteen.

NM: Fourteen.

CC: Yeah, somewhere about that, 14 or 15. And I was the oldest in the family, so mum's relying on me.

NM: Mm.

CC: You know, 14 years old. And I could remember dad come out, you know, in the...the prisoner... [Shrugs]

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: ...clothing they wore. And we talked and I don't know how long we were there. And he made sure that...we understood that he was okay. [Nods]

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: He never spoke of the camp or anything. [Shakes head]

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: But I think, you know, when I hear from others that...they made the best of it.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Like give them some garlic, oil and a can of tomatoes... [Shrugs]

NM: [Laughs softly]

CC: And, uh, so [laughs] the funny part of it...the soldiers used to eat with them.

NM: Oh?

CC: But then they disallowed that, they didn't think that was too [laughs]...smart. Because the soldiers would eat, you know, great stuff. They weren't eating...crap.

NM: Crap food. [Laughs] They knew where the good food was. Yeah. Now was your father ever told why he was interned?

CC: I'm sorry, was he...

NM: Was, was he ever told about why he was interned?

CC: No. [Shakes head]

NM: You didn't know.

CC: [Shrugs] We didn't know. Well no one knew.

NM: Did he know?

CC: No one knew. Like, you know, you were a threat. [Makes shocked expression] Wow. I wonder if today, every time there's a war somewhere if they put all that... [Makes gesture with hand]

NM: Yeah.

CC: ...particular nationality in jail, wouldn't that be something?

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: How long would that last?

NM: Not very long. [Laughs]

CC: No...

NM: Now how long was he in Petawawa?

CC: I think 28 months. I, I sort of remember that 28 months.

NM: And so your mother didn't know when he would be released?

CC: [Shakes head]

NM: When he was coming home?

CC: [Shakes head] Nope. All we heard that was once there's a court case they'll be released.

NM: Oh...

CC: Because I think we read [looks off to his right] somewhere, I read somewhere where, the judge and he was French Canadian. He's been known to say that, "What are these people in— what are they in a prisoner camp for? What did they do?" "Well, they're a threat." "Well, what threat?" So he had to release them right away, there was nothing...

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: ...nothing.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: You know. [Makes smacking sound with lips] Anyway...

NM: So he was released and he just showed up—

CC: Came home, yeah. [Nods]

NM: —one day, out of the blue.

CC: And you could smell the...internment camp. You could smell the army. You know how soldiers, you know, the, the clothing. I remember mom washed everything [unclear]. [Laughs]

VC: [Laughs]

NM: Were you at home when he—when your father showed up?

CC: I don't recall.

NM: No? Oh.

CC: I don't remember. Um, but he, he wasn't well. The, the camp didn't [shakes his head]...he was always sick in his stomach. And he died...six years after. It was a traumatic experience for him.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And I can remember, my mom was young, she was 12 years younger.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: So if my dad was say...40...40, 42...mom would have been 30 years old. I was born when she was 18 years old! [Scoffs] So like, you can imagine—and I have memories that [looks up in thought]...the money that came in was very restrictive. I don't know whether dad had—they had a, a bank account, and that the government would only give them maybe 50 dollars a month. That was a lot of money, but...

NM: Yeah.

VC: Mm hmm.

CC: ...fif—it was allotted. They could not have more money than that. And I keep thinking, today I said, “How did my mother do it?”

[00:10:05]

NM: Mm hmm.

VC: Mm hmm.

CC: But they were big family, there was...eight brothers and sisters...

VC: So did they help?

CC: ...in her family. Oh yeah. They—everybody helped, you know. But I'm trying to think, like, going to St. Anne's school and my dad's in the—in a...

NM: What was that like?

CC: ...prison camp.

VC: What was that like?

NM: What—how did they mistreat you?

CC: I don't—

VC: Other—

CC: —I don't remember like—I don't remember, um, real out and out discrimination. There was always...because you know the Italians and garlic and pasta were...

NM: [Laughs]

CC: ...like...you know, that's out. [Laughs]

NM: [Laughs]

VC: [Laughs]

CC: That's not the in thing. [Chuckles]

NM: [Laughs]

VC: [Laughs]

CC: You know. [Chuckles] So, anyway... But dad came home and he only lived...he died in '52...a young man. [Nods] He was...yeah.

NM: Mm hmm. Now what did, what did he do prior to the internment? What, what was—what did he—

CC: He worked at Stelco, but then—

NM: And then—

CC: —down there the health, like, it would kill you, you know.

VC: Mm hmm.

NM: Did he go back to Stelco after?

CC: No. Somehow we had a rental property, we used to live off that. It was a triplex on Jackson Street West.

NM: Oh.

CC: And he would drive us there to collect the rent. [Laughs]



NM: Oh! [Laughs] Is that right?

CC: We'd [chuckles], we'd have to climb the stairs, you know. And...little by little, you know. And then I was getting older. Well, '52 I graduated in pharmacy.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Same year my dad died. So, immediately I was of help to the family.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: My sister was at Loretta Academy. Uh, my brother was at McMaster. So we, we managed, you know, we really managed.

VC: Where did you, where did you have your pharmacy?

CC: First of all I, I started working at Tamlin's Drug Store. It was, it was the Shopper's Drug Mart of today, right.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Tamlin's Drug Store. And I delivered on this big heavy bicycle... [Laughs]

NM: [Laughs]

CC: ...to Westdale. And they were at 17 King East, right next to, uh, Mills...China Shop, yeah. And I could remember working there, washing windows, washing floors, as an apprentice.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Okay. So then...the soldiers were coming out of the war, and they got preference to go to university...so I had to wait four years.

VC: Oh.

CC: So we went and I was like 20...23 when I went to school, like university, and now they're going at 19, right. And, uh, I graduated in pharmacy. And mom mortgaged her house so that I could buy a pharmacy at, uh, across the road from Gates Park.

NM: Oh yeah.

CC: I was so proud.

NM: Aww...

VC: So you went back to your old neighbourhood?

CC: No, uh, Main Street—

VC: Oh.

CC: —Gage and Main.

VC: Okay.

NM: Oh.

CC: So Barton and Sherman was quite a ways down.

VC: Okay. Okay.

CC: But I can remember [laughs]...buying the pharmacy in this gentleman's name who was Anglo-Saxon right. He says, "Okay, Capponi," he says, "I want my name off the front of this pharmacy within 30 days." [Makes a facial scared expression]

NM: [Laughs]

CC: [Pauses] He was ashamed that he had sold it to me. [Nods while speaking sadly]. I'm sure that was the reason.

NM: Oh...

CC: He says—well, you know, that was in '50...'56, '58 so there was still a lot of sentiment—

NM: Still.

CC: —going on, eh. But I made a success of it.

NM: Good.

CC: And then they opened, uh, Dr. Ricky[?] and Dr. Shinny[?] opened a clinic, down on Barton Street...and they asked me to open a pharmacy there and...

NM: Good.

CC: And I understood Italian, I couldn't speak it too well, but I recall all the immigrants, in the '50s, late '50s, coming over, and where would they go first? Chester Pharmacy.

NM: Oh. [Laughs]

CC: [Laughs] That was their home ground because, there were only a couple of Italian-speaking doctors and they didn't, they didn't [unclear]...they were only 18 year olds.

NM: Hmm.

CC: And um...they'd come from near and far and I would type the labels in Italian.

VC: Oh good.

CC: Because my uncle helped me. [Laughs]

VC: Yeah? [Laughs]

CC: I'd say—

VC: You don't know how to spell.

CC: —“Okay, how do I write ‘One tablet three times a day after meals.’” [Speaking with an exaggerated Italian accent] And he'd put it in Italian and I would type it, we didn't have computers.

NM: Yeah.

CC: I loved that job. And my mother being widowed...I didn't know what to do about her, like, you know, she was...pretty depressed. And I says, "Why don't you come and work in the pharmacy?"

NM: Okay.

CC: My mother who was a housewife, like made gnocchi and pasta and that. But she was born in Canada, she was born in Hamilton. She came to the pharmacy, let me tell you, the best clerk in the— [Laughs]

NM: Oh good. [Laughs]

CC: —in the entire world.

NM: Okay.

CC: Because she spoke Italian, all the immigrant young guys...and young women, right. And she would teach them hygiene.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Like you know they were farmers, right?

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And mom that was—she was God to them.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And they'd come in and ask her, you know—they're young married people, the young—they didn't know anything. [Shakes head]

NM: Mm hmm.

VC: Had, had she, um, had any consequences of being, uh, the wife of an internee?

CC: I suppose. You know, she would never show it. But can you imagine like a...a 30, 32 year old. All of a sudden she's more or less widowed, right?

NM: Mm hmm. Yeah, with kids too.

CC: And worrying about dad and...

NM: Mm hmm.

VC: Did she have to go out to work?

CC: Say it?

VC: Did she have to go out to work?

[00:15:38]

CC: [Inhales deeply] She [pauses]—we had a home.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And it was a triplex so she rented it.

NM: Okay.

CC: So she'd get 50 dollars, and 40 dollars. [Laughs] I'd say, how can you make it on that, but in those days, you know, it was pretty good. So she survived. And at the pharmacy when she worked she'd bring us breakfast and lunch.

VC: [Chuckles]

NM: Oh, very nice.

CC: Her poor son, you know [chuckles]...wasn't eating well.

NM: Starving student...

CC: Yeah.

NM: That—

CC: But anyhow it was a good relationship. I don't know...you know with...Italian women I think they were strong, they didn't show...you know, they just didn't crumble, eh.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: No, they... Yup.

NM: Now did your father share any stories about the internment, afterwards?

CC: You know I don't recall.

NM: To you or to your, to your mom.

CC: Only that he worked in the kitchen and they made homemade pasta [says in a sing-song manner] and things that were...nice things to hear, you know.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Like I don't think he was—they were mistreated. [Shakes head] They were not, no.

NM: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

CC: I think...the soldiers were very sympathetic with them. I really do. My uncle's in the army and they took him out of the army. [Laughs] That was Sam [Samuel John] Mostacci.

NM: Mm hmm.

VC: Oh.

CC: I don't think he was in there too long though...they let him out.



NM: Hmm.

CC: But anyway there were a lot of horror stories that, you know, them picking up this old man, he must have been 85 years old he, he was crippled! He couldn't even walk to the corner. They said he was a threat or whatever they, or whatever they meant, I don't know. They got the wrong guy.

NM: Oh.

CC: [Laughs] They, they, it was another...of the same name, but a younger man.

NM: Wow, isn't that something.

CC: [Shakes head and makes sound with mouth]

NM: So did your father do anything in, in camp to keep busy other than—

CC: In the kitchen.

NM: Yeah.

VC: Oh.

CC: And I guess he used to make these wooden boxes, whatever they were. He wasn't musically inclined like, uh, like some of, uh, Elio's [Salciccioli] friends. [Makes sound with mouth]

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: No he, uh, he just led a quiet, you know...

VC: And did he bring any of tho—the boxes back with him?

CC: Yes, we had them, but I don't know where they are. They're made out of pine and pretty nice, you know. [Laughs]

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: And all of them brought back stuff. [Pauses] Came back with one suitcase and...all this junk. [Laughs]

VC: [Laughs]

CC: Training. [Laughs] Yup.

NM: So you—how did your, your father experience, uh—

CC: The whole—

NM: What would he—

CC: [Shakes head] He was never bitter. He—

NM: No.

CC: He never, you know, he never complained. Just, that was life, like the Italian...philosophy, you know, *que sera sera*. But...you know.

NM: Did he stay in touch with any other internees, afterwards?

CC: Well they were all around there like, um, Benny [Panfilo] Ferri and Frank [Francesco] Ferri. Well, they were all a community, but he never socialized. [Shakes his head]

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: Dad never...he was sort of quiet.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: I think he came from a part of Italy where they're...[laughs] I hate to say it, more sophisticated. [Laughs]

NM: [Laughs]

CC: Like, the *Marchegian'* and *Abruzzese*, uh, you know...

NM: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

CC: But anyway he never...no. Hmm.

NM: Hmm. And how do you view this whole experience...of the internment?

CC: Well, I think it was always in my mind but it never evidenced itself, till you guys came along. Um...definitely there was an injustice, and maybe...you know, it was [William Lyon] Mackenzie King...and maybe they were...panic-stricken because, like, Italy went to war, and all these Italians in Canada and we've given them a new life and everything. So...I think dad was always...thankful for what he had accomplished. [Nods]

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: He very proud—he died about a month before I graduated. [Shakes head]

NM: Oh, that's a shame.

VC: That's a shame. Oh, that's a real shame.

CC: He would have been so proud. [Laughs and says with some sadness]

NM: Oh, I'm sure—

CC: He'd probably walk up and down—

NM: I'm sure he's been watching you since.

CC: —in front of the pharmacy [laughs], saying, "Get in there!" [Laughs and points with finger]

[Laughter in the background]

CC: Yeah. Uh, well... But mum died, um, in a traumatic...car accident. My brother—it was her birthday. The day before my brother picked her up—he lived in Toronto. He was taking her to Toronto to Eaton’s to buy a beautiful dress.

NM: Oh...

VC: Oh...

CC: He got in a car accident, she was killed immediately.

VC: Oh boy.

CC: [Makes a scoffing sound] What a—hmm... [Shakes head looks away]

NM: Tragedy. What a tragedy.

CC: Yeah. And my brother survived, but he was never the same. He died—not at—uh, because of the accident he just died five years ago.

NM: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

CC: [Sniffles and nods] Yup.

NM: Oh.

[00:20:41]

CC: But other than that...you know—

NM: Any others—

CC: —as I say until you guys brought up all this...[laughs] material [laughter in the background], you know, we'd talk about it, like, I have a daughter and son...

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: They're both adopted. The son's out West...he is so proud. [Laughs]

NM: Mm hmm.

VC: Mm hmm.

CC: And, um, I, you know, I tell 'em briefly, but they don't understand, do they?

NM: Yeah.

CC: I, I don't think they can fathom it. Like, Angela, my daughter, who's in Hamilton...she-she's in-interested and when I tell her, you know, your grandpa was in jail [makes a face and laughs]...you know, what's that?

VC: [Laughs]

CC: Like you know...

NM: Yeah.

CC: But they're proud of the name Capponi and...

NM: Good.

CC: ...that's very important.

VC: Yes...that is.

NM: Alright.

CC: But other than that...um...I don't think I had any other experiences accepting—there were a few of my friends whose fathers' were in the camp like [Sabatino] Bartolini...

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: ...[Francesco] Zaffiro.

VC: Yeah.

NM: Now did you talk to your friends about the experience, afterwards, like amongst yourselves?

CC: We'd, uh, we'd maybe...no-not joke about it, but...we'd look upon it and say—

NM: [Unclear]

CC: —you know, they were [smiles]—they had fun up there. They were making boxes and whatever, like, doing menial...jobs. But I think the experience when we went up to Petawawa was...[rolls eyes] oh deadly. It was a cold winter, it was freezing. And, you know, Petawawa...  
[Laughs]

VC: Oh yeah.

CC: ...it could be pretty cold.

NM: [Unclear]

CC: And, and the—when I saw that, uh, video of, uh, *Barbed Wire [and Mandolins]* and, and I looked at the fences, I could—then I could realize—‘cause they didn’t take pictures. [Nods]

NM: No.

CC: There were no pictures came out of the camp. I don’t think? You run into any?

VC: No, none.

NM: No.

CC: Like...it’s amazing.

NM: Yeah.

CC: Anyway...it’s all gone...passed. [Smiles]



VC: Do you think it's a good idea to, to, um, to talk about it now?

CC: [Sighs and looks up in thought] I think some people are more passionate about...what was done. I think...in our community they just accepted it, you know, the Italian, well, you know, that happened, let's move on.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: You know. They have a hate for Mussolini—although, they tell me, Mussolini did a lot of wonderful things, as a dictator. Like, he was almost a good dictator because there was a lot of bad stuff going on in Europe, in Italy, all over, eh. The, uh, feudalism. In fact, my uncle...owned six farms, and they were feudal, you know like, they share, share, crop share, whatever it is. And, uh, then when I went over...in 1954—my mother had never been to Italy so we went over—and, uh, my uncle was getting old, and I thought my, my dad was a partner.

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: “Dad, you send money over.” He'd say, “Send money over...I got you a job at Stelco.” ‘Cause my uncle had worked at Stelco, but then went back to Italy.

NM: Oh I see.

CC: So he was going to accumulate land, that was the thing, right. And of these six farms that I thought, you know, would be wonderful for mum, because you know, money was a little short. I said, “Where are the farms?” He says, “Oh, they went bad.” He says, “I, I had to give them away.” And, and, and then I looked at his children; they had nice cars... [Says with a smile]

NM: Oh! [Laughs]

CC: ...nice homes. We never did, we never did retrieve any money, not 10 cents. And dad would send money, his brother, you know, because I guess a lot of immigrants when they came over didn't expect to stay forever. [Shakes head]

NM: Mm hmm.

CC: They all had, "I'm going back home." But they never did. Small percentage of them did I think. [Nods]

VC: Yeah. It varies a lot.

NM: My father sent money back to his mom.

CC: All of them did, didn't they? And now when they go back, like the children...[shakes head] says, "Oh no well we had to give it away" or "It wasn't worth anything" or "The farm went into...disrepair and everything was bad and..." [Laughs]

NM: Oh dear.

CC: All the stories. I've heard, like, younger people than me...they've gone back and their sister and brothers, still had the property. [Shakes head] "Oh no, well...oh, you know, things are not very good." [Smiles] In the meantime, they got these big homes with the, with the olive gardens. [Laughs]

NM: Yeah. [Laughs]

VC: [Laughs]

CC: Anyway, that's...life.

VC: That's life. Okay.

NM: That's—

CC: I don't think there's anything I can add. [Looks at the camera]

NM: That's good.

CC: No.

VC: Good.

NM: Well, thank you very much.

[Fades out at 00:25:36]

**[End of interview]**