

Summary of Interview by Alyssa Kwiatkowski

Questions	
Date of Interview	The date of the interview was Oct. 10 th , 2024.
Name of Interviewee	Domenic Pasqualino.
What age group/generation are you in?	Born 1959, a Baby Boomer.
Question 1 What first brought you to Canada?	<p>Alyssa: Would you be able to tell me a bit about what first brought you and your family to Canada?</p> <p>Domenic: I came to Canada when I was very young. My parents brought me here when I was two years old. That is what brought me to Canada. We subsequently moved back to Italy when I was eleven years old, and then moved back when I was seventeen.</p>
Follow up	<p>Alyssa: Where you already acquainted with anyone in Canada before you arrived, family?</p> <p>Domenic: When I first arrived I was very young, two years old. Coming back I was seventeen, and knew the language. I knew my relatives, my uncles, my cousins, and a lot of friends that I had left behind when I was eleven. I did move back into the neighbourhood that I was in before.</p> <p>Alyssa: May I ask, how did you come to Canada? What means of transportation?</p> <p>Domenic: By air.</p> <p>Alyssa: And so, you came with your parents initially, and then you returned with your parents?</p> <p>Domenic: Yes, with my parents. Actually, with my mother, and my sister, and my two brothers. My father, he moved one year ahead of us. In 1976 he moved back to Canada, and in 1977 we moved back to Canada, one year after.</p> <p>Alyssa: What year was it when you initially move to Canada, when you where two?</p> <p>Domenic: It would've been 1961.</p>
Question 2 What was the journey to Canada like?	<p>Alyssa: May I ask, what was the journey to Canada like for you?</p> <p>Domenic: When I came to Canada I, obviously I don't remember as I was young, I don't know. In 1977 I remember coming to Canada, a bit unwillingly. Being in my teens, I had already made a lot of friends in Italy. I became used to the Italian lifestyle, the Italian style of schooling, and I didn't want to move back to Canada. So it was a little bit difficult moving back for me, but I did come back knowing the Canadian culture and knowing the language. Obviously I didn't have the language of a seventeen year old, so my vocabulary was that of a younger man.</p>
Follow-up	Alyssa: Sorry, just circling back, where in Canada did you first arrive?

	<p>Domenic: Thunder Bay.</p> <p>Alyssa: So at what point did you move to Milton?</p> <p>Domenic: 1996. I had a young family, my kids were ranging in ages from 3-6 years old. In Thunder Bay I noticed there wasn't any future for them, because the economy wasn't all that well, there wasn't much opportunity. I knew that the better schools were in the GTA. I thought that there would be more opportunity if I was to move away from Thunder Bay. My thought was to move to Vancouver, where there was a lot of opportunity. My wife however, she thought that the GTA would be a better opportunity for us because she had family over here. Specifically, here in Milton. So that's why we chose Milton. Once in Milton, you know to make her happy I thought it would be the right thing, and it worked out well for us.</p> <p>Alyssa: When you moved to Milton, you said it was to provide better opportunities. Would you happen to know, was there an active Italian community at the time? Was that part of what drew you both as well?</p> <p>Domenic: Specifically, Milton was our choice because my wife had her parents over here. So that was the drawing card. For me it was the right thing to do as well, because of my job I knew I would be working in Toronto and that there would be a lot of commuting. I thought that living in Milton, even though I would have to commute to Toronto from Milton for my job as a chef, that it would be a good opportunity for my wife to be near her family if she needed anything. My kids were very small at the time, so it worked out very very well.</p>
<p>Question 3</p> <p>What inspired you to become a chef?</p>	<p>Alyssa: So you mentioned that you were and are a chef. What inspired you, to become a chef?</p> <p>Domenic: Specifically, I worked in Italy in a restaurant. I worked for my cousin. I worked there while going to school; I worked there in the kitchen of his restaurant, and I also worked in the dining room. I liked that the job over there, working in the summer and after school, it gave me the opportunity to learn. I would meet people from all over the world. I thought it was nice, that I was able to meet people from Germany, people from France, people from America, people from Canada. It was an excellent opportunity for me to see the world, in a sense, without having to move. I really appreciated that job when I was young. And I liked too, that the job itself, it's a welcoming type of job in the sense that it gives you the opportunity to entertain people. You look after them, you serve them with good food, good service and they appreciate that very much. It's kind of what we would do at our house, welcoming people and entertaining them when they come to visit. So basically, that is an extension of what we are at the restaurant. We welcome people, we give them a little welcome and make sure they feel comfortable to visit us. It is an extension of what we are in our own home, and it gives us the opportunity to express our culture. Italy has a lot to offer, in the arts and the culinary industry. It gives us an opportunity to express our culture, and that is what I really like the most about this job.</p>
<p>Follow-up</p>	<p>Alyssa: So that first job in your cousin's restaurant, when did you start working there?</p> <p>Domenic: I was eleven years old, and I only went to help out a bit. Then I got to like the job so I ended up working there for a few hours after school. School there would end at about 12 o'clock, that's a nice thing about going to school in Italy. At 12 o'clock we would leave school, but it was six days a week instead of five. So your days would be shorter but you would have a longer school week. So I would go help him for a few hours at work, and then I'd be free for the rest of the day. So usually it would be from 12-3 o'clock. Then in the summer I would work longer hours. As I got older, I became a waiter in his restaurant. That gave me the opportunity to learn as much as I could about the industry</p> <p>Alyssa: May I ask, where in Italy did your family live, where was the restaurant?</p> <p>Domenic: It was in Southern Italy, in the region of Reggio Calabria on the Ionic coast.</p> <p>Alyssa: What was the restaurant's name?</p> <p>Domenic: It was 'Ristorante d'William'. It doesn't exist anymore but it was very popular.</p>

<p>Question 4</p> <p>What was your first impression of Canada?</p>	<p>Alyssa: So you answered this question a little bit in your prior responses, but can you tell me a little bit about what you remember of your first impression of Canada and whether you faced any barriers/obstacles?</p> <p>Domenic: My memory of Canada from my younger years was pretty good. I had a very happy childhood. I, my family lived next door to my uncle and aunt. A couple of blocks away was my other uncle. I remember playing with my cousins. And I remember the early sixties was a very good time, a promising time in Canada. So I remember a very happy childhood in Canada. My teachers were all very good, and it was a very good time I would think. A very happy childhood. I made a lot of friends, and of course when you're a kid you have some of those problems, you get into some scraps with other kids because of race, or the way you speak, or the way you look. But it's all behind me, and just part of growing up I think.</p>
<p>Question 5</p> <p>Did you bring any items of importance with you when you came to Canada?</p>	<p>Alyssa: Did you bring any items of importance when you came to Canada, photographs, family heirlooms, mementos?</p> <p>Domenic: Yes, I brought a lot of pictures, some books that were special to me. I brought those over with me when we came to Canada in 1977.</p> <p>Alyssa: Would you be willing to share some of them with us, and have them photographed?</p> <p>Domenic: Yes, something in particular that I've asked my cousins and my brother to give me which I will forward to you are landing papers for my grandfather, who actually came here in the late twenties. I never met him, but I understand he was here for a period of six to seven years. He worked in Fort William, which is now Thunder Bay. He worked for a company called James Murphy Co. He had a position of importance, as he was a foreman there and was responsible for the payroll of the workers. Of the Italian workers, and so he had a fair amount of responsibility. So he made a little bit of money when he was in Fort William, and then moved back to Italy and bought some land there. He was doing very well there, but unfortunately he died very young, and left a young family. His children, my dad and my uncles, they were maybe seven to eight, ranging from seven to about eleven/twelve years old. Because they didn't have the leadership of their father, and the opportunities in Southern Italy weren't that great at the time they ended up moving to Canada. Had he stayed here I probably would have been third generation Italian Canadian. And had he lived I very likely would not have moved to Canada.</p>
<p>Follow up</p>	<p>Alyssa: I just want to make sure I have the details straight. So your grandfather moved from Southern Italy, to Fort William. Then he moved back to his hometown?</p> <p>Domenic: Yes.</p> <p>Alyssa: So after his passing, his family moved to Canada?</p> <p>Domenic: Not his entire family. His wife stayed in Italy, but his children they moved over to Canada. Some of them moved to Fort William, two of them moved to Pittsburgh because it was a large family. One of the daughters moved to Australia, and two of the daughters stayed in Italy. It was a family of eight, so a</p>

	<p>large family. There were two brothers in Pittsburgh, three brothers in Fort William, one daughter in Australia and two daughters in Italy.</p> <p>Alyssa: Those are all very different places. Do you know what might have drawn them to those locations specifically?</p> <p>Domenic: Fort William I think was because my grandfather had been there before, that was the reason why three of the brothers moved there. Pittsburgh was because one of the brothers, his wife’s parents had been there. They had lived there and worked in the coal mines I imagine. The people emigrating from Italy would often go places where either their friends have been or their relatives have been. As far as my aunt, she moved to Australia because her husband decided to move there, to Sydney Australia.</p> <p>Alyssa: Going back to the documents, would you be willing to allow them to be studied and make available to the larger community?</p> <p>Domenic: Yes, I think so.</p> <p>Alyssa: Thank you</p>
<p>Question 6 Did you exchange letters with relatives in Italy?</p>	<p>Alyssa: Not all of your family moved to Canada or the same location, did you exchange letters with your relatives in Italy? Or phone calls perhaps?</p> <p>Domenic: Phone calls with my relatives in Italy?</p> <p>Alyssa: Or letters, yes. Were you in contact with them?</p> <p>Domenic: Yes, via phone call for the most part yes.</p>
<p>Question 7 Where is “home” for you, and why?</p>	<p>Alyssa: May I ask, where is “home” for you and why?</p> <p>Domenic: I think home for me is Canada. I have lived most of my life in Canada. Although, I do appreciate that I moved to Italy between the ages of eleven to seventeen because it gave me the opportunity to understand where I come from, learn the Italian language, to learn the culture, and to truly understand Italy through the eyes of a young teen having gone to school there. So I think the advantage that has given me is that I am comfortable in any culture. I can adapt to Canadian culture, and I can adapt to the culture in Italy; I have a lot of respect for both. And I can understand the British background that Canada offers, I respect that very much. I also understand the Italian culture, its contribution given to history, and all the good things that Italy has to offer. Because it is a very special country, with a lot to offer.</p>

<p>Question 8</p> <p>Looking back on your experience, is there anything you would have done differently?</p>	<p>Alyssa: Looking back on your experience, is there anything you would have done differently?</p> <p>Domenic: No, I don't think so. I think everything is pretty good. Obviously you look back at some of your mistakes and think, "Oh I could have done this better, and that better". I think everybody has that, that things could have been different; but I am very happy with the way things have gone, and am very happy with my life. I'm very happy to have been part of Canada, to live in a Canada that offers freedom and opportunity for everybody. And I'm happy for the contributions that the Italians have given to Canada, like one of the first Italians John Cabot, Giovanni Caboto. One of the first explorers that came to Canada, sailing for the English. And a venetian merchant, I think he came more for opportunities of commerce and exploration, not to fight and not to conquer. Sailing for the English and ending up in Newfoundland, I guess he would have called it 'nuova terra' at the time. He came along with his son Sebastian, Sebastiano. So I'm very proud of that, that heritage. I think that's a special thing that I am particularly fond of.</p>
<p>Question 9</p> <p>What inspired you to found Pasqualino's?</p>	<p>Alyssa: So I know that you worked in your cousin's restaurant in Italy. After coming to Canada, what inspired you to found Pasqualino's?</p> <p>Domenic: For the longest time, I didn't work in restaurants when I moved back to Canada. I worked with my father, and I worked as a painter, as a painting contractor. But I still had this dream of opening up a restaurant. So in my late twenties I opened up a restaurant in Thunder Bay. Things didn't work out for me, and didn't go as well as I wanted. So that was kind of one of the reasons that I ended up moving to Milton, to the GTA; because there was better opportunity. Once moving to the GTA, moving to Milton, I worked in several restaurants in downtown Toronto before opening up a restaurant here in Milton in 2002, in the same spot I am now. It's just that is was much smaller than what it is today. We opened up with a small 50 seat restaurant. And I kind of grew as Milton grew, because at that time Milton only had 28,000 inhabitants. I'm not sure what it is now, but well over 130,000/140,000 perhaps. So it was kind of nice, growing with the town and growing in a place where there was good opportunity. We expanded in 2015, from a 50 seat restaurant to a 120 seat restaurant. So since 2002 we are still here and still doing very well.</p>
<p>Follow up</p>	<p>Alyssa: When founding the restaurant, what was that like? What was your experience, where there any difficulties you had to face or steps you had to take?</p> <p>Domenic: To open up the restaurant? It was very, very difficult. We put everything we had on the line, and money was very tight. We took over the building in June 2002, and finally opened up on November 4th of the same year. But during that time we went over budget on the construction, so we kept spending money and had no money coming in. It was very, very difficult. But luckily once we opened, my wife Maria and I, I was looking after the kitchen and she looked after the front of the house. Business was very, very good. We were kind of in the right place at the right time, and offering the right product at the right price. And it was at a time when Milton was growing, and at a time that there was definitely a need for my type of restaurant in Milton. So looking back at some of the difficulties they look easy now, but at the time they were quite challenging and we faced our fair share of problems. I think it has to do a lot with your family life, you know? You have support from your spouse which is important. I had support from my brothers as well; my brother Tony, Tessa's dad, helped me out quite a bit. Tessa's mom Laura she also ended up helping me. My brother Claudio gave me his credit card to buy some wines. My father helped me out a bit too, to make sure that we opened up on time. I think the fact that I had family to fall back on, and to get that help from was essential to our success. Without that it would have been a little more difficult.</p> <p>Alyssa: So your family was always very supportive?</p> <p>Domenic: Absolutely, we're always there for each other. And that's the thing, you know? Because of our</p>

	<p>culture, and because of the fact that there is a lot of importance on extended family, I think that was a key to our success. Absolutely.</p> <p>Alyssa: So do you have family working here today?</p> <p>Domenic: Yes, my kids. And my wife, she still works here. She looks after the front of the house. My nieces they've all worked here-part time. My children have worked here since a young age; the older ones don't work here as much, but they still come to help out. They're both lawyers. My son Carlo, he is a lawyer but he's been working here since high school and helping out. He still buys our wines, even though he's a lawyer and has got his own day job so to speak. My daughter, she's a lawyer but works with RBC; and she still looks after the social media of the restaurant. My youngest son, he studied political science and got his masters in political science, but he's looking after the kitchen of my restaurant because he liked the business. So it looks like our business is going to be around for another generation, which makes me very happy as well. My nephew, Maria's nephew, Francesco, the only job he's had has been here at Pasqualino's. He started with me in 2002 part-time washing dishes, then he became a helper in the kitchen. He eventually became a bartender, and now he is looking after the food and beverage program. He's a sommelier and a walking encyclopedia on wines and spirits. He's working at the bar now, and a very important part of my restaurant who attracts a lot of customers.</p>
<p>Question 11 What inspired your menu?</p>	<p>Alyssa: You mentioned that the restaurant, it was able to fill a sort of niche in Milton. Was there anything in particular that inspired your menu items?</p> <p>Domenic: I think the foods, they were inspired by my experience working as a chef and the items that we would eat at home. For example the tiramisu, that is my mother's recipe. She used to come in and make the tiramisu for me. The same with the gnocchi, she would come in and make the gnocchi. In the early days she was here quite often, helping me to prepare those items. We have somebody making them for us now, but always respecting my mother's recipe. Those are the key items that are still on the menu today, that are from my mother. And a lot of the traditional foods, sometimes we'll do very traditional foods that are inspired by either my mother or my mother-in-law.</p>
<p>Follow up</p>	<p>Alyssa: Is there a dish that you would consider your specialty, or your favourite to cook?</p> <p>Domenic: I think all of the dishes that I cook at the restaurant are my favourite, I like them all. I think they're great, and that they're a reflection of what I would like to see on a menu when I go out. So basically the way we looked at our menu, the way I looked at the menu, is "what would we like to eat if we were to go out to a restaurant?". And that's what we put on the menu. As far as signature items there's one, there are several, but there's one in particular. It's a linguine with seafood, baked in parchment paper. Everywhere I go I bring that with me. I've worked with it in other restaurants where I was the chef, and when I opened up in Milton I kept that on the menu, the "Pasqualino's seafood linguine". It's still on the menu, for the past 22 years, and as long as Pasqualino's is still here that will still be on the menu no matter what; even though some of the items come and go, because we change our menu according to the season. So there is always something fresh that we offer,</p>
<p>Question 12 Is there anything further you would like to add to your story?</p>	<p>Alyssa: So I think I have asked pretty much all of the questions that I have. Is there anything you would like to add to your story?</p> <p>Domenic: No, I think that's it. I don't think there is anything else I'd like to add. Aside from the fact that I hope it's a good story for you. I know it may sound... I'm very happy to be in Canada for the most part, even though there is a lot of difficulty today in Canada. I think my parents made the right choice to move here.</p>
<p>Follow up</p>	<p>Alyssa: Sorry, I just had one more question. I saw on your website, that the restaurant is partnered with the Milton Laison College?</p> <p>Domenic: The school is no longer in force. We sold that school because one of our partners, Giovanni, passed away sometime ago and we decided to not continue with the school. So the Milton Laison College at Pasqualino's is no longer operating, and it's been hard to remove that from the website. Once it is on the website it seems to be next to impossible to remove.</p>

Conclusion	<p>Alyssa: Well, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me. I truly appreciate it, and I'm sure that your story will be invaluable for this project.</p> <p>Domenic: Ok, thank you. I appreciate it.</p>