



Citation for this collection:

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Mr. Michele Ioannoni

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Mr. Ioannoni, where you were born?

Mr. Ioannoni: Italy.

Interviewer: What part of Italy?

Mr. Ioannoni: Teramo, Abruzzi.

Interviewer: Teramo and Abruzzi.

Mr. Ioannoni: And Abruzzi, yes.

Interviewer: Right. Now, Teramo is the province of Abruzzi.

Mr. Ioannoni: Abruzzi.

Interviewer: Now, what town in Teramo were you born in?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, just right close in the town there was a farm and I go to the farm and it was *[inaudible]* [0:00:23] I wasn't belong in the Teramo.

Interviewer: Oh, in other words, you didn't belong to any particular town, it was just almost like living in New Castle county but in any particular town?

Mr. Ioannoni: That's right. It's just that *[inaudible]* [0:00:38] that's close to Wilmington. That didn't belong to Wilmington.

Interviewer: Oh, I see.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: What was the closest town to where you were?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, that's Teramo.

Interviewer: Oh, Teramo was also a town...

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: In the province of Teramo.

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. What year were you born?

Mr. loannoni: I born in 1902, May 3rd.

Interviewer: May 3rd in 1902.

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Now, your father was a farmer in Italy then.

Mr. loannoni: My father was a farmer, he was -- this country he's 70, his first time and my mother was far away with me when he come in here. After seven years we come back one at a time. And then it stay over **[inaudible]** **[0:01:24]** and they have about two girls and a boy and then they come back in this country again.

Interviewer: Now, did your father own the land where you lived?

Mr. loannoni: My father has a farm, I would say.

Interviewer: I see.

Mr. loannoni: But he left it with his father.

Interviewer: He left the farm to his father.

Mr. loannoni: His father lives here.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, when your father came to this country, what year was it that he came to this country?

Mr. loannoni: 1902, my mother wasn't in the...

Interviewer: Oh, that was the first time he came here in 1902.

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Why did he come to the United States?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, he come in because I think he wasn't in the work, he don't have money.

Interviewer: In other words, he came here to earn some money, was that it?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Had he intended to stay in the United States?

Mr. Ioannoni: No. No. First time and he intended to stay in the United States. But then the second time, he was trying to stay at United States but he got sick. So, when he was Florida *[inaudible] [0:02:28]* when I was small. By the time he got sick and he got before sick *[inaudible] [0:02:33]* he has to come back.

Interviewer: So, he got sick and he went back. This was the second time he came here.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: What kind of work did he do when he was here?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, I think it would've been really hard the first time. And also, the second time he come back, I think he come back in the 14th, I think, or 13 and *[inaudible] [0:02:57]*. And after that I think it would have -- defensive plan in *[inaudible] [0:03:08]*.

Interviewer: They had a plan here that didn't make anything...

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah, he made sure *[inaudible] [0:03:24]*.

Interviewer: In other words, when your father came to the United States, he came right here to New Castle then?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Now, why did your father come to New Castle?

Mr. Ioannoni: Because *[inaudible] [0:03:35]*.

Interviewer: He went to...

Mr. Ioannoni: The first time in Coatesville.

Interviewer: But did he go to Coatesville?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, he knew somebody there.

Interviewer: Oh, he had friends there from where, from Teramo?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, from Teramo. Yes.

Interviewer: Now, did they write to him and tell him that he could make another living here that's why he came over?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Now, how did he wind up in New Castle?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, he had some of his friends over here too, I would say, *[inaudible]* **[0:03:57]** my wife is centered around here Wellington. My mother's sister was -- *[inaudible]* **[0:04:03]**. And so he come here and *[inaudible]* **[0:04:11]**.

Interviewer: All right. Now, after your father went back to Italy to stay, now when did he go back, after World War I?

Mr. Ioannoni: After World War I in 1919.

Interviewer: 1919 he went back to Italy?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Now, by that time, you were 17 years old, right?

Mr. Ioannoni: That's right.

Interviewer: You weren't drafted in the army at all, were you, during World War I?

Mr. Ioannoni: No. I never drafted because I was a little bit too young. But after you come in and -- when he actually come back, I went to army for one year.

Interviewer: In Italy?

Mr. Ioannoni: In Italy, yes.

Interviewer: Now, did they still have the draft at that time in 1919 or did you go voluntarily?

Mr. loannoni: No, you *[inaudible]* **[0:04:50]**.

Interviewer: *[inaudible]* **[0:04:51]**?

Mr. loannoni: We started two years or a year and a half. It was one year *[inaudible]* **[0:04:55]**.

Interviewer: All right. Now, I'd like to go back a little bit more to ask a couple of more questions.

[0:05:00]

Mr. loannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you go to school in Italy?

Mr. loannoni: Not too much.

Interviewer: But you did go to school?

Mr. loannoni: I went in night school.

Interviewer: Oh, you didn't go to day school?

Mr. loannoni: No, I didn't go to day school.

Interviewer: How old were you when you started in night school?

Mr. loannoni: Well, we had a farm. It was off and on *[inaudible]* **[0:05:20]** about six, seven years old. But then we have to quit. My father was in this country. You know what I mean? And *[inaudible]* **[0:05:30]**.

Interviewer: Oh, you didn't have a public school close to where you live, is that it?

Mr. loannoni: No -- when I was in there I have to walk about an hour or more to get in the school.

Interviewer: You have to walk about an hour to get to school.

Mr. loannoni: Yeah, walk about an hour or maybe more.

Interviewer: I see.

Mr. loannoni: So, *[inaudible]* **[0:05:49]**. We never had enough time to do it.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: And I was young, you know what I mean? *[inaudible] [0:05:57]* you know what I mean? Better than nothing.

Interviewer: So, you learn how to read and write anyhow.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah. Well, yes.

Interviewer: All right. Now...

Mr. Ioannoni: But it's not like we go to school.

Interviewer: Yes. Now, what did you do just work on the farm during those early years, you work on the farm.

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, yes, I work in the farm.

Interviewer: Did you do anything in particular or did you just go a little bit of everything there?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, we go eat, freshen the cattle -- we got cattle, you know, calf, sheep. We make cheese. We used to make cheese.

Interviewer: You make your own cheese?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes. So we have sheep that makes cheese and *[inaudible] [0:06:45]*.

Interviewer: *[inaudible] [0:06:46]*? Did you ever use goats milk and make any cheese too?

Mr. Ioannoni: No, we use the *[inaudible] [0:06:51]* when my father comes home, he got a lot of goats milk.

Interviewer: He got a lot of goats milk *[inaudible] [0:06:59]* to make mozzarella. That makes the best mozzarella.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Buffalo *[inaudible] [0:07:05]*.

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible] [0:07:07]*

Interviewer: Right, for the...

Mr. Ioannoni: The goat's milk and the cow milk, they make that cheese so hard that you can't even grind. And when you put the spaghetti, that thing is clingy. And they *[inaudible]* **[0:07:22]** just like a butter.

Interviewer: I see.

Mr. Ioannoni: All the cream, all mozzarella just like a butter in the spaghetti.

Interviewer: I had never realized this. *[inaudible]* **[0:07:36]**.

Mr. Ioannoni: Oh, I used to come to sheep *[inaudible]* **[0:07:39]**.

Interviewer: For?

Mr. Ioannoni: We have *[inaudible]* **[0:07:44]**. And then at least I was about 10 years old when I started *[inaudible]* **[0:07:50]**.

Interviewer: Yes, later on it's worth something.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah, yeah. In one cent, two cents you can buy one quarter wine in those days.

Interviewer: With two cents?

Mr. Ioannoni: Two cents, yes.

Interviewer: What do they call that? *[inaudible]* **[0:08:17]**?

Mr. Ioannoni: No, *[inaudible]* **[0:08:18]**.

Interviewer: Oh, then that was...

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible]* **[0:08:23]**.

Interviewer: Okay. Let me go back and do this English now. The *[inaudible]* **[0:08:37]** go back beyond 1919 then, right?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: And they're the smallest denomination of money that...

Mr. Ioannoni: I don't even remember *[inaudible]* **[0:08:47]**.

Interviewer: Well, you don't even remember *[inaudible]* [0:08:50]?

Mr. Ioannoni: No.

Interviewer: Is that all?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: But until you had sold it or sold...

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah, sold.

Interviewer: Right. Now, that was -- to your memory, that was the smallest denomination, right?

Mr. Ioannoni: Ci.

Interviewer: And after that we had lira.

Mr. Ioannoni: Lira, that's right.

Interviewer: And this is what they still use. They don't even use or sold in Italy anymore. Lira is quite...

Mr. Ioannoni: No...

Interviewer: So lira is worthless, really.

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible]* [0:09:12].

Interviewer: Yes, we take at least that. Okay. Now, when your father came back to Italy than to stay, you were 17 years old.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: That's 17. When did you start? What were you doing then? Is it still the same thing working in the farm and so forth?

Mr. Ioannoni: Oh yes.

Interviewer: When did you start thinking about coming to the United States?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, really, I was *[inaudible]* [0:09:37] and then go back over there.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. loannoni: Whether to work in the farm or we can buy a cab and we can buy this. It was *[inaudible]* **[0:10:11]**, anything, you know, for the money to make. But when I come to this county, you know what I mean, I started to stay here and I started to like this country. I started to make friends and I started to make a little money. Work, I like to work. I've been working all my life. I like work. I'm honest, never been raised, never been *[inaudible]* **[0:10:38]**.

Interviewer: Now, when you decided to come to the United States, what year was it?

Mr. loannoni: That was 1923 and 1925. No, I decided -- before that I decided but I mean, I decided a year before in 1922 *[inaudible]* **[0:10:59]** in 1921.

Interviewer: That was our brother in New Campton?

Mr. loannoni: Yeah. Yes. So, since he stayed with us, he said, "Well, papa, I like to go, you know, a year or two make a little money, get to marry and *[inaudible]* **[0:11:25]**," because we can't make a living here. We are six children in the farm *[inaudible]* **[0:11:29]**, "Go ahead son" *[inaudible]* **[0:11:36]**.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mr. loannoni: But I *[inaudible]* **[0:11:40]**. So I never came back for 25 years. I went back 1948 the first time since 1923.

Interviewer: Now, when you've started to make plans to come to United States. Did you have to get a passport? Did you have to get approval from the council and everything else?

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Where did you go to get these things?

Mr. loannoni: Well, *[inaudible]* **[0:12:07]** couple of days, two to three days before *[inaudible]* **[0:12:54]**.

Interviewer: Yeah. Now, where did you live from, from Naples?

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you go to Naples? How did you get to Naples? How did you travel to Naples?

Mr. loannoni: Train *[inaudible] [0:12:35]* in Rome, and I stayed three days up in Rome, and I get to train in Rome and Naples.

Interviewer: Okay. So you took the train down to Naples. Now, when you got to Naples, was the ship in port then that you were supposed to leave on?

Mr. loannoni: What did you say?

Interviewer: The ship that you were supposed to leave Italy, was is in the port when got to Naples?

Mr. loannoni: Yes, yes. It was really almost too late.

Interviewer: You're almost too late.

Mr. loannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you remember the name of the ship?

Mr. loannoni: Yes, America.

Interviewer: The America. Was it an Italian ship or an American?

Mr. loannoni: Italian.

Interviewer: It was an Italian ship called The America?

Mr. loannoni: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: How was it aboard ship? Was it comfortable? Did they have you in cabins or did they have you in big compartments or people separated, was everybody together? How was that aboard ship?

Mr. loannoni: Well, *[inaudible] [0:13:27]* it was a nice ship. It takes 10 days to come in here. I think *[inaudible] [0:13:37]*.

Interviewer: What were the accommodations like aboard ship? What I mean is do they have you in a cabin by yourself?

Mr. loannoni: No, no, I think there were four of us, four to six.

Interviewer: Four to six men?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah, and an old man.

Interviewer: Do they have everybody in cabins like that?

Mr. Ioannoni: No, they got bigger *[inaudible]* [0:13:59].

Interviewer: Well, how did you manage to get the small room or big room? How did that happen?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, I never really asked *[inaudible]* [0:14:05]. They got you a number and they got your number *[inaudible]* [0:14:13].

Interviewer: Now, they had the men and women separated, didn't they?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Or they had them on together?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: How much did it cost to come over here in those days? How much did it cost for the ticket?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, *[inaudible]* [0:14:29]. But I think cost about 200 something. I think that my father give me, 275 he give me.

Interviewer: That was...

Mr. Ioannoni: And -- but he was *[inaudible]* [0:14:48] I don't know.

Interviewer: I see.

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible]* [0:14:50] pay for.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, when you got aboard the ship, did it come directly to the United States or did it stop anywhere like the route?

Mr. Ioannoni: No, it came directly in United States.

Interviewer: It didn't stop anywhere.

Mr. Ioannoni: No.

[0:15:00]

Interviewer: Not even one stop?

Mr. loannoni: Not even one stop.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. loannoni: Well, if it stopped for a few minutes *[inaudible]* **[0:15:07]**.

Interviewer: Okay. It came directly to where, to New York?

Mr. loannoni: New York, yes.

Interviewer: New York. Okay. Now, what happened when you were aboard ship? How did you spend your time during those 10 days?

Mr. loannoni: Well, I have some *[inaudible]* **[0:15:26]**. And really, I never even done sales *[inaudible]* **[0:15:29]** three steaks a day.

Interviewer: Three steaks a day.

Mr. loannoni: Three sticks a day. And it cost *[inaudible]* **[0:15:39]**. I have one in the morning, one in the day and one in the night, and they get to *[inaudible]* **[0:15:57]**.

Interviewer: Why did you eat the stake? Did you like the other food that they serve?

Mr. loannoni: Well, it look like a king on the kitchen because some looks like it would make me sick.

Interviewer: Okay. Yes, I understand perfectly. Yeah. Now, you mentioned the steaks that they're about three quarters of an inch thick.

Mr. loannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: This is very unusual in Italy, isn't it, to get a big steak like that?

Mr. loannoni: No.

Interviewer: It isn't?

Mr. loannoni: No. In Italy *[inaudible]* **[0:16:27]**.

Interviewer: They don't *[inaudible]* [0:16:28].

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible]* [0:16:31].

Interviewer: Well, I mean I know they cut them with a knife, but I thought that they were just real, thin pieces a meat usually.

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, for one meat *[inaudible]* [0:16:40].

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: But one layer, they usually give a cord steak. It was enough for me. Of course, *[inaudible]* [0:16:55]. You can buy a lot of things in the ship, you know what I mean? You can buy a lot of things, you can have a glass of wine, a can of beer, a cup of coffee, you can have anything you want *[inaudible]* [0:17:07], anything you want.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, when you arrived in the United States, in New York, how were you received? How did they receive you?

Mr. Ioannoni: We commanded *[inaudible]* [0:17:27] and put your name and then raise a little bit. And I don't know if I can *[inaudible]* [0:17:42].

Interviewer: Now, when you were first received, you went through customs, did you, in the United States in New York, you went to the customs?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Now, you wanted to come to New Castle, is that right?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, I want to come -- I want to go to Chester first because I got *[inaudible]* [0:18:08]. And then also from there, I want -- the day after, like, I want to *[inaudible]* [0:18:13] my brother there.

Interviewer: Yes. Now, how did you get here? How did you get here?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, I *[inaudible]* [0:18:19].

Interviewer: Now, when you left New York, did you have a tag on your lapel?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: And say where you're going to go.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, when you got off the train in Chester, did the train take you directly to Chester?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Did anybody meet you there?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes. I think there are some friends of mine.

Interviewer: They knew you were coming then?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, *[inaudible] [0:18:44]*.

Interviewer: Oh, they got you in Philadelphia.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: And then we got the train.

Mr. Ioannoni: And then you got another train then to Chester.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible] [0:19:04]*, yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, when you first got to Chester, did you stay with your uncle?

Mr. Ioannoni: I stayed one day and then coming here -- the day after coming here to see my brother. My brother was here.

Interviewer: Did you come down here by yourself?

Mr. Ioannoni: No, somebody -- a friend of mine was with me.

Interviewer: A friend of yours brought you here?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Now, did you get off the train in Willington?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: And did you take the Charlie car from Wellington to New Castle, or it wasn't there at that time?

Mr. Ioannoni: As with the *[inaudible]* [0:19:37], yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, did your brother meet you in the train station in Wellington or...?

Mr. Ioannoni: He came and get me in Wellington, yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, when you were coming to New Castle, you're coming here to stay, right?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Where did your brother live? Did he live by himself to the house? Was he married or did he...?

Mr. Ioannoni: No, he was -- some friend of ours here in New Castle.

[0:20:01]

Interviewer: Okay. Now, this friend of yours was married?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, it was relatively common in those days for the man who are married they usually had a house, is that it, and they would boarders, they take in boarders.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, yes, yes.

Interviewer: Now, what were the circumstances in the house where you were living? Did you just have a room that you shared with your brother?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, *[inaudible]* [0:20:27] my brother have a room, so I want to sleep with the same room with my brother.

Interviewer: Okay. Now...

Mr. Ioannoni: I would sleep the same bed like we used to *[inaudible]* [0:20:38].

Interviewer: Okay. Now, how about food and so far as eating and so forth? Did the lady of the house cook for you? Did you have to pay for board? Did you buy your own food or did he cook that for you?

Mr. loannoni: Well, for a while the *[inaudible]* [0:20:56].

Interviewer: Now, you paid her for the food and she supplied you with your food. Is that it?

Mr. loannoni: He supply for everything.

Interviewer: For everything, so you took care of your laundry.

Mr. loannoni: Everything, yes.

Interviewer: Everything. Now, where did you get your first job when you came here?

Mr. loannoni: The first job I got in the railroad.

Interviewer: In the railroad?

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Which railroad was it?

Mr. loannoni: I was -- oh, *[inaudible]* [0:21:32].

Interviewer: What sort of work did you do with the railroad?

Mr. loannoni: Well, *[inaudible]* [0:21:42].

Interviewer: Okay. You were with the railroad gang then, right?

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Were they mostly all Italians that were on the railroad gang or were there mixed nationalities?

Mr. loannoni: Most of us are Italian then.

Interviewer: How about the boss, was the boss also Italian?

Mr. loannoni: No, *[inaudible]* [0:21:56].

Interviewer: How did they treat you? How did they treat the Italians then?

Mr. loannoni: Well, I don't know *[inaudible]* **[0:22:03]**. Yes.

Interviewer: What was the -- excuse me, go ahead.

Mr. loannoni: No, go ahead.

Interviewer: What was the pay like in those days?

Mr. loannoni: How much was the pay?

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. loannoni: I think it was -- I think it was about 35 cents an hour.

Interviewer: Thirty-five cents an hour? How many hours a day did you work?

Mr. loannoni: I think it was 10 hours a day.

Interviewer: Ten hours a day?

Mr. loannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: And how many days a week?

Mr. loannoni: About six.

Interviewer: Six days a week? How long did you stay with the railroad?

Mr. loannoni: Well, it was my first time *[inaudible]* **[0:22:39]**.

Interviewer: I see. Now, you said you worked in the shop.

Mr. loannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: What shop was it?

Mr. loannoni: American Manganese.

Interviewer: American Manganese?

Mr. loannoni: Yeah, *[inaudible]* **[0:23:08]**.

Interviewer: What sort of work did you do in the shop?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, *[inaudible]* [0:23:14].

Interviewer: What -- obviously, you got the dirt out. What did you get the dirt out, the furnaces?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, *[inaudible]* [0:23:39].

Interviewer: Okay. Now, you said you went back to the railroad after that and then you went to Chester.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: And what did you do in Chester?

Mr. Ioannoni: I went *[inaudible]* [0:24:13].

Interviewer: Was it the Pennsylvania railroad again?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: How long...?

Mr. Ioannoni: It was *[inaudible]* [0:24:22].

Interviewer: And how long did you stay up there?

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible]* [0:24:29]. Yes. And then I went to work at the brickyard for a year. And then I quit that and I wouldn't -- and *[inaudible]* [0:24:43].

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: And I stayed there for a while *[inaudible]* [0:24:49].

Interviewer: Was that a building contractor?

Mr. Ioannoni: Road.

Interviewer: A road contractor in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, yes, yes.

Interviewer: Was he an Italian contractor?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: And did he have mostly all the Italians working within?

[0:25:00]

Mr. Ioannoni: Headed by *[inaudible]* **[0:25:04]**, but the most was Italian people that we had.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, during the time that you were here working during this period, we've been talking about, certainly you work for long hours and there are hard hours.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: But you're a young man and a young man doesn't just work and sleep. What did you do in your leisure hours? Did you -- how did you have recreation?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, really, we had more fun when we came here in New Castle *[inaudible]* **[0:25:39]**. But when it's about 9, 10 o'clock, most of the time I go sleep *[inaudible]* **[0:25:58]** go to sleep. That's all.

Interviewer: And that was about...

Mr. Ioannoni: And then in the morning I got up and go to work again.

Interviewer: And go to work. Okay. Did you ever belong to any clubs of any sort of during that time *[inaudible]* **[0:26:12]**, anything like that?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, no. I never -- at that time, no. But then later on, when I come back from *[inaudible]* **[0:26:22]** come back here again up to the time I belong to *[inaudible]* **[0:26:27]**.

Interviewer: *[inaudible]* **[0:26:29]** here in New Castle?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes. *[inaudible]* **[0:26:33]**.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, what was Saint Anthony's Club or society associated with? Was it associated with church here in New Castle?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: It was a church organization then.

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. What sort of things did the club do? Was it just a social club?

Mr. loannoni: Well, no. I kind of see this club a bias club at that time when they start to make feast. And this club will benefit to their *[inaudible]* **[0:26:58]**.

Interviewer: So it was pretty well, pretty closely associated with the church then, right?

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, did you belong to any other organizations besides St. Anthony's Club?

Mr. loannoni: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, around 1923, Mussolini was becoming quite powerful in Italy. He was very popular figure there.

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: What was the attitude towards Mussolini here amongst the group that you all associated with?

Mr. loannoni: Oh, me?

Interviewer: Yeah, what do they think of Mussolini.

Mr. loannoni: Well, we never tackled that.

Interviewer: You didn't think too much about it at all?

Mr. loannoni: No. I remember when I was in the army, Mussolini they started to get the party.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. loannoni: But I think as a government, king, or whatever he was, I think it could stop Mussolini, you know. But they're just the one *[inaudible]* **[0:28:09]**.

Interviewer: Yes, Mussolini started *[inaudible]* **[0:28:27]**.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes. And then the people *[inaudible]* [0:28:33]. Now, he just want somebody as *[inaudible]* [0:28:38]. So, Mussolini say, "Well, this thing is not good because they *[inaudible]* [0:28:42]."

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: So we've got to change this. So, when Mussolini started, they started this as we've got work and to produce and eat *[inaudible]* [0:29:04].

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: But then after that, there might be ways *[inaudible]* [0:29:11]. Here's a very good idea of the work and to produce and *[inaudible]* [0:29:18] in Italy when he started.

Interviewer: All right. But you didn't -- you're not aware. You are not aware of any organization that supported him?

Mr. Ioannoni: No, no.

Interviewer: Did you ever hear of the fastest league of North America? This was an organization of American fashion, they're Italians, of course, in the United States. Did you ever hear this group?

Mr. Ioannoni: I had sometimes but then I think there was *[inaudible]* [0:29:49].

Interviewer: No, I know they had a group in the Willington there.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah, *[inaudible]* [0:29:52].

Interviewer: Okay. Were you ever aware of there ever having any parades in Willington or any rallies of any sort? Maybe back in the early '30s. I know they had a couple of rallies...

[0:30:11]

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible]* [0:30:12].

Interviewer: All right. Now, in 1923, in that area, they started St. Anthony's Church in Willington. Do you remember when that happened?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, I remember when I started...

Interviewer: They built a little chapel first and they later they built a big church.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, when they started the foundation, really. I remember when they started the foundation, I forgot some of the contracts that they put in the machinery and then *[inaudible] [0:30:39]* and money. And they started this foundation.

Interviewer: Yeah. What did the Italian people feel when they started to build this Italian parish? It was the first Italian church, really, in the area. How did the Italian people feel about that? Does this make them proud, make them feel very good?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, I think they're making a real power *[inaudible] [0:31:05]* the rest of the people do. There might be some people *[inaudible] [0:31:08]*.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, this brings us up pretty much to the mid-20s, and I think we've got into the 30s. Now, when you came back to New Castle, you went back to work for the railroad. Is that...?

Mr. Ioannoni: No.

Interviewer: You didn't?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: Where did you go back to work then?

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible] [0:31:30]*.

Interviewer: What kind of mail was it then?

Mr. Ioannoni: Sort of *[inaudible] [0:31:38]*.

Interviewer: And how long did you stay there?

Mr. Ioannoni: Four years and a half.

Interviewer: For a year and a half?

Mr. Ioannoni: Four years.

Interviewer: Four years and a half.

Mr. Ioannoni: Four years and a half, yes.

Interviewer: And what did you do after that?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, I was there four years and a half and I got sick *[inaudible]* **[0:32:03]**.

Interviewer: Were you living with your brother at this time?

Mr. Ioannoni: No, I live with somebody as of then.

Interviewer: I see.

Mr. Ioannoni: And he was *[inaudible]* **[0:32:17]**.

Interviewer: I see.

Mr. Ioannoni: So, there was somebody I saw -- what was I saying?

Interviewer: You got sick...

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah. I got sick and *[inaudible]* **[0:32:36]**. So, they gave me lay off.

Interviewer: And what did you do then?

Mr. Ioannoni: And then that's the time I started a store.

Interviewer: So you start your own business and then you have *[inaudible]* **[0:32:56]**?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, that was before coming back to New Castle.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, when you started your own store...

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible]* **[0:33:09]**, yes.

Interviewer: Oh, really? What sort of work did you do *[inaudible]* **[0:33:14]**? Was it construction, hauling and so forth?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, *[inaudible]* **[0:33:19]**.

Interviewer: How many trucks did you have at that time?

Mr. Ioannoni: I mean, as of now we have five.

Interviewer: You had five?

Mr. Ioannoni: Uh-huh.

Interviewer: Now, when you left, what did you do, sell out to the other fellow or just sell the trucks?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, we had -- I had a truck *[inaudible]* **[0:33:33]**.

Interviewer: Yes. I see.

Mr. Ioannoni: So, *[inaudible]* **[0:33:45]** and I have to quit because my brother *[inaudible]* **[0:33:53]**. It was depression time. That was in 1926, 1927. So, *[inaudible]* **[0:34:01]**. So, after I gave up, part of mine *[inaudible]* **[0:34:15]**.

Interviewer: I see. Yeah.

Mr. Ioannoni: And then now you do the contract *[inaudible]* **[0:34:30]**.

Interviewer: Well, he's still in business.

Mr. Ioannoni: He's still in business. They've sent out about 10 years ago, about 5 years ago in the business.

Interviewer: All right. Now, when you started your own business then you started your own business during the depression then.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes. We've had about -- a little bit *[inaudible]* **[0:35:02]**.

[0:35:03]

Interviewer: Now, I meant the business here in New Castle.

Mr. Ioannoni: Oh. When I started the business?

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: I think it was in '31. '30 or '31, I think it was.

Interviewer: That was the depression. Yeah. Did you find it difficult to start the business during that time?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, it was hard. You know what I mean? We used to work there, open about 7 o'clock in the morning to 11, 12 midnight. And I started the store

before I got married, by the year before I got married. And I had a boy **[inaudible] [0:35:46]**.

Interviewer: Right. This was the grocery store that sell that you've got right now.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes. And it wasn't here, it was another place.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, when you started the business during the depression in the 30s, this was in '31 where Roosevelt came off by the year after that, right, '32?

Mr. Ioannoni: No, I think it was in 1938 or '37.

Interviewer: I think he came in '32 at first time, didn't he?

Mr. Ioannoni: It might be the first time when he was in.

Interviewer: '32, okay, the first time. Now, when...

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah, they put us over there **[inaudible] [0:36:30]**.

Interviewer: WPA.

Mr. Ioannoni: WPA, yeah.

Interviewer: And so -- now when he came into the presence the first time, so there were a lot of people out of work and -- you know, I'm trying to relate those questions directly to your circumstances. You had your business, how did people -- how are people able to buy anything in those days? There are so many people out of work.

Did they have help from the government during that time or did a lot of people buy own credit?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, a lot of people buy enough credit. Some people might be **[inaudible] [0:37:05]** because some other people was awarded to, you know.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: They make **[inaudible] [0:37:09]** any more, not farmer, and not us. You know what I mean? It was just a solid **[inaudible] [0:37:37]**.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: Now, during this time, this was the time when a lot of changes are taking place. The country was really in a bad way, right?

Interviewer: Yes. Now, what changes did you particularly notice yourself? What changes that were taking place did you notice?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, you mean up to that time when I started the store?

Interviewer: Yes, yes, during that time.

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, the change really -- I think after I got a store, some of the -- they opened up some better things *[inaudible] [0:38:14]* a little bit of money. You know what I mean? Start to make some money because I remember a lot of people had drawn *[inaudible] [0:38:27]* American people, any kind. Yes.

Interviewer: So you just use -- take the work and pick him up and ready to go...

Mr. Ioannoni: No.

Interviewer: Not all the time.

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible] [0:39:01]*.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, this brings us pretty much up to modern times now. You know, fairly recent times. Now, would you say there are any big changes that have occurred since that time? Now, certainly, we know that there were changes that occurred.

And so far as the depression itself is concerned, what would you say started to bring the people out of it? Would you say it was World War II?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, I don't know. Too much *[inaudible] [0:39:41]*. You know what I mean? If anybody has work, you know what I mean, *[inaudible] [0:39:45]*.

Interviewer: And so, if a man has a job and is making an income...

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible] [0:39:49]*.

Interviewer: Right, he didn't even know there was a depression.

Mr. Ioannoni: That's right.

Interviewer: But there were a lot of people, I'd say probably more people who weren't working and there were who were.

[0:40:00]

Mr. Ioannoni: I have a little money, you know, *[inaudible]* **[0:40:02]** spend the money. You know what I mean? *[inaudible]* **[0:40:29]** we used to pay \$10 a week and have to work for 10 hours or 6 hours to get \$19 to get \$20 a week. And then if you work on Sunday, you used to get about \$22, \$23.

Interviewer: Yes. Okay. How did World War II affect you? Did World War II have any great effect upon you or upon your business?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, *[inaudible]* **[0:40:52]**. And it affected me because I wasn't going honest. I know black market *[inaudible]* **[0:41:02]**.

Interviewer: Yeah. Tell me something about this black market business. Do you know how the black market operated during the war?

Mr. Ioannoni: I don't know, I just hated that to say. You know what I mean? But I don't know -- I think it's bad because I know it's not my intention to do it and, of course, I don't know *[inaudible]* **[0:41:30]**.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: That's why it's called black market.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Did you live in the Italian community all the time you were -- that you've been here in the United States?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, no. I live with -- because I'm over -- when I came back here, before I got the money *[inaudible]* **[0:42:03]**.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: And I live in New York, a couple places in New York *[inaudible]* **[0:42:15]**. They give more than 19 -- 29, 30. But it was given *[inaudible]* **[0:42:24]**.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well...

Mr. Ioannoni: I've been to plants *[inaudible]* **[0:42:32]**.

Interviewer: Why would you say that people did not want to take boarders anymore? Would you say that the reason for this is that they're becoming more prosperous that they were...

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, it has done pretty good over there really.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mr. Ioannoni: 29 and 28, 29 is still pretty good. They've even done entirely. He was very good because we had no *[inaudible]* **[0:42:53]**. We used to get about 40 cents an hour *[inaudible]* **[0:42:58]** about 85 cents an hour.

Interviewer: Yes, in New York?

Mr. Ioannoni: In New York state, yes.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, the reason I supposed a lot of people took boarders in the early years was because it was very difficult for a man to raise a family on what he earn, right?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: If a man is making 10 or 15 cents an hour, a lot of them were, it was very, very difficult. And when they took end boarders, this was a few extra dollars that they would be collecting.

Mr. Ioannoni: That's right. But like I said, a lot of people might be *[inaudible]* **[0:43:30]**. You know what I mean? It was a hard *[inaudible]* **[0:43:39]**.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, you say World War II did have an effect on and so far business was concerned because you couldn't get a lot of the scarce items. Is that it?

Mr. Ioannoni: It was that and there was also the tight economy. It wasn't hard *[inaudible]* **[0:44:10]** and people have got no money.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: And they got *[inaudible]* **[0:44:14]**.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: You know and somebody make \$100, \$200 in the coming day *[inaudible]* **[0:44:28]** to somebody, you know.

Interviewer: Yes. This was...

Mr. Ioannoni: ...to myself and the money that pay my bill.

Interviewer: Right. Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: I have brother *[inaudible]* **[0:44:38]** to pay my bill and at the same time I have a money that's collected from the people.

Interviewer: Yes. Now, this was before the war started?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes, it was -- that was about -- after -- before the war start, yes.

Interviewer: Yes. Now...

Mr. Ioannoni: That was in 1924, '25, something in that area.

[0:45:00]

Interviewer: Right. But when World War II started, things started to get a little bit better, didn't they? I mean, people have the money to spend, but it's just that it was difficult to get much of that itself.

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, *[inaudible]* **[0:45:12]**.

Interviewer: Okay. Right. In other words, if you want to buy this stuff, you could get it. But what you'd have to do is pay a higher price for it.

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, if you want to have exactly what you want, you're going to pay a high price for it, and if you could find it.

Interviewer: Right, if you could find this, how much are you willing to sell?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, what would you consider to have been the greatest change in the United States since the time that you came here? What would you consider the greatest change?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, to me, there is a change after the war.

Interviewer: And in what way would you say it was the greatest change?

Mr. loannoni: Well, because everybody had a little money and have a better work. And they have a better machinery, you know. Everything was a little modernized, they modernized everything. Everything had to change, better trucks, better machine and better everything. And like I said, the thing was *[inaudible]* [0:46:24]. That's what I could say to that. It was better.

Interviewer: Have you ever regretted coming to the United States? Were you ever sorry that you came to United States? Do you ever wish you'd stayed in Italy?

Mr. loannoni: No. I think -- really, I think it was -- I was in this country because *[inaudible]* [0:46:44].

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. loannoni: You know what I mean? It might be there by that time. But I wasn't here. I wasn't here.

Interviewer: How did you feel when the United States and Italy went to war?

Mr. loannoni: I feel bad.

Interviewer: Yeah. You felt bad. But you never had any question as to where your allegiance laid, did you?

Mr. loannoni: I don't know what you mean.

Interviewer: What I mean is that during the war, do you remember when the war first started?

Mr. loannoni: Yeah.

Interviewer: A lot of the Italians who did not have citizenship papers are picked up by the FBI.

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: And a lot of people were scared, you know, how the country was running scared there for a while.

Mr. loannoni: Yes.

Interviewer: They were afraid that a lot of foreign nationals people living in this country who had come from foreign country like from Japan, Germany and Italy. They were afraid that maybe they wouldn't be loyal to the United States.

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, yes, because I have in my citizen *[inaudible]* [0:47:48]. That was in 19 -- when they called me, I think it was 1928.

Interviewer: And 1938, they called you up for your draft.

Mr. Ioannoni: Yeah, my draft. Yes.

Interviewer: Did you...?

Mr. Ioannoni: *[inaudible]* [0:48:13].

Interviewer: Did you ever go to school in the United States?

Mr. Ioannoni: Yes. I went to night school.

Interviewer: Where did you attend the night school?

Mr. Ioannoni: When I was here *[inaudible]* [0:48:24] in New Castle. It was a school here with Italian...

Interviewer: Who ran the school? Who operated the school?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, at first I don't know, but when I was in, it was Mr. Burnett.

Interviewer: Oh, she work for the government or for the state?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, I think it was -- I don't know, one of *[inaudible]* [0:48:46] but I think it was the state.

Interviewer: Okay. What sort of things do they teach you in school?

Mr. Ioannoni: Well, *[inaudible]* [0:48:53].

Interviewer: Yeah. What do they teach you, about the United States government and the...?

Mr. Ioannoni: United States government and citizen paper, if I got citizen paper and learn some *[inaudible]* [0:49:05] something right, you know, school, you know.

Interviewer: That's right. Yeah. Okay. Mr. Ioanni, I have asked you just about all the questions that I have to ask you. If you have anything you would like to add to what we've already talked about, you can go right ahead and do it.

Mr. Ioanni: Not really. I'm all right with everything, I guess. Just -- like I told you, I want to *[inaudible]* **[0:49:38]**.

Interviewer: Oh, did you go last year?

Mr. Ioanni: Yes, yes. I don't know then -- I think third, I think it was 3rd of July *[inaudible]* **[0:49:55]**.

Interviewer: Okay. I have spoken with some people, well, with a lot of people.

[0:50:00]

And a lot of people have told me that the worst day that they had in the United States since they've been in this country has been better than the best day they ever had in Italy. Do you understand that I'm talking about, what I mean?

Mr. Ioanni: What's that?

Interviewer: [Foreign Language]

Mr. Ioanni: [Foreign Language]

Interviewer: Okay. The worst day that they ever had in this country, you know, during the depression, no money, you buy little food, and so on.

Mr. Ioanni: Yes.

Interviewer: The worst day that they ever had here was better than the best...

Mr. Ioanni: The best day Italy.

Interviewer: They ever had in Italy while they live there.

Mr. Ioanni: Well, just like what I want to tell you, it just depend like it is here *[inaudible]* **[0:50:42]**.

Interviewer: It depends upon the circumstances. Right, right.

Mr. Ioannoni: Like the last *[inaudible]* [0:50:51] because we had a farm, we had something to eat. We, like I said, to get to the farm there was *[inaudible]* [0:50:59]. And we have something to eat. And our first work, first to work -- that was the bad time *[inaudible]* [0:51:13].

Interviewer: Yeah, during World War I.

Mr. Ioannoni: World War, yes.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: That was bad over there because we don't have enough food. A lot of time, we get to about a lot of *[inaudible]* [0:51:22] and we have other people who work with us in the farm. We give something to eat. A lot of time *[inaudible]* [0:51:31] just to cook green.

Interviewer: Right. Yes.

Mr. Ioannoni: Just to sip with the green.

[0:51:38] **End of Audio**