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TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH

CARLO CAVANNA

911 Liftwood Road

Liftwood ~~Manor~~ Estates

Wilmington, Delaware

Interviewer:

Francis J. Fierro

Summer, 1967

Transcriber:

Irene H. Long

Winter, 1968

Where were you born?

I was born in a little town, Becciala.*

Becciala?

Becciala, Province of Piacenza is nearby..

It's near Bari?

Nearby, I said nearby.

Oh, nearby.

It's in the north of Italy.

In the north of Italy?

Yeh.

What big city was it near?

Well, Piacenza was the big city.

It was the big city, Piacenza?

Yeh, near the Po River there.

Uh, as a boy, what did you do in Italy?

As a boy, I do several thing. I mean, uh, I had a lot, a lot of ambition to be a mechanic. Maybe see something, a machine, anything that moves or turn around. See that - see the locomotives - thing like that. I like to see that. I like to see those things over there.

Was there anything.....?

I

Excuse me. Go ahead.

'At's all, no, nothing else.

Was there anything special that made you like this sort of thing? Did your father do this sort?

No, my father and my mother they were - my mother dressmaker and my father was a tailor. I like to see the machine

*This word should be spelled Betola although it appears throughout the transcription as Becciala.

over there. They had two machines. Singer machines, I remember, (chuckles) distinctly. (chuckles)

Yes.

At that times it was sixty years ago, you know.

Yes.

Maybe more.

The Singer machine.....

I'm seventy years old now, you know. Singer machines they were in Italy already.

Uh huh.

Yeh.

I thought Singer machines going to Italy was a relatively modern thing. I didn't realize that the Singer was in Italy at that time.

At that time, yes. The only one was over there too, I think because I never see any other machine there.

Really?

Yep.

Let's see they call it in Italy, the "Singe - er."

The "Singe - er," that's right, the "Singe - er."

Yes, -uh- this was, this was quite a change your going into mechanics your father being a tailor?

Yep.

Was it customary in Italy.....

Well,.....

In those days to follow in the tracks of your father?

Well...was.....we were in a big family, you know, I mean four brothers and one sister -uh- very poor to tell you the truth, you know. (chuckles)

This was not too uncommon.

Yeh, right. It was a small town but we didn't possess

anything, you know. All most of the people possess a little ground and thing like that, but we didn't possess nothing.

(chuckles) We were plain, plain worker. That's all. I mean....

Yes, well, how old were you when you started going to school?

Went to school? We starts to go to school six, six years old.

At the age of six?

Six.

And how many years did you go to school?

I went to school....around....three years, three.... a little over three years. I was about in the third grade, and after it was a family, they had a grocery store in Genoa. They were from that town where I come from, you know.

Yes.

And they need a boy, you know, delivery boy there... -uh-....to get him cheaper, you know, they got him from the town over there.

From?

So they suggest me. I go there...in Genoa. I ----- I never saw a train before there, especially a tunnel. I remember I went through the tunnel (chuckles) from a Piacenza to go to Genoa - it's a big tunnel.

Yes.

I pass there two years ago. We were there again. My memory.....it's over a half hour there.

Half hour in the tunnel?

In the tunnel! And it's pretty long.

Yes.

What they call a... tunnel and at that time -
all electric now - it's all electric in Italy now.

Yes.

At that time it was all coal and tin down there, you
know.

Yes.

And -uh- it was a terrific smoke inside there,
you know. (chuckles)

The smoke outside the train?

Yeh, smoke outside the train.

Cinders all over the place?

Yeh. Finally we arrive in Genoa. They put me on the
train in Piacenza.

Yes, well, how did you get to Piacenza? Did you walk
there?

No, Piacenza.... they took me to Piacenza....the family
over here; they took me to Piacenza; they put me on the train, they
told -uh- that train over there, this boy's going to be - is going
to be go to Genoa. So and so. Genoa's going to be somebody to
take me there. All right! I arrive in Genoa that time. We got
out of the train. I don't know where to go. I was there! Nobody
was there!

No one was there to meet you?

Yeh, finally one of those porters told me, "What are you
doing there?" You know. "What are you doing over here?" he says.
"Well," I says, "I'm supposed to -uh-, I'm supposed to get somebody
to take me but I don't know." And you know the way they speak over
there; they speak different from over here.

Yes.

At that time they all speak adialect...

Yes.

It's pretty hard dialect, you know, Genoese dialect.

(chuckles)

Yes, Genoese dialect, yes.

It's a hard to understand. Finally we had a little bit, a packet, couple rags in my thing, you know. I went out. Finally I saw a lady over there. And the lady says, "Hey child." You know, she says "Carletto." That's what she call me. "I didn't even see you. I was going on now. I didn't see you," he says. "Well, I was inside," I says. (Laughs)

Was she waiting for you outside the train station?

Yeh, by the train station. You see they couldn't come in, you know.

They couldn't come in?

They couldn't come in the station. That's why.

Oh, they wouldn't let them come in.

No, they wouldn't let them come in that time. I don't know why.

Oh.

That's why I was there.

That's unusual.

Yeh, that's I was really worried about that.

Yes. So you went from a.....

Piacenza.

Piacenza to Genoa on the train.

By train.

How old were you then?

Ten years old.

You were ten years old?

Ten years old, little over ten years old.

Uh huh, had you finished your schooling by that time?

I didn't finish the school because the school was six, six grade. Oh no, fifth, five grades, yeh.

Five grades?

Five grades, I didn't finish, no.

And you went to the third?

I went to the third grade; after the third grade I went over to there.

And when you were ten years old, you finished the third grade and you.....

Yes.

And you went to Genoa?

Genoa.

O.K., now when you were in Genoa, you worked

I worked over there - delivery boy.

In the.....?

I, they start me right away there, you know.

Yes.

I don't know nothing about Genoa, no, nothing -----
bout the. Used to explain me, this is the route. Go over there.
This is the route; go over there. And they ...and those big....
they got big apartment over there, too, you know.

Yes.

Especially that time, you know, and they got the -
they call them "numero-interno" and "numero-esterno." I mix it
up, you know, the number over there. The numero-esterno with the
numero-interno, you know. I made a mistakes right away the first
day. (Laughter)

Well, what was the difference between this numero-in-
terno and numero-esterno?

Numero-interno means you go in the apartment and esterno is outside. The nu-, numero-esterno is outside and interno you go the number of the apartment.

Oh, in other words, the numero-esterno was the number of the building.

Of the building.

And the numero-interno was the number of the individual apartment inside.

Individual apartment inside.

Uh huh.

And they tell you nothing else - esterno, interno.

Yes. (Laughter)

Mix it up - interno, esterno.

So you had a real time there.

Well, a tough time in the beginning. But after while I got to know Genoa pretty, pretty good, you know.

Uh huh.

I was going around, around over there. All of Genoa there was pretty good, I mean. I stood there about a year.

You stayed there about a year?

'Bout a year.

And then what did you do then?

Then 'bout a year my father, I don't know, my father was one of those ----- over there. He come over Genoa and got me there. He got me home anyway. I was very, very unhappy over there in Genoa, you know, very unhappy.

Oh were you? Why were you unhappy in Genoa?

Well, a, I miss all my friends, you know. A small boy - take him out from the family and going in the different..... that's another state from me.

Yes.

Different language, different everything, you know.

Yes, yes.

Very unhappy.

It was entirely a new life, wasn't it?

Oh sure. I remember one night - I explain all the time. I had a small bed. Sleep, I sleep in a small bed, you know. Ahhh - high as that, maybe a little lower, and I was dreaming I was home. Home I used to go with people over there. I mean with my friends over there. We used to go in the creek over there, you know.

Yeh.

All summer, I was very happy, you know, in the creek. And after, I woke up - I woke up. I don't know if I was in Becciala or if I was in Genoa.

Yes.

Finally I said to be sure I put my hand, I know, I put my hand and I touch. I touch the floor. Oh boy, my heart went sinking. (Laughter)

Yeh.

I say I'm in Genoa.

Just by touching the floor you could tell the difference?

By touching the floor, yeh.

What was the difference in the floor?

Well, that Becciala in my home, we had the beds very high.

Ahhhhh, yes.

See over there in Genoa was very low. (Laughter) It was like a cot, you know.

Uh huh.

But they had a nice apartment there and everything.

Now after you went home with your father, -ah- you were eleven years old, right? There, after one year?

My.....yeh.

What did you do back in Becciala?

Becciala, back over there....Becciala.... See Becciala was not too much place to work. I had some parents, some relative in - near Piacenza there.

Yes.

Was all....my cousin had a small shop, you know, those a what they call "fabriferro," you know.

Fabriferro? What a blacksmith shop?

Blacksmith shop, yes, that's right. And a I used to help him. I went over there, his family over there. I stood there oh 'bout couple years, maybe more. You know, I was going back and forth once in awhile, you know.

Learning the blacksmith trade?

With the bicycle. And after that, I think I was over there till about fourteen or fifteen years old, yeh, yes. And after one of my brother went to Paris to work. He was older than me. He was three years older than me. He was about seventeen, eighteen years old, yes. So he wrote to me. He says He send me the money, he sent me - what - about forty lira, you know. He say, "You better come over here," he says. You know because I was already pretty good strong that time, you know.

Yes.

Even fourteen years old - fourteen, fifteen years old - I was pretty strong. So, "You better come to Paris," he says. So I took a train and I went to Paris.

And you were at that time about sixteen years old.

Ummmm. Not even.

Not even sixteen?

No, not even sixteen years old, no.

What year was that?

Uh.... 19..... 12, 13.

1912, 1913.

That's right.

Yes. Once you got to Paris, what did you do?

I do? I lay.....I was a stone mason helper, stone mason helper, yeh. I was pretty strong -----. Stone mason. I was a little young but, but, but my, my built, you know, was pretty good, pretty good.

The best, yes.

I stood over there since the wars began, you know, the First World War.

You stayed there till the First World War began?

Yeh.

In 1914?

1914.

Yes, and then what did you do when the war began?

War began - we were in Paris all day. Nobody can get out. You know when the war was very close.

Yes.

Was terrible. And finally we stood over there. We had a woman over next door who was in Paris, too, that time. Old woman, Martha's, Martha's mother, Martha's -ah- aunt from Pittsburgh.

Your wife's aunt?

No, Marta.

Who Al Marta? Al Marta?

No, John Marta.

Oh, John Marta.

John Marta, lives over here next door.

Yes.

And, uh, we took the last train from Paris. We went to Italy. We went to Italy without paying anything because we didn't have no money. (Laughter)

You just got on and went?

All the time -----. Finally the, the governor over there, you know, put up a train. We didn't have much train over there, you know, because there was a war. Was a terrible war that time, you know.

Yes.

And finally we went through Marseilles and we went through La Rainier over there, Genoa again, and we went to Piacenza without paying anything, you know, because we didn't have no money. Nobody had. Very, very few had.

Well, what was the life like in Paris?

Paris? It was all right that time. I mean for working man, you know.

Yes.

It was pretty good. Lot of Italians there. Lot of Polish. It was, I mean, it was better, the working conditions was much better than Italy anyhow.

O.K. Well, once you got back to Italy what did you do then?

I went back to Italy. I went to work again with a, as a mechanic with my cousin. Then he was building something, you know, different, you know, not a blacksmith but he was building something else over there. Eh, he was building rails, ah,

porch, porch, you know.

Yes, wrought iron rails and things.

Wrought iron rails.

Yes.

Good, good business was and uh, and after I wanted to work in a garage. That was something out of this world at that time. (Laughter)

Yes.

You know working on the automobiles. (Laughter)

Was that your first introduction to the automobiles?

Yeh, yes.

Uh huh.

Yes, I went in Piacenza, right in Piacenza it was.

Uh huh.

And uh, I kept likin' so much, you know.

Uh huh.

And I was....well....well-liked it there, very well-liked, yes. I learned a lot there; very, very much about uh.... Naturally, naturally after seventeen, seventeen and a half years old, they called me in the army; called me. (Laughs)

So there you were. You were just learning the mechanics trade and you got drafted.

Got drafted but I stood, stay there 'bout uh, seven or eight months, maybe more, maybe more. Was uh, almost eighteen years old at that time, you know.

Uh huh.

So when you are in the army, before you got in, it says - there was - you can make an application, you know, to go in the aviation. Oh, I made applications right away, you know.

(Chuckles) Oh, they sent us to Rome. You see, you see that train, those train Dr. uh, "Dr. Zhiavago?"

Yes.

Well, you see those trains over there. They call them over there. Something like that was the train that time during the First World War.

They were just like cattle cars with.....

That's right, cattle car over there, smell and you know.

They were really bad, uh?

It took two days from Piacenza to go to Rome.

Two days?

Two days! And they stop and they go and they stop and they go. Oh terrible! And we arrive in Rome. (Chuckles) We go at night. It was at night I remember, yeh; and they give you a blanket over there, a little straw over there and sleep right there. That's all.

Where, in Rome?

In Rome, in Rome, right in Rome.

What place in Rome did you go to? Was it an army barracks or?

An army barrack, an army - was the uh ----- give me chance to remember...at that time. Actually I went to see that time when I went over there. It's still there.

Really, the same barracks is still there?

Same, same stayed there.

Huh.

Uh, naturally after they - we made the boot training there. And after we had to give an examination. I was telling you we had an examination. We went over there. First they make

you work if you were really a mechanic, you know.

They let you work on an engine to see whether you were.....?

No, not the engine. They make you do something over there uh on a bench work, you know.

Uh huh.

They want to know if you really were a mechanic.

Yes.

And I passed that test, anyway very easily. But after they give you the oral test. I don't mean oral test. I mean reading, reading test.

Writing test?

Writing test, oral test.....the same time, you know.

Yes, they give you both writing and oral.

Yeh, and I remember at that time it was a General Nobile, you remember Nobile who was the one who went to the North Pole?

Nobile?

Nobile.

The aviator?

Yeh, was not an aviator, he was, he was a chief engineer over there of the Aeronautical Institute of, Institute of Rome over there. We were right next to it.

Uh huh.

But uh really he was never been in an airoplane. He was, he was an engineer, most all of the time and he was giving the examination himself.

Oh, he was giving the examination.

He was giving the examination. I remember like yesterday. Well, as I was telling you the square root and everything

before me went in and you know, I pass. (Chuckles) I don't know why I did but I pass. (Laughter)

You took, you took about a half hour crash course in the square root and you took the examination and you passed it? (Laughter)

Yeh and eh, after that they took us toIn Torino, where they build the motors there.

In Torino, huh?

In Torino. Itala was the name of the factory. It was an old factory over there. Itala was makin' automobile.

Uh huh.

It was makin' yeh, automobile at that time there were makin' aviation motor, too. There were makin'-----It was, it was a replica of those German motors.

Uh huh.

They were makin' Hispano-Suiza. It was a French motor there, Hispano-Suiza. They were makin' those motors over there, and they let us stay over there 'bout, oh 'bout six months.

Just learning the uh.....?

Just learning how the construction was and everything else. Just working over there with.... and everything else.

Just learning the engines and uh.....

And after from there they sent us...uh, first they sent, they sent us into Scanada(?) near, near Florence, uh, Pontedera.

What was the name of that?

Pontedera.

Pontedera?

Pontedera. Was about twenty or thirty miles from -

not even - I don't think it's thirty miles from Florence. It's between Pisa and Florence.

Yes.

It was more near Pisa than Florence anyway.

Yes.

And there we start flying. Started going in dirigible with better man actually.

You were flying then?

Oh yeh. They trained in(?) over there. You see the photographs over there - the pictures there.

Yes, oh yeh, let me stop this.

So they sent us to Pontedera. Pontedera, they had a man over there. They sent two dirigible. We were - you - the way we do it over ther, we used to go from that coast over there near Pisa, Livorno(?) yes, Livorno to Sardegna.

To Sardegna, really?

Yeh.

From Livorno to Sardegna?

Yeh, the crossing over there ----- because was a lot of Sardegnians over there, a lot of soldier. They used to come from Sardegna. They used to go to Livorno, from Livorno they used to go to Sardegna, naturally. They had a tracking course over there and they had a lot of submarines over there.

Oh really? What were they, Austrian submarines?

Austrian no! They was the German.

Oh, German submarines then.

German submarines over there. Oh you could, I see some ships over there right in the bottom of the sea there. About three hundred feet from, three-four hundred feet from the ground from the, yeh, from the, from the water over there. You could

see then you were near the water.

Really? Well, what were you doing, anti-submarine work?

Yeh.

And you carried bombs to.....?

Ah! Some bombs! Hand bombs, you know. (Laughter)

Hand bombs, really?

Oh, if you saw a submarine, you just dropped it.

Just dropped it? (Laughter) Did you ever sink any submarines?

No, never, never.

Did you ever see one?

Never seen it either, no.

No? You never saw one either?

No, no.

So, well, this is perhaps one of the first ah cases of anti-submarine warfare from the air.

That's right. That's right, yeh.

Yes.

Yeh, it come from there.

Yes, yes. Well, I'll be darned. How about that.

After from there, they sent me to Rome.

Uh huh.

Rome, "ciampino" there, but there I got time, you know, the war was almost finished.

Uh huh.

Was almost done. Eh, and they built one big dirigible, and they had like a, a, a - on the bottom over there - like a trolley car, you know, double deck.

A double deck gondola?

A double deck gondola there.

Yes.

With three motors, three motors on the, on the back.
And they built about two for about forty, forty passengers.

Really? Huh!

And when they stop the war, they used to stay over there. They used to come all those mission from France. Mission from, even from Japan, from the United States, you know.

Yes.

And they used to give me ride over there, you know, just show. (Laughter)

They come - oh really? In other words.....

Yeh! Yeh!

When you got the Ambassadors and so forth coming?

It's a - I don't even know the people who they were, but I know one man. One man was Mayor LaGuardia of New York.

Really?

Yeh. He was in aviation then, you know, before...

Yes, he was in American aviation, yes.

And he came over there, too. He was over there and a he was speaking in Italian. I spoke to him over there, too. Oh, yeh, yeh. He says to me, you know. He, he supposed to come to New York, he says to me. "Well, I don't know," I says.

Uh huh.

I really wasn't thinking about that time, you know.

Yes.

And a - so war finished. You know, had to go home. Somebody. Most of them they stay there, you know, in my But I was fed up stay in the army. I don't very I was a sergeant at that time and everything else, but a I was fed up

so I went home. I went home in Becciala again. After so many years I never have been there. And I put up a little shop there, repair shop like. I was repairing motorcycles, cars. It was pretty good business. And after the political situation over there was terrible after the war.

Yeh?

Yeh, with Mussolini there then, especially over there in the north of Italy, especially in my region over there. It was you know,.....

Why was it so bad in your region with - when Mussolini started to a?

This - maybe you don't know the history of the - near Bologna there, near Parma - I come from that region over there..... There was a lot of unrest a there, alot a there was a lot of killing.

What was the cause of the unrest and the killing?

Well, a, it's a political thing, you know, because a when they come over, when people come home from the war over there, you know, there was a lot of unemployed and a lot of unrest and a lot of It was a disorder all the time, especially in Milan there. All over north of Italy there. It was terrible!

Well, a, there was a lot of unemployment and this led to the unrest, is that it?

Oh, sure.

A, now you say the political situation was in a turmoil also?

Whew! (Whistles)

Well, what was this? What was, what caused this political unrest, was it Com.....?

The war, the war!

Now there was a lot of communist growth at that time, wasn't there, in that part of Italy?

Well, yes. Oh, sure.

There was.

First of all, it was socialized not communism.

More socialist, huh?

More socialist than communist. Communist, I mean the most extremist, those extreme.....

Yes.

And they got the extreme all over, especially in Milan. They were more socialist than communist.

I see. And what did you have, a clash between the socialist and the fascist. Is that what it was?

Oh well, the fascist was.....it was...they were worst than the Klu Klux Klan over here.

Really?

Oh yeh! Oh yeh! I saw some thing. (Deep breath) Finally there was a friend of mine, he says, you know, why don't we go in America. "Yes," I says, "let's go." Our friends over there, you know.

Uh huh.

Because I'm not, no brothers, relations over there, nothing.

You had no relatives in the United States?

No, nobody.

No? And it was just a suggestion from this friend?

Just a suggestion from this friend of mine over there.

He was here a long time ago. He says,.....

Oh, he had been here before?

He had been here before. He says, "Let's go over there."

He went over there and one of them he come over over there and he had a good business over here, you know. He had a bar and.....

Yes.

"If you write to him," he say, "he send you those, those papers. You know, that time they used to call them carte di richiamo."

Uh huh. "La procura" a lot of them used to call them, too.

No, la procura is when you, when you sell something or you give your power of attorney.

Uh huh.

That's the procura, the power of attorney.

Is.... that's what that is. I have heard a lot of people refer to this thing as the procura, too.

Because they want to sell something.

I see, yes.

Something like that, they give them the power to sell thing like that - that's the procura. But this was ...a....a lot of immigration was that time, you know. I mean.....

Yes, there was a great deal at that time.

Most, most, most of those people over there, especially north Italy, they used, they used to go to France most of them because it was easy for them to go to France.

Yes.

That's why I say, "Why you want to go to France?" "France is so near." They say, "Why don't you come to United States?" Well, we took it up. "Yes," we say, "we go." And we come over there in the United States.

So you came to the United States.

Came to the United States.

Well, uh, well how did you get here? Now you were in Piacenza at this time.

Yeh.

Where did you leave Italy?

I leave Italy from Becciala.

From Becciala. Well, uh, I know but you said you came over here by ship, right?

Yeh.

Where did you catch the ship, in Genoa?

No, in France.

Oh, you went to France to get it.

France.

Where in France?

France.....uh....

Uh....

I, I stop in Paris first because my brother was there.

I see, yes.

I stopped about eight, eight to ten days over there.

And a.....?

And after I came over here.

Well, what did you do, just catch the train in Piacenza?

I catch the train. I, I had to make all the paper before, you know, before

Sure, course you had to make all the papers then, yes.

Oh sure.

But you just took a train in Piacenza and went straight to Paris?

Straight to Paris.

And then you stayed there for eight days?

Eight, eight to ten days. Something like that, yeh.

And then you went to Havre and you caught the ship?
Caught the ship over there, waiting, you know, went
to a harbor.

Do you remember the name of the ship?

Yeh, Paris.

The Paris, it was a French ship then?

Yeh, a French ship.

I see, and then from there you came to the United
States?

Uh huh. We were all Italians there. (Laughter)

There were all Italians aboard the ship?

They were all Italians. I know there was a Frenchman
over there, he was, we were talking about, talking, talking. He
says, "Where you from? Where you from? Where you from? I from
France," he says. "How did you come over here," he says. (Laughter)
Very, very few Frenchmen.

Very, very few, yes. Ah...tell me, how long did it
take you to get across, ah....?

I don't know. I took, it take me eight days that time.

Eight days?

Yeh. It was, it was pretty, pretty fast.

What was it like aboard ship?

Uh, it wasn't too bad. We went in the third class, you
know. (Laughter)

Yes, what were the accommodations like?

The accommodations were.....I think four in each cabin.

Four in each cabin.

Yeh, it wasn't, it wasn't too bad that time, at that time,
you know.

What year was this now?

A....19.....22.

1922.

1922, Uh huh, the end of 1922.

Well, things had gotten a little bit better from the end of the war.

Oh, yeh, yeh.

I spoke to one man who had come over in 1919 and he told me that the ship he was on- he was on a Dutch ship, Holland-Amsterdam line. And he said they had everybody mixed together in steerage - men, women, and children all sleeping together, just like cattle.

They tell me that, too; but I never seen that.

You never saw..... You were, you came, you had much better accommodations then?

Yeh, but some of them, they were very cheap, cheap ships, you know.

Yes.

Cheap, cheap accommodations there, but this was not a high class but it was not a very, very low class.

But it was - you, ah, were able to maintain your dignity.

Oh yeh, very, very sure, sure. We were eating at the table and everything.

You ate at a table?

Oh yes, yes.

How was the food? You got enough food?

Food - yes, plenty.

Plenty of food and eh.....

Plenty of food.

And I guess it was pretty good too, huh?

Pretty good, pretty good.

Now when you landed in New York uh.....?

I landed in New York.

You came with your friend, right?

Me and my friend and uh we find that friends of mine over there. He was right there.

He was waiting for you?

He was waiting for me. He came down, right down town over there. He come - he was waiting for me. And we went up 104th Street. I remember right, 104th Street was a lot of people over there. They put for us to sleep in a small, small room over there. We was four in a room. That was worst than the ship!

(Laughter)

You had more room aboard the ship than you did.....?

Oh yeh. Jesus!

So there were four of you sleeping in a small room?

Small room for awhile, you know.

Yes.

And after I had another friend, he was working for the Fiat.

With the, with who?

Fiat, Fiat.

Fiat, yes, over here in this country?

In this country, in New York.

Was Fiat building cars here?

They were building. They were representative, you know. They had a shop and everything else.

Uh huh.

And, and he knew somebody who was working for this Arthur Forsini, Arthur Forsini, who was a big car at that time,

you know. (?)

Yes.

It was like Rolls Royce, you know.

Yes, I've heard of that car.

Yes and DiNunzio, Wilbur DiNunzio was the first, was the representative here.

DiNunzio, now, Ugo DiNunzio?

Ugo.

That, that wasn't the poet?

No, his son.

His son?

Oh yeh.

Ahhhh, that's - this is interesting.

Yeh.

And he was representative in New York?

He was representative in New York with, with somebody else. But him, he was the big cheese.

He was the one who had the big name, huh?

Yeh. So he recommend me to go over there after two days I wasn't here. I was very, very lucky. So I went over there. I says. And he give me the job right away.

And he gave.....you were fortunate then.

Yeh, very, very fortunate. And uh, I made a very good friend with Ugo 'Nunzio there. Very, very nice, very nice. But after while I don't want to stay there any more because they were all Italian there, not all Italian but I like to speak, I like to learn to speak English like this. I don't speak nothing. Was nice over there because I used to speak French, a lot of French chauffeur was there, you know. All those big guys was.... Proc-tor(?) over there, the one who owned all the - who owned all the

over there, movie house.

Oh, the movies in New York, yes.

New York, yes. Was one of them. He was, he was there all the time. I think he was a shareholder, too, in that place.

What, in the - he was a shareholder in this...agency?

Yeh, because they were very expensive automobile, you know, at that time.

Yes.

The cheapest one was twelve thousand dollar.

Really?

Yes.

Wow!

Yeh, was the Rutho Forsini(?), was the first, first car, he had four wheel brakes.

Uh huh.

It was the first car he had eight cylinder in line.

A straight eight?

A straight eight.

It had a straight eight, yes.

It was the first one, too, at that time. It was a big, big car.

These were all built in Italy and shipped here?

Yeh. They were shipping over here all the chassis, you know; the motor; disk; and everything. After they were making the body over here - Fisher body.

Oh really? Oh, Fisher made the body here.

Oh yeh. They made one special body over there. It cost twenty-five thousand dollar.

Wow! And did you used to assemble these automobiles right there in?

Right there. Not for assembly but to adjust them. Make a, make a run because that time, you know, when an automobile came out from the factory, it wasn't finished. (chuckles)

It wasn't finished, no.

They put the electric gun, they put the battery, they put eh a lot of things over there. The clutch wasn't good enough. Used to rebuild the clutch and everything else. Oh, a lot of trouble we had.

In other words you practically had to rebuild the car after you got, before you let the customer have it.

After that I went work with.....

Well, how long did you stay with these people?

Oh, about.....over a year.

Over a year?

Over a year. But I kept in touch all the time with DiNunzi'. "Oh," he says, "Why did you quit?" he says. "I quit because I wanted a change." You know I was young that time, you know. (chuckles) Anyhow I went to work with the Sacony Motor Company. Sacony...ah....they had a repair shop for a all ... for car and trucks and things like that, you know. They had a bunch over there, but I didn't stay there long enough either. I went to work in another place again. Some Italian fellow in the Bronx.

Yes.

And he weren't there. I didn't like it. So, finally I went, I went in a club over there. We, they use to belong to a club, an Italian Club. And a, a lot of them over there, you know. 104th, 105th Street there. A, at that time I met, met a, a, La Guardia there.

LaGuardia?

Yeh, LaGuardia. And I says, "Oh." And we were talking and I says, "You don't remember me, uh?" "I think I remember you," he says. "You know," he says, "Yeh, you were in the army in Italy," he said. "Yes," I said. "I met you in Rome." "Oh, yes," say LaGuardia, "What are you doing now?" I says, "I'm working so and so." "Why don't you go to work with Bellanca?" he says. "Bellanca is a good friend of mine." What is - he just put up, but before that, you know, no, at that time, yes, yeh. Where, where is "He's over there in Staten Island," he says. He's got a small place there now, you know, but a, but -----.(?) So before that, you know, I went over there. No - yeh, I went there right away and he give me a job right away. He give me a job. "All right, what do you do?" I do so and so. "All right, all right, all right."

How long had Bellanca been here?

Oh, 'bout, he's been here before. I don't know exactly but I think it was

Was he here before World War One started?

Yeh, yeh, yeh, oh yeh.

Well, when did he start? Was - had he just started this aviation business?

No, but he had, he had built before. He had built one plane or two, you know, and not many, you know.

Yes.

But that time he put a really. But when he put up a really things over there, where Lindbergh started, you know.

Oh.

But before Lindbergh, you know, he built another, another plane. At that time, you know, I was there it was almost finished. I show you the

This is it?

One of them, you know, but I got the original downstairs. I mean the original plane.

In other words he had already when.....

Another time - at that time, you know, Lindbergh was starting away, I went to Floyd Bennett Field over there. Not Floyd Bennett Field, it was Curtis Field, they used to call. I went to see Lindbergh take off early in the morning there. We stood there all night. (chuckles)

Really? This was when he took off for Paris?

Yeh, that's right when he took off for Paris.

Well, uh, Bellanca then.....

Bellanca then he had one plane before he hit a, the endurance record. There were Trampolini and LaCosta(?), they were flying over New York all the time for sixty hours without refueling.

Uh huh.

That was the thing, the testing, as you was, was flying across the ocean.

Yes.

On account of that Levine there, remember him?

Yes, Levine. I saw this article in the "Evening Journal" and that was on May 20 of 1967.

On account of Levine, on account of Levine they were bickering all the time because Lindbergh wants to go alone. The other one, he says, "No, I want to go with them."

Well, Levine, was he a partner of Bellanca?

Yes, he put the money out. (laughter)

He put the money up. Bellanca had the know how and Levine had the money?

Yes, he put the money on. Eh, Bellanca was one way, ----- the other one. So he said. They built the plane over there in St. Louis. They copy from that plane, you know. They copied

They copied the Columbia. You can see the.... here's the picture of the Columbia. You can see the resemblance between the Columbia and the Spirit of St. Louis.

Right, right. So then he took off alone. He went- but that was very, very lucky, too, you know. Naturally Trampolini and Levine went after but, as you see over there in the paper, you know.

Yes, they followed by a couple months, didn't they?

That's right. And after from over there, I mean from over there we come over here in

So Bellanca moved his whole operation from....

From Staten Island.

Staten Island.

Over here.

To New Castle.

19....27 or 28, ...28.

1928?

I'm not sure.

It was either '27 or '28, huh. It's in the end of '27 or the beginning of '28.

I see. Now when Bellanca moved here, did he a, a, cut off, cut off his relationship with Levine before coming here?

Oh yeh. Cut off completely.

He ceased that?

Oh sure.

Cut off completely. Came here and set up for himself

and you can with him.

I came with him, but I think duPont come down over here, you know, at the time. It was, we come down over here because of the duPonts, you know.

Oh, really?

Oh yeh.

What did duPont invite Bellanca to come down here?

Yeh. It was a ...Ch..... what's his name? Chandler, Chandler duPont, you know. We don't even know it was Chandler duPont, Chandler duPont was really the man. He, he, he talk Bellanca in and we come down there. Naturally and after year or so even, they's tried to put duPont man over there at the.. because one know the other one and the other one knows the other one, the other. Finally Bellanca, he don't want to know nothing about, about the duPont.

So what did - did duPont put up the money to set Bellanca up down here?

Yeh, duPont I think, you know, that's....because the financial combination over there. I don't know nothing about but they start to - they want to control.

So duPont wanted to take over Bellanca, is that it?

That's right. And he don't want to give it to him. And finally he got another, a sponsor from Boston and he tried to go on over there. They went on for years, you know. A, they went on for several of years. Yeh, many years. Since I was there I.... then I left over there.

Oh really? How long did you stay with Bellanca?

Ohhhhh, about, I don't know, for about twenty years.

Oh really? Now, a, when you first came down here, how many years did you stay with Bellanca when he first moved to

a New Castle.

Moved down here 1928... '36, about a...eight years.
About eight years? And when you left him, what did
you do?

When I left over here, it was during the Depression,
you know. Went, I went, I went to work in ... in Budd. It was
during the Depression.

Budd Chemical?

No, Budd Company - over there in, in Budd Company
in Philadelphia.

I see. What sort of work?

Huh?

What sort of work did you do there?

Uh, layout man, layout man. Machinist, you know,
layout.

Yes.

For awhile and after I had an accident in the car
with my wife...and uh, I stayed around over there. And, uh,
same time, you know, it was during the Depression, you know,
in the meantime my brother-in-law was in New York lost his job
and everything like that. And he came down over here. He came
down here and he came down over and he put up some kind of gaso-
lene station down there on the duPont Highway, you know.

Your brother-in-law did?

Yeh, me and my brother-in-law.

Oh, you and your brother-in-law.

And after and afterwhile, we put up cabins over there.

Uh huh.

Motor courts, you know, that Delmar - it's still
there now.

The Delmar Motor Court?

Yeh, yeh, it's still right there.

You and your brother-in-law started that?

That's right. 19.....

Now they were the first....

1935 or '36.

They were the first motels in this area?

That's right.

How was the business in those days with the motel?

It was very good..

It was really great?

It was good, yeh, but I mean not, not like today.

No, not like today but for those days it was good?

(chuckles) Talking about the first time we put up
the cabin there up.....

(MRS. CAVANNA) You know we were getting a dollar fifty a room
or a dollar or two dollars afterwards. Big deal. Sure.

(FRANCIS) So how long did you stay in that business?

(MR. C.) How much?

(MRS. C.) Oh, 1937 - 1962, I guess, '60.

(FRANCIS) Really? Then you stayed in it a good long time then,
didn't you?

(MR. C.) Yeh, but after we built another one, you know, we
sold that motel there and we built another - Motel DeVille.

Oh, did you build the DeVille?

Yeh.

Oh, how interesting. Now, uh, you got married then
while you were in New York?

No, I got married over here.

(MRS. C.) You got married in New York.

(MR. C.) I got married in New York, but I was over here already.

Oh, you were down here working and you went back to New York to get married.

Yeh, you talking to me. (laughter)

Tell me, how was - what were the living conditions like when you first came here?

Here?

Well, when you first came to New York?

(Pause) For example?

Yes.

Ohhhhh, they were very good at that time.

Uh huh.

I mean, it was just after the war, you know.

Yes.

Soon after the war over there, it was a boom.

So living was pretty good. Now....

It was pretty good. Everybody was a boot-legger then.

(laughter)

Everybody was bootlegging, huh? So what was your social life like in New York at that time? What sort of thing did you do? I know a lot of people who lived here, really in so far as a social life was concerned, it was mostly an interaction between people. There wasn't much outside entertainment.

Well, we put up a club over there in a That's where I met my wife, you know.

Really?

We put up a club, Italian Social, Italian Social Club there.

Uh huh.

This was in New York City?

New York City, yeh, 105th - isn't that what it was-
105th, 105 Street.

(MRS. C.) Italian-American.

Italian-American. It was pretty good because we had
a lot of entertainment over there, huh? We used to go outside
some ones picnic and everything like that, you know. We were a
good - we made a good company over there. I mean, between her,
between hers - we were all the same province, school, you know?

Yes.

You say all from province of Piacenza, you know,
we had pretty good time.

In other words most of your social life was centered
around the Italian community?

Oh yeh, right there - Italian Community.

Did you have many dealings with people who were not
Italian?

Not in New York.

Just with the Italians. Well, how were you treated
by people who were not Italian?

Well, I think,.....especially when I was over
there with thewith the Sun Oil Company, the Italians weren't
too....(snickers)...too proud.

They weren'tin other words they didn't treat
you too well?

I mean....

(MRS. C.) Discriminated against.

Oh sure, especially your Irish.

Uh, you

I remember an Irish man over there, he was an nice

fellow and everything else, you know. He was, he used to call me some time, you know, because I knew, I knew better than him.

Uh huh.

And he says, he was telling me. "Hey, I forgot this things, what you call this," he was telling me. And me, I didn't even know what I know in English what it was, it was made. "What is it made for? This?" he says. And here you say, "What is this for?" (laughs) And he was an inspector.

He was an inspector and you knew the business better than he did.

Yeh! (laughs) Now, and after there were a lot of Germans over there and to tell you the truth, they didn't like the Italians.....

Why didn't they like.....?

I don't know. I don't know. I really don't know because when, uh, there was a fellow over that place - he was a nice fellow - he was a he appreciate, you know.... what I knew and what I don't know and he was a foreman there and everything else. He was right; he was treating me right. But then they put that German over there and he start, you know, eliminating everybody else, you know, and then I get out. (chuckles)

What was he doing, gradually eliminating everybody and bringing in all Germans?

Yeh, sure, that's right. Not only that but he give them the best jobs to the Germans, you know, he.....a....so... I quit.

So, yes, in other words you were harassed pretty badly so you left?

I quit!

When you said.....

I quit, I quit over there. That's when I went to working with Pete, a, Colgari, you know, with Louie ----that's with---Italy together---. And, uh, from there I went to Bellanca.

Bellanca? When you came here to Delaware, where did you live?

Uh, first time I came over here?

Where in Wilmington or in New Castle?

New Castle, New Castle.

You lived in New Castle.

First time we live in New Castle, yeh.

Were there many Italians in New Castle?

Well, we were all our, our gang over there from, from Staten Island.

What did Bellanca have, did he have mostly all Italians working for him?

Well, ah, he had a lot of Germans, too, German. There were a couple of French, a, Irish. Most especial the wood work(ers), they were all Italian.

I see.

I mean ninety-nine per cent.

Did you?

Ah, mechanic, not many....a.... were two or three Italians there.

And the rest were all what? German? French?

German, French, from South America.

Really?

Yeh, from South America, yeh. Now then.....

Well, how did you all get along together?

Oh, we got along all right.

I mean there was no discrimination there, was there?

Welllllll, there was some fights there, too.

There was some there, was there?

I tell you one fight was over there.(laughs) It seems funny, but it was a Jewish helper and those German and a German, a German mechanic anyway - sheet metal worker. They had an argument over there. And, you know, those sheet metal, they used those, piece of metal, over there to, to knock, you know, to (knocks on recorder).....

To cut holes? Oh, you mean the flat piece of metal.

The flat piece of metal, you know.

What do they call that a?

They have a name over there. This guy over there he had an argument with this fellow over here. A young fellow too, - was you know. Pah! Throw him right, right against his head. He almost kill him. Finally he got fired over there.

What was the cause of this fight, was it....?

I don't know. I don't know the cause of this fight. And then they talking over there some time, you know, over there was all the German and naturally Italian one side and they, they were talking and he says, "Who was that guy?" A German says, "Oh, they had a fight but who was the other guy, he got hurt," he says. "Oh, he was only a helper," he says. (laughs)

He was only a helper.

A Snyder says that. "He was only a helper because you..... you're...going to kill him," I say.

So this pretty.....but how were you treated otherwise as an Italian living in New Castle?

New Castle was all right for Italian.

Yes. Were there many Italians living there?

Well, at that time, yes.

There were quite a few?

Oh yeh, quite a few.

But were you social activities at that time still pretty much centered around the Italian community?

Yes.

Pretty much so?

'Bout that time, you know, people come a down from New York and the first, first one, first - even the first year - they used to go back every week, they used to go back in New York. Stay in New York not even two, three hours, they'd come back again.

Really?

Yeh, seems impossible.

But they'd run back and forth to New York every weekend?
end?

Yeh, every weekend.

Oh my heavens.

Yes.

They just didn't like to shake off New York, huh?

Well, we went over there, New Castle it was bare over there, you know, at that time, you know. Was nothing there.

There was nothing there?

There was nothing, absolutely nothing!

Uh huh. So they.....

So.

They would go back to New York for some relief.

I don't know. We used to go to New York, stay there two, three hours and come back.

Well, tell me.....

Sleep there maybe some time, you know.

Uh huh. Uh, when you left Italy, Mussolini was already starting his rise to power, right?

No, no, wasn't in there, yet.

But he wasn't in there, but he was starting what it takes to rise to.....

Oh yeh, he was starting, oh.

Now you had, the experiences you had with him over there certainly caused you to view him in a distasteful light.

Oh yeh, most of them, yeh.

How about over here? When you came over here, how did people over here react to Mussolini?

What people?

The people that you knew, the Italian people that you lived with.

Oh, they were all against Mussolini.

Were they all against him?

Oh yeh, sure.

Most of them all against. They just didn't care too much for him. Well, in other words, they thought he was really wrong.

He was wrong!

Yes, he was. I mean he showed that, but I know that at the beginning there were a lot of people in this country who thought, Italian people, here who thought he was doing.....

Oh yeh, sure.

A lot of good for Italy but the group you were with - mostly from the north of Italy, a, just didn't view him very favorably.

Yes, that's right. From the south of Italy they didn't know yet.

Yes.

They didn't know yet.

Yes, from the south, I guess, many of those people from the south, of course.....

Now the south is more than the north, now.

Yes.

They got more communist in the north than in the south.

Have they really? I thought it was mostly up around the Po Valley and up in the north of Italy.

Yes, but the Po Valley and everything, they - they all socialist. I told them. I thought I knew. They like, they like - you won't find no different over there in Italy in north of Italy, a, Austria, and France,.....Germany....and Switzerland, and even the Spaniard now, you know. They all the same thing.

Yes.

They all the same. And you see all the south, from the south Italy they go up the North. All of them. They all in Torino. They all in Milan now.

All over the place, yes.

All full.

Yes, I'd like to ask you one other question in reference to what we're doing here. A, what was your affiliation with the Church when you came to the United States. How, how, did you ... did you go to church at that time or did you have any religious affiliation?

Oh well, I was religious all the time for that matter, but I mean I didn't go to church for a, for a long time. When I got married, I started to go to church again. (laughs) That's true!

But this, but this is typical with Italian men - they

don't go to church.

That's right.

I know that here in the early days there were a lot of Italian people that were practically driven out of the Church, out of the Catholic Church by the Irish priest. They wouldn't even let them in church and I was wondering.....

Where - over here?

Yes, in the early days here.

Yeh? I didn't know 'bout.

And I was wondering if you experienced anything like this.

No, no.

You didn't?

Never, never.

In other words you had pretty favorable experiences most of the time you were in this country.

Oh, I met Father Tucker.

Yes.

I got the picture over here - Father Tucker.

Well, this was a, the a, bad experiences with the Church came before Father Tucker.

Came before Father Tucker?

Now, Father Tucker of course changed the whole picture in Wilmington for the Italians.

Uh huh.

Yeh, he changed the whole picture and a, I think that the Italians have progressed tremendously since Father Tucker started the Church. Now this was back in the twenties, but I was just wondering if you had.

No, no.

Had any unfavorable experiences. You hadn't?

And uh, even now Father Balducelli is a very nice.....

Yes. Now tell me something - in so far as aviation is concerned in this area, what were your experiences with aviation? What did you contribute? What would you say that you contributed to a, aviation and what were your experiences in the growth of aviation in this area?

Well.....

You were with Bellanca from his earliest days here in New Castle right after you came down from New York.

I use to put - I put - I install one of the first engine in the plane there. I use to install most of the instruments the first time they come out. I remember I install the first ...uh...automatic pilot.

You installed the first automatic pilot?

Yes.

In a Bellanca plane. Was that the first one in this country?

No, no, no. Wasn't the first in this country, no; but we were in an experiment there. We working right that time, you know.

It was still experimental?

Yeh, in experimental stage, it was.

Uh, how about, how about your own experiences with flying?

Flying, flying, we just.....just to...a...spend money. (chuckles)

You used to fly just to.....

We.....at that time flying was like a sport. If you fly, was just fly. Everybody was flying for sport.

In other words, you just went up in the air to fool around because there was really no place to go.

That's right. And, and.....it was costing a lot of money, too, at that time.

Uh huh.

It was costing.....

It was quite expensive?

See the, quite expensive, expensive now but compare - much expensive before then now.

I see.

Because if you want a, want a hire a plane that time it was costing eighteen dollars an hour, the cheapest one was.

Eighteen dollars an hour?

Right there on....the field over there, right a..... service field there, you know, flying service.

What were these, single seaters or two seaters?

Two seaters, two seaters.

Two seater planes.

Two seater planes, but if you fly alone and you didn't have no license, you can't fly with somebody else. You have to have a license to fly with somebody else.

But without a license you could fly alone?

I could fly alone. You could fly anything you want at that time. (chuckles)

Without a license? In other words all you do is go there and present your eighteen dollars and take the plane.

Well, naturally, he'll, he'll check you out before if you know how to fly.

Yes, uh huh.

But at that time it was that way. If you had the

license, you can take somebody.

(MRS. C.) You can take a passenger.

Yeh, I used to take her, too.

Now really, how easy was it to get a license?

Ah, it wasn't too hard but a...you... got through red tape, you know, you got to go through . You got to go maybe - me, I got my license over there in Camden, New Jersey. Everybody else, even Mike Regaldo there he came with me that time and he got the license. Yeh, we got the license together there.

Uh huh. So.....a, a, this was your experience with the airplanes, huh?

Yeh, that's right.

And you did own an airplane of your own?

Yeh, three-hundred dollar plane. Was a thing there.

(chuckles) Me and my

What was that a bi- ? What do, what do they call those?

Monoplane. No a monoplane, a biplane.

A biplane, with two wings.

Yeh, a biplane with two wings, yeh.

Those you don't see any more.

No.

No. Everything is one wing now. O.K. Well, that'sdo you have a.....what would you say was the biggest change that you've seen in the United States from the time you came here to the present?

Oh my. (chuckles) Between day and night.

Yes. I'm sure that there are so many changes that you couldn't put your finger on one.

I couldn't put your finger on one, really.

There.....

Especially, especially in the airoplane it's, it's impossible to.....it's impossible.

Yeh, it's a, it's a completely different world, isn't it?

That's right. Oh sure.

Eh, do you ever feel that, a, life was better back in the early days than it is today?

No, it's better today. (chuckles)

It's much better today?

No, (laughter) no.

In other words you never had, you never had any.....?

Eh?

You never had any desires to go back to the good old days?

No, no, no. (laughter) I like to be young again, but.....

But you would say these are the good old days right now.

Oh my God, yes.

Right. Then there's no..... do you have anything else? Excuse me.

No, we're talking about, you know, you used to take a ride in the car, it was nice because there was nobody on the road, you know. It was not too wide, you know, but we had so many flats and things like that. (laughter)

Yes, flats and breakdowns.

That's bad now because you got so many cars, so much traffic, things like that. But still all, it's better now than before. Much, much better. Better living conditions, sure.

Yes.

Better housing.

Do you have anything else that you'd like, want to add relative to what we've been talking about?

I don't know what to add.

No?

Suggest something, I don't know.

Well, I was just wondering if you had anything else that might have come to mind that you might add to what we've already, a, touched on.

No, not now.

(TAPE CUTS OFF, THEN REOPENS)

O.K., now. We haven't touched on the transatlantic flights yet. Now, during the period in which you were in this country, when you were working in aviation in New York and also down here, this was the period of the a, the great period of the transatlantic flights.

Everybody has a fever for the transatlantic flight, yes.

Right now, a, would you care to give me your experiences in relation to, a, the transatlantic flights that took place during that time? Lindbergh's flight and so forth.

Well, Lindbergh's flight was the first one, naturally. And afterwards Ciambollini and, Ciambollini and Levine, a, the one who botched up everything for Mr. Bellanca.

Yes.

If it wasn't for Levine the first plane cross the ocean it would of be Bellanca plane. It was a big lot of difference.

Yes, I'm sure it would have made a Bellanca probably

much bigger man in aviation than he, he already was.

That's true. Your're right, you're right. And, a, we had several transatlantic flight after, after Lindbergh naturally, but we had no as famous as Lindbergh.

Yes, they weren't the first flights.

Yeh, that's right. For instance, we had General Di-Pineda ----- who came from Italy, he was a man, he, he was a general over there, but on account of Mussolini, him too, he was - he got out of Italy.

Then he was a general in the Italian army.

That's right.

Was he an avia....of course, he was an aviator also.

Aviation, sure. He, he cross - I mean he went all over the world with a C-plane, you know, before, too.

Was he with Balbo when Balbo.....

No, Balbo, no. He was over here in the same time.

He was here at the same time.

Yeh, show you. I was over there in the Floyd Bennett Field with him that time with DiPineda when Balbo came over here. And that time you remember it was the exposition in Chicago. When Balbo arrived in New York, DiPineda, he took off. He took off - I mean he went by train, I think he went to Chicago not to meet him.

He, he went to Chicago just so that he would not meet Balbo?

Not meet Balbo, yes.

Now why did he.....?

When Balbo, wait a minute, when Balbo went to Chicago, he come back to New York.

Why did he not want to meet Balbo?

Well, it was a friction in the Italian government over there, you know, that time, you know.

Balbo was a sympathizer of Mussolini.

Yes. He was a right man.

In other words he cooperated with Mussolini?

Yes.

And, uh, DiPineda?

He ran off.

Was not a sympathizer of Mussolini. As a matter of fact Mussolini was the cause of his coming to this country.

Yes, not only that but Balbo was a fascist and Mussolini was not a fascist.

A, you mean DiPineda was not a fascist?

DiPineda was not a fascist, yes. Yes, but a ---- thing there. Well, DiPineda came over here in this country, he was a very good friend of DiNunzio. And after we built a plane over here in New Castle at that time. And, a, after a lot of trouble, we had plenty trouble, you know, with that plane. He wants to put in automatic pilot. He couldn't put the automatic pilot. I was with him all the time, most the, of the time when, and, uh, we went to New York when, when we finished the plane. Then we went, took - to make it short - we went to New York. Supposed to took off over there. We stood over there about...oh... two or three weeks, I think, you know, preparing and everything else, you know, and a As you remember - oh no, you don't remember because you not old enough. (laughs)

Yes.

You don't.

Wait a minute. (Turns tape over)

We went to New York. I was there as a mechanic then

with them, you know. DiNunzio was there too, you know, all the time, you know, just to prepare the flight and everything else. And that morning he supposed to start to take off. Anyway and, uh, a bad habit he had, a bad habit - it's a habit he had, you know - was flying most of the time with big C-plane (sea-plane?). And when you fly with big C-plane, you know, especially big, you rough water most of the time and you got a long,.....like a long field, long to take off.

Yeh.

And the light plane you restricted so much land like we were in. I, I don't remember how long it was that runaway we had in Floyd Bennett, but I don't think it was a mile long. I don't think so, no, no. And naturally at that time there was no wind at all. I remember I spent all night over there. Was no wind at all, but he was decided to, to take off just the same, you know. And the worst part, too, he was taking off against, against the building, against the administration building.

He was headed straight for the.....

Yeh, straight for the administration building. Sure. I tried to talk to..... make him talk to DiNunzio. He said, "Tell the general not to take off that way, anyway." It was somebody else over there, too. They were telling him not to..about... "Oh no," he says, you know. "I got a little....about two hundred feet," he says, "A little cross wind - I mean- head wind over there, you know, I go against the wind all the time." When he took off and I said, "Well." He start to take off, and when you take off a plane - I remember even ----- when he took off - he started waving all the time because the plane was so heavy in the tail, he starts to swerve, you know.

Yes.

And he stopped and he come back again and he start over again. And I explain it to the general that time, you know, explain right there before he took off. I says, "If you start swaving (swerving), you know, you got to stop and return back," I says, "It would be better." When he took off, you could see the, you could see he start swaving - go off the runway, on the runway. You see the tail go up and down. That's the manouver you do when you take off in a C-plane. See, he lost - well, that's seconds over there, precious seconds over there. And when he start, he got a little speed; but he didn't have enough speed anyway. When he realized he didn't have enough speed, he tried to put the brakes on and to swerve; and when he swerve like that, you know, he was almost against the administration building and he tip over and the flame come up right away. It was, oh, about two-hundred feet high, and he burnt to death right there. It was a terrible shock.

Yes, that was.

Yeh,yes it was.(softly)

A, what a, what other a experiences did you have with, a, these attempts at a transatlantic flights?

Well, a, I prepare the flight, you know, that uh, a Dutch - he was, he was Dutch, yeh - Olgaf Eric. He was living over here in Wilmington. He was living. And he flew the Atlantic with a German fellow, a German photographer from Liberty, New York. This, this huh, this is another story. (chuckles) This German photographer he was a little bit a.....eccentric.....(chuckles)

A real eccentric?

Eccentric...a...he supposed to take a flight with a dir..... you remember that dirigible, German dirigible - what's his name?

Graph Zeppelin,(?) was it a.....

Graph Zeppelin? The one who burn in

Yeh.

Flight. A, he supposed to take a flight, you know, you remember, he was going back and forth.

Yes.

But that time he, he, he took a ticket. He got a ticket but a....at that time, you know, they, they used to give the tickets only to the cream of the society. (chuckles) This man doesn't fit there so they told him it was no. But he had the ticket already. They say it was no, no place for him - no, no seat for him. And this guy he stop the dirigible. He stop that...

He stopped the a.....

He stopped the flight, yeh. He put, put in a lawyer there. He stopped the flight. Eh, finally they, they let it go, but they give him twenty-five thousand dollars.

Not to take the flight?

Yeh, not to take the flight. That's right. He got a court order and everything else, you know.

Uh huh.

With the twenty-five thousand dollars he come over there Bellanca and we built a plane for him that time. And this pilot here, Olgaf Eric - he was one, he was one of those pilots that taking passengers in what they call - well, whatever it is, he was going up in Liberty. He made acquaintance with this.

What would he take, chartered passengers?

Yeh, chartered passengers, yes, yes. You know, just one flight.

Just take them for rides, is that it?

Just take them for rides, yeh, for ride. So he got acquainted with us, you know, and he come over here and we built

a plane for him and everything else. Took off after and he went to Germany. (chuckles)

He just flew right over to Germany? Was that a non-stop flight or did.....?

Non-stop flight he flew. He had a non, non-stop flight, yeh.

Really? Where did he take off from, New Castle?

Uh, he took off from New York.

New York.

Yeh, New York.

From New York to Germany. Was this the first time that had been done?

No, it had been done before.

Oh, it had been done before.

Oh sure. It had been done by Ciambollini. It was done, it was done by Lindbergh, naturally. Ciambollini was done and it was done....

I meant to Germany.

I think it was done. He went to Germany, Ciambollini, you know, that time.

Oh, did he? I didn't know that.

Yeh, a, it was done by some Irish man, too. It was done by - not Irish man - some Polish fella. Oh, I got another one! A Polishwas name...Ozner (?)....yes, Stanley Ozner. He 's a Polish, Polish fella. He, himself was a, he was a, he was not a great pilot for that matter - no he was an amateur pilot. But he had those ambition to go to, to cross the ocean. Was the, was the dream of everybody that time, especially from, from the old pilot and thing like that, you know. But this, this fellow here was a, was an amateur and he got some backing from some Polish

people there, you know. And the first plane that he had, he crashed, crashed over here in Bellanca field. Yeh. And that a, after time, you know 'bout that time he had enough. They didn't repair the plane over here, no. They repaired the plane in New York. I think I did some work for him too, you know, after I did - yeh, I did some work. Operate Camden, Camden, New Jersey. He come down once. Took off for cross flight. He was going New York to Warsaw and what happened. He got lost in the ocean. He didn't say nothing that he never got lost in the ocean and he landed, you know, he ditch it - he put it in the ocean there.

In the ocean?

And he stood there for eight days. See, they got a big tank over there. He run out of gas and that tank over there it work like a, like a

Float.

A float. It floated all the time for eight days. Finally a steamer from, from Italy there, they picked it up - an Italian steamer pick it up.

Did they just run across him by accident or were they looking for him?

Yeh, no, they weren't looking for him.

They just....?

At that time there were no communication like now. There was no radio. (laughs)

So he was very fortunate.

Very fortunate.

How did he survive those eight days?

I don't know. That thing they, they never told nobody that thing he survive eight days. I don't know. He was very weak they say when they pick it up. They say....

Eight days, just floating on the, on his airplane?

Yeh, he come back again after and ask next he wants to fly again. He got another plane, got another plane; and, a, they had a big holiday like aPulaski Day, I think it was, in Detroit....Detroit, yes. And, uh, he was flying over Detroit. He was flying low a little bit low. He ran against a steeple of a church and he burnt to death, too.

The same thing happened to him, really?

Yeh. And when I went two years ago, I went to Florence. I was in a restaurant over there and I met a priest there. I know he was a Polish "ist" priest, you know, the way he looks, you know. And he started, he couldn't talk Italian, you know, so I helped him. He said. "Where you from?" I says to him. "I'm from Detroit," he says. "You know," I says to him, "I guess -----you're Polish." "Yes," he says. "You know," I says. "I'm talking about thirty, thirty years ago," he says, "maybe more," he says, "You know any Stanley Ozner?" "Stanley Ozner?" I said, "Do you know him?" "Yes, I know him. You know," he says, "I was, I was saying Mass that time when he, when he crashed in Detroit," he says.

Really? In the same church?

Same church. (laughs) It's a small world, yes. Course my wife was present there.

Yes. Did you work on any, a, transatlantic flights?

Transatlanticoh, another couple fellows there, but I didn't work much for that plane over there. I and they got, got, they got lost in the ocean, too. They, they were Jewish. Two Jewish, two Jewish boy. They used to go, they used to fly from New York to Israel.

They had flown from New York to Israel?

No, they supposed to.

Oh, they were. This was what they wanted.

But instead they wouldn't get no license. They wouldn't got no permit to fly from New York, you know. 'Count of the plane wasn't good enough that way, you know. They told them. So he start Portland, Maine, I think he went. But they got lost in the ocean.

They got lost you say?

But I didn't, didn't work much that plane.

Uh, they never found them at all?

Never found nothing. They don't know nothing what happened, nothing.

Uh huh.

There was a nice guy and doctor, Doctor....oh....a... I don't remember his name. Himself, too, he went with a nurse, Flying Nurse they supposed to call it. It was a Bellanca plane, too; but it was, it was prepared in New York by, by another mechanic. I remember that he went down, too, in the Atlantic. Nobody know nothing about, nothing.

They just drop out of sight, too.

Just drop out of sight. That's all.

Uh, how many, uh, of these attempts to, these early attempts to, a, cross the Atlantic, a, failed that you know of?

Fail?

When people were lost and never heard from again.

Well....lot of, lot of people attempt. They take off too. Some, some of them cross the ocean-after they got killed. Two a, two Polish fellows, too, they took off from New York. They flew the Atlantic and they reach in Germant at night, you know.

Yes.

And a, and not to see good, you know, they supposed to land because they were run out of fuel. Instead of land in the field they landed in a, in a woods. Ohhh they got killed. Oh yes.

So there were quite a few of them.

In fact they were, I think they were from Detroit. They had a Bellanca plane, too.

There are, there are quite a few a.....

Oh, quite a few them thing. I don't remember exactly. I forgot everything almost.

Yes, well, Bellanca supplied a lot of the airplanes, then?

Oh the most, the most!

Ah, how did Bellanca stand in so far as plane manufacturing, airplane manufacturing in the United States in those early days?

Early days was one of the best.

The Bellanca plane was one of the best?

Well, they had the best lifting power to hold a plane in the world.

It did have the best lifting power?

Oh yes!

What did.....?

Compared, a, the speed, the power and the lifting power, I mean the payload - it called - it was one of the best.

Uh, why was this plane so good. I mean was there any special feature that it had that no other planes hadn't had.

Well, he had, a, well, he had a good, good wings. I mean a the design of the wings was excellent. He had the struts, he had the lifting struts, you know. They function like wings.

And he had those struts over there, you know, they were made like wings.

Uh huh.

Yes and not only that but stability, too,..... It was at that time, it was one of, one of best designer.

Did he design his own airplanes?

Oh yes, yes.

He designed them all himself then?

Oh yeh.

And he sup.....

Not the power plane, but I mean the motors, but the design on the plane was his.

Well, how about the motors? Where did he get the motors?

Most of them they got from the Wright people. He was working for the Wright, too.... But that developed, developed easy, you know. That mean it don't develop in one when those motor over there they come in very.... (chuckles)

Is there anything else that you could add?

I don't remember exactly. You know it's a, it's memory, you know, thirty, forty years ago.

Yes, I appreciate this.

It's very, very hard.

Well, was there anything else besides the transatlantic flights that you feel probably would be worth mentioning.

Well, there was another one over there in Detroit, and, a, in Chicago. I got the picture downstairs, too. There was a special plane made for the "Chicago Daily News," made from here.

Bellanca made that?

Yeh. And I went to Chicago myself at one time there, too. And, a, that was a tragical thing because they put a full

load over there in Chicago. I wasn't there that time. I was there about a week before. And they were flying. There was a pilot, a co-pilot, a mechanic, and awho was that..... there, they were four ----- . They, a, try full load. They went - they were trying up in, a, Curtis Field in Chicago, yeh. They made a very stick (?) turn, you know, when you put in the stick, turn over there you put a lot of load inside of it. One wing came off.

One wing came off?

Wing came off. They all died.

Whew!

Yeh.

Well, a, was this due to a structural weakness in the plane?

Well, that's a - the structure weakness of the plane. They not supposed that, that kind of a stress, you know put in a short curve like that, you know. You put a stress, a terrific stress on a plane. Those plane over there, especially even, even those big, big plane if you put in a manouver like that, they don't last.

Yes, they're not, they're not.....

They're not made to a....a....

Especially those a curvatic (?) plane you had before, you know, those were curvatic over there. They were, the structure was, was a much higher than the other one.

Yes.

If you fly straight flying, that's a much, much better.

So.....

And, uh, I saw two, I saw two, two young people over there, even in Chicago there that time I was there. Two young fella, they had a small plane. They were so active going to California,

got a field over there, their own. And they were so anxious to take off, they took off cross wind and they were loaded, too. Too heavy. They went over - what?- not even one-hundred fifty feet and they slipped right down over there. And they caught fire over there. Both died.

So you have to take off into the wind, huh?

Especially when you're loaded, I mean when you got a lot of weight. I took off the wind, wing to stay straight. A lot of people make mistakes, make mistake. It says....a slight a habit.....you took off, especially in those days, you know. You had only one more motor, first of all.

Yes.

Took off and motor fails maybe. Well, everybody got a tendency to come back, and when you come back over there, you put, you put them over there, you slip right down.

Yes. Is there anything else that a.....?

No, what else?