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Interviewer: Mr. Antonelli, where were you born?

Antonelli: In Italy.

Interviewer : What part of Italy were you born in?

Antonelli: Uh, *Provincia Paruga (phonetic) Nortia*

Interviewer: *Provincia Paruga...?*

Antonelli: *NortAntonelli: PiasAntonelli:*

Interviewer: The *paisa* was called *norja*

Antonelli: *NortiAntonelli:*

Interviewer: *Nortia?*

ANTONELLI: Yes.

Interviewer. Where is this located? In what part of Italy?

ANTONELLI: Down below Rome.

Interviewer: Below Rome?

ANTONELLI: Yes

Interviewer: Is it along the Mediterranean coast or is it on the Adriatic coast?

ANTONELLI: We on the center Italy.

Interviewer: In the center? It's not near either coast.

ANTONELLI: No.

Interviewer: What year were you born?

ANTONELLI: I born in ninety-three.

Interviewer: Eighteen...?

ANTONELLI: 1893.

Interviewer: What did your father do in Italy?

ANTONELLI: He had a store. Seller (unintelligible/foreign). Like a grocery (unintelligible). Sell everything.

Interviewer: I see. Did he sell hardware too?

ANTONELLI: No. No.

Interviewer: Just food?

ANTONELLI: The food and something to eat.

Interviewer: Now, when you were in Italy, did you go to school?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: How old were you when you started school?

ANTONELLI: I start at six years old.

Interviewer: At age six?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: How many years did you go to school?

ANTONELLI: I go seven years, because at thirteen years old I was a barber, and I go to work for my own.

Interviewer: Alright, in other words, you started school when you were six years old...

ANTONELLI: ...Six, yeah...

Interviewer: And you went until you were thirteen.

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: Now, you said when you finished school, you went to work as a barber.

ANTONELLI: That's right. I was a (unintelligible) barber.

Interviewer: That's when you started...

ANTONELLI: Before. Before I finished school.

Interviewer: Oh, then you started your apprenticeship before you finished school.

ANTONELLI: That's right. Go to school. At the same time, learn a trade.

Interviewer: In other words, you went to school during the day, and in the afternoons you went...

ANTONELLI: And at night, I go to working. Yeah.

Interviewer: What was the apprenticeship program like in Italy...

ANTONELLI: Three years.

Interviewer: ...at that time. You had to be apprenticed for three years.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: What did you have to go through with the master barber? What sort of...

ANTONELLI: No, you got no (unintelligible) over there. Where I come from, you got no (unintelligible) like over here.

Interviewer: Uh huh. But with the master barber under whom you worked...

ANTONELLI: Yeah, he take care of me.

Interviewer: He took care of you. Now, what sort of things did you do when you were first learning...?

ANTONELLI: Well, I started by clean up the shop.

Interviewer: Started by cleaning up the shop?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. And then I started, uh...

Interviewer: Lathering?

ANTONELLI: Lather the face of the man for many year. Then I started to use the razor.

Interviewer: In other words, it took you three years of this...

ANTONELLI: Three years to finish the trade, yeah.

Interviewer: Now, when you finished your trade, you were sixteen years old then.

ANTONELLI: No, it was before that.

Interviewer: About fifteen then?

ANTONELLI: No, I started when I was about nine years old.

Interviewer: Oh you started when you were nine.

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: I see.

ANTONELLI: I go to school. At same time, I learn a trade. After school, I go to the barber shop and learn it.

Interviewer: In other words, you were a barber then by the time you were thirteen years old.

ANTONELLI: Thirteen years old, I was a barber, yes. And in my own (unintelligible).

Interviewer: What did you do then? Did you work for another barber? Did you have your own shop?

ANTONELLI: No. I go work for somebody else. I go to (unintelligible) I go to Rome. To finish my trade. I stayed there three years.

Interviewer: You stayed in Rome three years.

ANTONELLI: Yes. Then I come back in my own town, I want to open a shop, but I got married.

Interviewer: You got married. Okay, now, when you went to Rome to finish your trade, did you go alone?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you have any relatives in Rome?

ANTONELLI: I got an uncle, yeah.

Interviewer: Did you stay with your uncle in Rome?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Stayed with my uncle.

Interviewer: Now, you said that when you came back, uh, You stayed in Rome about three years?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: And when you came back to your own hometown, you couldn't have been much more than, what, sixteen or seventeen years old?

ANTONELLI: I was seventeen years old when I come back. Two years later, I got married.

Interviewer: Okay, then you're nineteen years old. Now, after you got married... What year was that, then?

ANTONELLI: What year?

Interviewer: Yes.

ANTONELLI: 1912.

Interviewer: 1912?

ANTONELLI: Yes. September 1912.

Interviewer: When did you first start thinking about coming to the United...

ANTONELLI: No. No, no, no. It was in June 13 I married. And then, I got a (unintelligible) I come over to this country on September 8, 1912. After three months of marriage, I come over and (unintelligible).

Interviewer: I see. Now, why did you come to this country?

ANTONELLI: Because I got disgusted with the boss over there, and I make a passport to come over to this country.

Interviewer: Did you have friends in the United States...?

ANTONELLI: I had one friend...(unintelligible)

Interviewer: Yes. And he was from the...

ANTONELLI: ...Same town, yes.

Interviewer: ...from where you came.

ANTONELLI: Yes.

Interviewer: Now, did he write back to you and tell you what it was like...?

ANTONELLI: Yes. He said to come over in a time like what I got today. By the time you come over here, someone receive you over at the Battery, (unintelligible), and that's all.

Interviewer: I want to go back gently now, and find out a few other things. Now, when you decided to come to this country, where did you have to go to make out your passport and to make out all the necessary papers?

ANTONELLI: Well, I go down Spoleto (unintelligible)...

Interviewer: Spoleto?

ANTONELLI: Spoleto.

Interviewer: And where was Spoleto located?

ANTONELLI: Oh, it's about forty miles from my hometown.

Interviewer: Is it towards Rome?

ANTONELLI: Yes.

Interviewer: After all... Did you have any difficulty making out...

ANTONELLI: No, not difficult at all.

Interviewer: Now, when you were finished making out your papers and you decided to come, you were on your way to the United States, where in Italy did you leave from? In other words, where did you get a boat?

Antonelli: I got a boat from Naples.

Interviewer: From Naples. How did you get to Naples?

ANTONELLI: By train.

Interviewer: By train? And where did you catch the train?

ANTONELLI: I got a train (unintelligible), go to Rome, see my uncle, then from Rome, I go to Naples.

Interviewer: I see. Now, how did you get from your hometown to Spoleto?

ANTONELLI: At that time, there was a transportation autobus.

Interviewer: There was a bus?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Now you got the, uh, you got the, uh, railroad. But the time was (unintelligible).

Interviewer: I see. You didn't have the railroad then.

ANTONELLI: No.

Interviewer: Now, how long did it take you to come from Italy to the United States?

ANTONELLI: It take me twenty-nine days.

Interviewer: Twenty-nine days. Did the ship make any stops anywhere?

ANTONELLI: The make a stop at (unintelligible), stop over there for a day, and then I come over.

Interviewer: So in other words, it just stopped in the Azores (?) to refurnish, and then it came and then it came straight to... Where did it come to? New York?

ANTONELLI: New York.

Interviewer: Now, when you reached New York, did anybody meet you there?

ANTONELLI: A friend of mine. (unintelligible)

Interviewer: He was waiting for you in New York?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: What were the conditions aboard ship like?

ANTONELLI: The ship?

Interviewer: Yes. What were the conditions...

ANTONELLI: Like you be in the Army.

Interviewer: Really?

ANTONELLI: Your own, uh, (unintelligible).

Interviewer: Like a mess kit.

ANTONELLI: Spoon. No fork.

Interviewer: No fork. Just a spoon.

ANTONELLI: You go in the line like in the Army and get your lunch.

Interviewer: And that's all. You just through line and got your own lunch. Now, what were the sleeping quarters like?

ANTONELLI: What?

Interviewer: Where you slept. What was that like?

ANTONELLI: Oh, not like today. One floor, it was called ground, like (unintelligible).

Interviewer: One floor.

ANTONELLI: Yes.

Interviewer: Were there bunk beds all over the floor?

ANTONELLI: Yes.

Interviewer: And were there just men in there? Or mixed...

ANTONELLI: Only men.

Interviewer: Only men.

ANTONELLI: Ladies on one side, men on the other.

Interviewer: I see. Okay, now, when you first came to the United States and this friend of yours met you, did you have to go through customs or anything when you landed here?

ANTONELLI: No.

Interviewer: You just got off the ship and that was all.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did they give you a physical examination and see if you were healthy...?

ANTONELLI: No, no. They give you the examination in Naples.

Interviewer: Oh, they gave you the examination before you left?

ANTONELLI: Oh, yeah. Before you leave.

Interviewer: So you didn't have to have one when you got here.

ANTONELLI: No.

Interviewer: Now, where was this friend of yours staying?

ANTONELLI: On 33rd Street in New York.

Interviewer: Oh, your friend was staying in New York, then. Now, did you stay with him in New York?

ANTONELLI: Yes. I board in the same place.

Interviewer: So you both were boarding in a house.

ANTONELLI: In a house, yes.

Interviewer: Who was the owner of the house? Were they Italians, too?

ANTONELLI: Yeah, he was Italian. He was Romano.

Interviewer: Now, when you got there, did you find a job right away?

ANTONELLI: I find a job the next day.

Interviewer: Where did you find a job?

ANTONELLI: In New York.

Interviewer: I know, but, what kind of a job was it?

ANTONELLI: Barber.

Interviewer: As a barber?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Was it easy to find work at that time?

ANTONELLI: Well, in New York City, you got an agency. You go to them, if they got a job open, you pay a dollar, and they send you on a job.

Interviewer: Oh, they did have this agency... Was this a private agency, or was it government-run...?

ANTONELLI: No, no, no. Private.

Interviewer: It was private. Now, the barber for whom you worked, was he Italian?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Were his customers mostly Italian?

ANTONELLI: Oh, we got all kinds.

Interviewer: All kinds. How did you make out when you first got here? Not being able to understand the language?

ANTONELLI: Well, not so much after three weeks... I work with this man, **[10:00]** I got disgusted, because they said to me the first week, I go to 7 o'clock in the morning. We work at 7 to 11.

Interviewer: At night?

ANTONELLI: Uh huh. Then the second week, they said six thirty. The third week, they wanted me to go to work at six o'clock.

Interviewer: From six o'clock in the morning to eleven at night?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. He wanted me to go to work at six o'clock. I never started at six o'clock because I quit. I don't said nothing to him, I got a reason, and (unintelligible).

Interviewer: How much did he pay you for all of this work?

ANTONELLI: Three dollars a half for a week.

Interviewer: How many days a week did you work?

ANTONELLI: Seven days.

Interviewer: Seven days a week?

ANTONELLI: Uh huh.

Interviewer: All those hours, every day?

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: For three and a half dollars a week?

A: That's right.

Interviewer: How much did your room and board cost you?

ANTONELLI: Well, it cost me three dollars.

Interviewer: Your... So, you had fifty cents to yourself.

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Well, I make a (unintelligible), but that wasn't much. But after three weeks, I got a job for seven dollars a week because I got a different shop.

Interviewer: Did you get the other job through an agency, too?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: And in this other shop where they paid you seven dollars a week, was the owner there Italian, too?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Yeah, Italian.

Interviewer: How long had the owners, the first owner... Was he born in this country, or did he come from Italy, too?

ANTONELLI: The first one?

Interviewer: Yes.

ANTONELLI: Well, I think he come over when he was a kid because he was talking much Italian.

Interviewer: How about the second...

ANTONELLI: The second was talking Italian just like me. The agency send the report to him, he says this boy just come across. He no talk English. But he work because he's a barber. If you like it, take it; if you don't, send him back, we send the money back. As soon as I got there, he sees me, he asks, "You a barber?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "All right." He had customers there, I started working the customers, he said, "Okay, the job is yours."

Interviewer: How long did you stay with that man?

ANTONELLI: I stayed with that man seven months.

Interviewer: Did you make the same pay? Seven dollars a week?

ANTONELLI: No, he give me nine. He raised me to nine dollars.

Interviewer: Now, did you still work the same hours with him as you did with the other barber?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Seven in the morning to eleven at night?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. I get a day off a week.

Interviewer: Oh, you did get a day off a week.

ANTONELLI: Yeah, but we don't get it because we didn't get the money. We wouldn't make any commission.

Interviewer: Oh so in other words... Did you get paid extra for that day you worked?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Now, you stayed with one about, what, a couple of weeks?

ANTONELLI: (Unintelligible)

Interviewer: The first one. You stayed a couple of weeks.

ANTONELLI: Three weeks. Three weeks.

Interviewer: Three weeks. And the second barber, you stayed seven months. Why... why did you leave him?

ANTONELLI: Well, I go work another place for 12 dollars a week.

Interviewer: Was this barber an Italian barber also?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Had he been born in...?

ANTONELLI: He was located different.

Interviewer: And did you work the same hours with him?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. One day off. You had to take a day off.

Interviewer: So you got one day off and you had to work from seven in the morning to eleven at night. (unintelligible) How long did you stay with him?

ANTONELLI: I stay with him about...three years. Then I go back to Italy. The first World War.

Interviewer: When you first came to this country, of course you were married. Did you send money home to your wife?

ANTONELLI: No, my wife come over in 1913.

Interviewer: Oh, your wife came over right after you did.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now, when your wife came over, did you stay in the same boarding house?

ANTONELLI: No, no, I got my own house.

Interviewer: You got your own house then.

ANTONELLI: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: Now, were you renting your own house, or did you buy it?

ANTONELLI: No, I rent. It was an apartment.

Interviewer: I see. How much were apartments renting for?

ANTONELLI: At that time, it was for twelve dollars a month.

Interviewer: Twelve dollars a month.

ANTONELLI: Yeah, four room and bed.

Interviewer: For four rooms and a bed. Now, you lived in New York, and the area where you lived, were they all Italians?

ANTONELLI: Eh, it was mixed.

Interviewer: It was mixed? Italian, Irish, Polish...

ANTONELLI: All kinds.

Interviewer: Now, what did you do when you weren't working? For recreation?

ANTONELLI: I can't get no...no place. (Unintelligible) We, uh, one day off, we go to movies. That's all.

Interviewer: That's it.

ANTONELLI: We go downtown New York, and we see the Italian movies. That's all.

Interviewer: So you couldn't do much... Now, today, a lot of people talk. They say New Yorkers are unfriendly and you'd be living next door to someone for a long time and never really get to know them. Was it the same in those days?

ANTONELLI: Oh, yeah. It was, uh, two, four, six, seven... Eight apartment floor. You get in your door, you get in, you close it, you forget about who was next door.

Interviewer: Or you just...didn't get to know the other people.

ANTONELLI: If we see someone down the steps, we say "good morning" or "good night," but that's all.

Interviewer: Okay, now... You state that after about three years, you went back to Italy. Was that 1916?

ANTONELLI: 1915, when Italy declare war in AustriAntonelli:

Interviewer: Okay, you went back to Italy to join the Army?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Why did you go back there?

ANTONELLI: Eh, I was crazy. (laughter)

Interviewer: Did anybody come and ask you to go back?

ANTONELLI: Yeah, a friend of mine, a (unintelligible) of mine... (unintelligible) If you don't go back, you can't go back there no more. I was a younger boy, you know?

Interviewer: So, you went back?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: How did you go back? On a boat?

ANTONELLI: A boat. The government paid for.

Interviewer: Uh huh. Did you go contact the government agents, or...?

ANTONELLI: No, I go to Italian consul.

Interviewer: And what did he have to say?

ANTONELLI: Well, he...he give you a pass to go.

Interviewer: Okay, now, aboard the ship that you went back to Italy on...

ANTONELLI: What ship it was?

Interviewer: Yeah.

ANTONELLI: What name?

Interviewer: Do you remember it?

ANTONELLI: The *AnconAntonelli*:

Interviewer: The *AnconAntonelli*: It was an Italian ship.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Was the ship filled with young men like yourself.

ANTONELLI: Yeah. And families. Everything.

Interviewer: Oh, you bring your family with you?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: How many children did you have then?

ANTONELLI: I had two kids.

Interviewer: Two. And you brought them back to Italy with you.

ANTONELLI: Mmhmm.

Interviewer: Now, when you got back to Italy, what, ah, where did you go first? Did you...

ANTONELLI: I go to my paisAntonelli:

Interviewer: And that's where your wife and children stayed.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: And then what did you do?

ANTONELLI: I go to Spoleo, what you might call my district, and they picked me and sent me to Rome. Ready for regiment in infantry.

Interviewer: In other words, you went to Spoleto where you joined a unit, and they sent you to Rome in the Eighty-First Infantry.

ANTONELLI: MmHm.

Interviewer: Right. Now, how much training did you have?

ANTONELLI: I got much training. I got about...August, September, October, November... I go on the front. About four months.

Interviewer: Where did they send you on the front?

ANTONELLI: They send me on Valsarego (phoenetic), he call them (unintelligible), he call them Catore (phoenetic)

Interviewer: Catore. That's the area where you were. This is in the north of Italy.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: And did you see much combat and action in that area?

ANTONELLI: Oh, yeah. I see about three or four times.

Interviewer: How long did you stay up there?

ANTONELLI: I was over there...1917.

Interviewer: In other words, you stayed there for two years.

ANTONELLI: I put in three years.

Interviewer: Almost three years.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now, when you finished your time over in the service and the war was over, what happened then?

ANTONELLI: Well, after nine months, they send me home.

Interviewer: They sent...

ANTONELLI: Yeah, he gave me my, uh, what do you call them...

Interviewer: Your discharge papers?

ANTONELLI: Discharge.

Interviewer: They gave you discharge papers.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: And sent you back to your paisAntonelli:

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: And how long did you stay there after you got out of the army?

ANTONELLI: One month.

Interviewer: And then you came back to the United States?

ANTONELLI: And then I come back over here.

Interviewer: Okay, now, under what circumstances did you come back? Did the government, the Italian government...

ANTONELLI: They paid me everything to come over back.

Interviewer: They (unintelligible) to come back, family and all.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you go back to New York?

ANTONELLI: No, I come back to Wilmington.

Interviewer: Why...

ANTONELLI: In 1919.

Interviewer: In 1919. Why did you come to Wilmington?

ANTONELLI: I had a sister over here.

Interviewer: Oh, you had a sister here?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: When did your sister come here?

ANTONELLI: Come over in war time. Just before war time. I don't know, myself.

Interviewer: Oh, you didn't even know that she was over here.

ANTONELLI: No.

Interviewer: Why did she come to Wilmington?

ANTONELLI: She had a husband over here.

Interviewer: He went back to Italy and married her, right?

ANTONELLI: Who?

Interviewer: Your sister's husband.

ANTONELLI: No, no, she was married before.

Interviewer: Oh, she was married before.

ANTONELLI: (Unintelligible) husband was here.

Interviewer: Uh huh...

ANTONELLI: And he send for her.

Interviewer: I see.

ANTONELLI: But when she come over here, I was in New York. Didn't know anything about it.

Interviewer: You didn't even know that she...?

ANTONELLI: No.

Interviewer: You were in New York when she came here.

ANTONELLI: Yes.

Interviewer: You could have met her and ...

ANTONELLI: And then I don't go to Italy for sure. I don't go back to Italy (laughter).

Interviewer: Well, what brought your brother-in-law here to Wilmington? Why did he come here?

ANTONELLI: He come over here and got a (unintelligible)

Interviewer: Oh. Yes.

ANTONELLI: He was a... (unintelligible).

Interviewer: Oh, that's why he came here.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

[20:00]

Interviewer: When you first came back in 1919, you came back to Wilmington... I suppose you landed in New York and caught a train to Wilmington.

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: Did you get your own house as soon as you got back here?

ANTONELLI: No, I live with my sister about three months.

Interviewer: And then you got your own house.

ANTONELLI: And then I got my own apartment.

Interviewer: Where did your sister live in Wilmington?

ANTONELLI: She was living (unintelligible) blocks west of Fourth Street.

Interviewer: Right in front of (unintelligible) Fourth Street?

ANTONELLI: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, and where did you get a house?

ANTONELLI: I get a house at Seventh and Union.

Interviewer: Seventh and Union. Now, were there all Italians in that area?

ANTONELLI: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Did you buy the house there at Seventh and Union?

ANTONELLI: No.

Interviewer: You just rented it.

ANTONELLI: I got an apartment.

Interviewer: All right. Now, what did you do for work when you first got back in 1919?

ANTONELLI: I got back Thursday. On Monday morning, I go to work.

Interviewer: With whom were you working then?

ANTONELLI: (Unintelligible)

Interviewer: A barber?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: You worked with another barber at Seventh and Union?

ANTONELLI: Yeah, I worked with somebody.

Interviewer: How long did you work for him?

ANTONELLI: I work with him for about four months.

Interviewer: About four months?

ANTONELLI: And then I come up to Seventh and Lincoln. More money.

Interviewer: Okay, now, when you worked as a barber, what kind of hours did you put in?

ANTONELLI: Well, you go eight to seven.

Interviewer: From eight in the morning til seven at night.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: That was much better than before.

ANTONELLI: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: Six days a week?

ANTONELLI: Yes, six days a week. No Sunday.

Interviewer: No Sunday. What was the pay like in those days?

ANTONELLI: What's that?

Interviewer: What was the pay like right after the war?

ANTONELLI: Oh, it was different (unintelligible)

Interviewer: But what was the pay like? It was a lot better right after...

ANTONELLI: Oh yes.

Interviewer: What was the difference, uh, differential between...?

ANTONELLI: Well, the pay was different.

Interviewer: A lot higher?

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: Well, before the war, you made twelve dollars a week. That was the best...

ANTONELLI: Now I make thirty-five when I come back.

Interviewer: Thirty-five when you got back...

ANTONELLI: Then I make some more when I change it.

Interviewer: I see. Well that was a great difference right there.

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: How much were you paid for a shave and a haircut then?

ANTONELLI: I shave...the first time?

Interviewer: Well, before the war, how much...

ANTONELLI: Before the war, it was 5 cents a shave, ten cents a haircut.

Interviewer: And how much was it right after the war?

ANTONELLI: It was twenty-five and fifty.

Interviewer: Twenty-five and fifty.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now, after the war, you had a lot more free time than what you used to have before the war.

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: Because before, you used to work all day long with one day off...

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: ...And, uh...

ANTONELLI: I can go to school over here, too.

Interviewer: Oh, you were able to go to school then?

ANTONELLI: I go to school night time, to get my, uh, citizen paper.

Interviewer: I see. So, you did go to school at night time...

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: ...And you did get your citizenship papers.

ANTONELLI: That's right.

Interviewer: Okay, well, that's fine. Now, what else did you do for recreation?

ANTONELLI: Eh, you go to club.

INTERVIEWER: Which club did you go to?

ANTONELLI: Well, uh, we had one club down at Twelfth and Walnut called El Cristobol Columbo. And we got a Saint Anthony club.

INTERVIEWER: Well, now, in 1919, you didn't have a Saint Anthony's club, did you?

ANTONELLI: No. No.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have the, uh, Columbus...?

ANTONELLI: Columbus Lodge. The Sons of Columbus.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, the Sons of Columbus opened in 1919?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. No, uh, not open, but, it was on Sixth Street. You know (unintelligible)?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

ANTONELLI: Well, it was a public hall.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

ANTONELLI: We had a meeting over there.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, really? That's...

ANTONELLI: Downstairs, he had a bar, you know?

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that was Sons of Columbus, then.

ANTONELLI: Well, that's where he started the meeting.

INTERVIEWER: That's where he...

ANTONELLI: (Unintelligible)

INTERVIEWER: Right. That's (unintelligible). How did the Italians get along with the rest of the community?

ANTONELLI: Oh, they got along fine. It was a different time (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: It was a different time than it is today. There, uh, there was never any trouble of any sort, was there?

ANTONELLI: Hmmm?

INTERVIEWER: I said, there was never any trouble...

ANTONELLI: No. No trouble. They call it, you know, the Irish are what it is. They call you wappo, deggo, ah, eat the spaghetti, drink your beans, you know?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I know.

ANTONELLI: That's the trouble with a big mouth, but (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: But there was never any, uh...

ANTONELLI: No. This is what we call Little Italy.

INTERVIEWER: Now, where did you used to go to church before St. Anthony's was open?

ANTONELLI: Saint Thomas.

INTERVIEWER: At Saint Thomas'. Did you ever have any trouble of any kind...?

ANTONELLI: No. No trouble at all.

INTERVIEWER: You go to any mass you wanted to go to?

ANTONELLI: Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever go to Saint Peter's?

ANTONELLI: No, I never go to Saint Peter's. Was too far away for me. But, what people are talking about Saint Peter, he chasing out Italian people.

INTERVIEWER: This is what I heard; that they didn't...

ANTONELLI: That's the truth. A friend of mine, he told me the truth.

INTERVIEWER: Well I heard that the Italians only went to the nine o'clock mass there. If you went to any other mass, they threw them out.

ANTONELLI: I went to Saint Thomas and never got in trouble.

INTERVIEWER: What was your relationship with other people? Like, uh, for example, when you first came back here, well, let's take, for example, when you first came to this country and lived in New York, you worked long hours, you didn't see too many other people.

ANTONELLI: Well, you make a friend in the shop.

INTERVIEWER: You did make fairly good friends in the shop.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you did socialize a little bit with them on the day off...

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But was that the extent of it right then?

ANTONELLI: Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How about when you came back here after World War I?

ANTONELLI: In Wilmington?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, in Wilmington.

ANTONELLI: I make bigger friends over here.

INTERVIEWER: You made more friends here than in New York.

ANTONELLI: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find people to be friendlier here than in New York? A little more open?

ANTONELLI: Well, that time in New York... People think you were working all the time because you can't lose a day if you've got a family. You know, if you lose one day, you can't keep it up.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you couldn't support your family if you lost a day.

ANTONELLI: That's right. But when I come over to Wilmington, it was different altogether. Cause you're making more money, you know?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

ANTONELLI: You make more friend. You say to one friend, let's go here, let's go there, you can't do in New York.

INTERVIEWER: Things like that you couldn't do... Right. You had more money here and you had more time.

ANTONELLI: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: And consequently, you get to meet more people.

ANTONELLI: More people, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: When Saint Anthony's was first founded, suddenly they started all sorts of Catholic clubs like Holy Name and everything else.

ANTONELLI: Well, they had the club down under the Church.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, but I want to ask you one other question. Before Saint Anthony's was started, did any of the Italians belong to the holy names at Saint Thomas' or...?

ANTONELLI: I don't know. I don't know that.

INTERVIEWER: You don't know if any of them belonged to any clubs or anything...

ANTONELLI: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: Uh, did you belong to any clubs yourself?

ANTONELLI: Not...

INTERVIEWER: I mean back in say, 1919, 1920.

ANTONELLI: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't belong to any clubs at all?

ANTONELLI: I just joined when I come back to Wilmington, I joined the Columbus lodge.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so, in 1919, you did belong to Columbus lodge.

ANTONELLI: 1920.

INTERVIEWER: 20. Now, that was... Were they affiliated with Sons of Italy at that time?

ANTONELLI: No, that's...the lodge over here. (unintelligible) This affiliated with the Sons of Italy.

INTERVIEWER: But Columbus Hall, er, Columbus lodge never was.

ANTONELLI: No, Columbus was not. Then we make it propaganda that the big, uh, that order in beer. Then we got the Sons of Columbus. Got a Chris Columbus. We form a Roman lodge, (unintelligible). The jealousy come along from one of the other state of ItaliAntonelli: That's all. That's why the order is that way today.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Um, when did they first start to build Saint Anthony's parish?

ANTONELLI: Saint Anthony's started I think in 1923, 24.

INTERVIEWER: Now that's when they built the little chapel, right?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How did the Italian people feel about that?

ANTONELLI: Oh, it was a (unintelligible). It was a (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: How did Father Tucker first strike the Italians? Now, here was a man who was an Irishman and the Irish were the ones who gave the Italians the worst time of all. And yet, you have an Irish priest coming here to start an Italian Church.

ANTONELLI: We had Father Tucker. He was in Rome for (unintelligible) years. He talk the language – Italian language – better than me. And the bishop in the city, the one in Wilmington, never wanted to give Italian priest at the Italian Church.

INTERVIEWER: This was the bishop.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Why didn't he want to give a...

ANTONELLI: I don't know what it was. Father Tucker, he go himself. Father Monaham (phoenetic), at the time, he was a biship...

INTERVIEWER: Bishop. Bishop Monaham.

ANTONELLI: Yeah. And they got a permit.

INTERVIEWER: So they gave them permission to form an Italian Church.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Now, who built that first chapel? Do you know? Did they get a contractor to come in or...

ANTONELLI: Oh, no. The, I think (unintelligible)... It was all wood, you know. Wood.

INTERVIEWER: It was all wood.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It had stucco on the outside.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: DiSabatino...

ANTONELLI: I think it is. I know the bigger Church, he built it.

INTERVIEWER: He did build the bigger one.

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Then a lot of people donate one day work, two days work, you know what I mean? But he was a general contractor.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when the big Church was built, was there a big celebration?

[30:01]

ANTONELLI: Oh, yeah. A big celebration all day. It was finished, and Father Tucker said mass over there.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

ANTONELLI: Mmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: And all the Italian people felt very very proud of themselves.

ANTONELLI: Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did they have a parade?

ANTONELLI: No, no, I don't think so. No. Because there was a mass, and they blocked everything (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: Now, when the Church was completed, were there any clubs that were formed?

ANTONELLI: Well, that's what I say. Form the (unintelligible) and the Saint Anthony club.

INTERVIEWER: The Saint Anthony Men's Club.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: (Unintelligible) Well, they didn't have a bar down in the basement, did they?

ANTONELLI: Down in the basement, yeah. It was just a little... Small, like this room.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, really? It was just a small room then. Um... What changes would you say took place in Little Italy here? In the Italian community when Father Tucker formed the church? What changes would you say...

ANTONELLI: They change. Everybody go to church.

INTERVIEWER: Really? Before, they didn't go to church.

ANTONELLI: Well, they go sometimes. Some go sometimes. Some go no place. (Unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: This really raised the enthusiasm... Now, tell me, is it true that a lot of Italians left the Catholic Church before Saint Anthony's was built?

ANTONELLI: Well, I don't remember that because it was before my time. I heard about it, but I don't know if it's true or not. Before, changing religion, you know? Episcopalian. Holy roller, they called them.

INTERVIEWER: Holy roller, yes.

ANTONELLI: But, I can't say that because I'm (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: Then you wouldn't know if a lot of them came back...

ANTONELLI: That's right. Everybody come back after (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and you would say that Father Tucker then had quite an impact on the Italian people.

ANTONELLI: Yeah. The best priest we ever had.

INTERVIEWER: (Unintelligible). Now tell me something else. Usually when you have an area where the people of one nationality all concentrated together, usually you have a couple of politicians from that areAntonelli: Or maybe representatives of that group in the city. Did the Italians have any representatives on the city council or anything like that?

ANTONELLI: Not Italian.

INTERVIEWER: No. They didn't.

ANTONELLI: Not Italian.

INTERVIEWER: I see. Where did the representatives come from? Do you have any idea?

ANTONELLI: No.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when you came to this country the last time, was Prohibition in effect?

ANTONELLI: It was Prohibition when I come over. Prohibition go into effect in 1918.

INTERVIEWER: Right. In other words, that was just before you came back to settle...

ANTONELLI: It was a bootlegger town. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Everyone was...

ANTONELLI: Everyone was a bootlegger.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Everybody made their own.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Did anybody have any trouble with the law because of this?

ANTONELLI: Oh, plenty of trouble.

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell me something about that?

ANTONELLI: No, because I never go to speak-easy myself. I don't like (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell me about any of the problems? You don't have to say any names or anything.

ANTONELLI: No.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about the problems...

ANTONELLI: Well, lot of people, they got the store selling whiskey (unintelligible). But I never go to such a thing myself.

INTERVIEWER: How about the Depression? When the Depression hit, what sort...

ANTONELLI: Well, the Depression hit pretty bad in 1929.

INTERVIEWER: And everybody had a problem, is that it?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, now, insofar as your being a barber is concerned, did you ever open your own shop?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: When did you...

ANTONELLI: 1922.

INTERVIEWER: In 1922? In other words, you weren't here too many years the second time when you opened your own shop. Where did you open your shop?

ANTONELLI: I bought a shop at Fifth and Union.

INTERVIEWER: At Fifth and Union?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Five-oh-two Union.

INTERVIEWER: How long did you stay there?

ANTONELLI: I stayed there six years. And then I got sick in 1923. (unintelligible) the house... It was damp. And my doctor said, "No live in the house." But if I lived in the store and rented the house, he'd kick me out. I sell the shop, and I bought (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: I see. This house right here.

ANTONELLI: Yeah. 1926.

INTERVIEWER: And you've been here ever since.

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Then from there, after I sell the place, I go to Kennett Square. I was in Kennett Square for five years.

INTERVIEWER: Did you live in Kennett Square, or did you just go there every day?

ANTONELLI: No. I wanted to live up there, but the first wife I had, she no want to come up there because there was too much negroes.

INTERVIEWER: There were a lot of negroes in Kennett Square?

ANTONELLI: Oh yeah. At that time. That's the worst. Then five years, up and down, every day. When I went in there, (unintelligible), then I come back to Wilmington.

INTERVIEWER: How did you used to go up to Kennett Square?

ANTONELLI: Huh?

INTERVIEWER: How did you get to Kennett Square?

ANTONELLI: With a car.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, you had a car then?

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of car did you have?

ANTONELLI: Ford.

INTERVIEWER: Model T?

ANTONELLI: Model T Ford.

INTERVIEWER: Really? Okay, that's interesting. Now, after you stayed up there five years and decided to leave off that shop, did you open another shop down here in Wilmington?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. Fifth and Lincoln.

INTERVIEWER: At Fifth and Lincoln.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And how long did you stay there?

ANTONELLI: Oh, I stayed there three years. Then I move down to Union Street again. Five Twenty-Two Union. I stay there for thirty-four years.

INTERVIEWER: You stayed there, just running the shop there. Were you the only barber in your shop or did you have...

ANTONELLI: I had... I had a working man at one time. But then, nobody (unintelligible) no more, I got to work by myself.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, now, I want to go back a little bit to around the time when you first came here to the United States, you know, in 1919... The second time you came here. Around that time, Fascism was becoming pretty big in Italy. Until 1923, Mussolini took over.

ANTONELLI: Well, (unintelligible), don't know about that. I don't read the Italian newspaper. I heard it, but... The people were talking. Mussolini was one of the greatest men in Italy.

INTERVIEWER: What other sort of things did you hear? Did it sound to you like most of the Italians were in favor of Mussolini?

ANTONELLI: Oh, yeah. (unintelligible) You got some that like it, some that don't like it.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, naturally.

ANTONELLI: You know what I mean? But what I heard myself... I was in 1960 in Italy. I ask about Mussolini, about what he'd done, what he'd do. He says we never got another man like him. Was a great man.

INTERVIEWER: In 1960.

ANTONELLI: When I come back in Italy myself, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: This is what the reaction is...

ANTONELLI: Sixty-eight.

INTERVIEWER: So, the people still over there...

ANTONELLI: Still over there, they like him, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Uh, being in a barber shop, you hear a lot of talk. You know, everybody comes in, they talk. Did you hear much more about Mussolini other than just that?

ANTONELLI: No.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever know that there were any fascist organizations that existed in this area?

ANTONELLI: We had an organization over here. They called the (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: (Unintelligible) That's...uh, veteran's organization.

ANTONELLI: Yeah, veterans of the first world war.

INTERVIEWER: That was an Italian veterans organization.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Were they all fascist?

ANTONELLI: No... (unintelligible) we had a permit from Washington.

INTERVIEWER: How about, uh, was there a fascist organization here, too?

ANTONELLI: I think there was one.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever hear of the Fascist League of North America?

ANTONELLI: No.

INTERVIEWER: (unintelligible) the organization was. I was just wondering if you'd ever heard of it.

ANTONELLI: No.

INTERVIEWER: Did they ever have any parades around Little Italy here?

ANTONELLI: No.

INTERVIEWER: Did they ever have any rallies at Columbus Hall?

ANTONELLI: No. Only (unintelligible) come to church once a year with (unintelligible), you know?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

ANTONELLI: (unintelligible)

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember when they had this big drive on people giving their gold wedding rings and everything?

ANTONELLI: Oh, yeah. (unintelligible)

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Now, this was a fascist rally, wasn't it?

ANTONELLI: No, it was (unintelligible)

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't it? I thought maybe it was because, you know, they were sending money to Mussolini...

ANTONELLI: No, I don't think so. (unintelligible)

INTERVIEWER: What was that all about, then?

ANTONELLI: Well, the council... We had the first assistant councilor here in Wilmington.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I remember, we had a counselor over here, just a few years, about eight years ago. There was one down on West Street, I believe. No, Washington Street.

ANTONELLI: No, no. Been long time since down on Washington Street. More than ten years. Then before that, we had one on Fourth Street. But the last one we got was ten years ago. Got same house. It was (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And that was on Washington Street.

ANTONELLI: Yeah, Washington Street, yeah. Between Sixth and Seventh.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it was around there. I remember that somewhere down there. Now, when Mussolini came to power in Italy, he got in a war with Ethiopia, and a lot of people thought this was bad in this country. Did this affect you in any way in your relationship with other people?

[40:00]

ANTONELLI: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: In no way at all?

ANTONELLI: No.

INTERVIEWER: What changes did you detect as a result of Franklin Delanore Roosevelt's election to...

ANTONELLI: He was saving the country.

INTERVIEWER: He saved the country. Now, how did this affect your life?

ANTONELLI: He was better for everybody, he was better for me, too. After he become President, he put a lot of work in and people are spending money.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Okay. In other words, he just got the economy going again, is that...?

ANTONELLI: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: How about World War Two? What effect did it have on you?

ANTONELLI: Nothing. I had a boy in the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Well, let me ask you the question a different way. You were an American citizen...

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...But you came from Italy.

ANTONELLI: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You had been in the Army in Italy. You fought for Italy in World War One. And now here World War Two starts, and Italy and the United States are at war with one another.

ANTONELLI: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: How did this affect you? How did you feel about it?

ANTONELLI: I feel like any Italian... (unintelligible). I keep it to myself. Because it's not my business.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. What would you consider the greatest change in the United States since your arrival here?

ANTONELLI: A big change now. A new generation.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it's tough to say just one big change.

ANTONELLI: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: But if you were to look over the whole picture, how would you say that life has changed the most? In what way?

ANTONELLI: Well....

INTERVIEWER: Would you say the automobile has caused the biggest change...

ANTONELLI: Automobile... Too much luxury. That's what I think.

INTERVIEWER: Too much luxury?

ANTONELLI: That's what I think myself.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever desired to go back to Italy to stay?

ANTONELLI: No. I got my own family over here.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever regretted coming to the United States?

ANTONELLI: No. Never.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you ever feel that you would like to have things changed here back to the way they were when you first came here?

ANTONELLI: No. My god, I don't want to say that. I don't want to see that time no more.

INTERVIEWER: In other words, you feel that life here is better than...

ANTONELLI: Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I spoke to one person and they told me that the way they felt was that the best day they ever had in Italy was worse than the worst day they ever had here. Could...Do you think you could say the same thing?

ANTONELLI: No... You know, I come over in 1912, then four years I was in the Army... You don't know nothing because you're the first in line... You know what I mean? (Unintelligible) It takes one month to come back here. I never read that Italian paper. (Unintelligible)

INTERVIEWER: No, I don't think you understood what I meant.

ANTONELLI: Yeah, I understand what I'm talking about, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That life in Italy...

ANTONELLI: Life. It's good life. If you've got work.

INTERVIEWER: In Italy.

ANTONELLI: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Well, this is the point I was trying to bring out. I had spoken with some other people who said that the best day, (speaking Italian).

ANTONELLI: Well, 1929 was a bad time.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

ANTONELLI: Not another one time was bad in 1913. See, my wife is supposed to come over to this country, I stop her. For three months. Because we had no work. Then the work come back, I send for my wife. I remember when I make a subway in New York. People make a dollar a day. Work under the ground.

INTERVIEWER: Digging the subway.

ANTONELLI: Ten hours a day. One dollar. Ten cents an hour.

INTERVIEWER: That's digging everything. How did they dig that subway? Mostly by hand, was it? Or...

ANTONELLI: Mostly by hand because there wasn't much machinery. Only had a drill, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Hydrolic drill?

ANTONELLI: Yeah. It broke the pavement.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

ANTONELLI: It was small. You know? One use it, one... All pick and shovel. I remember when they make Seventh Avenue. Subway at Seventh Avenue. I was working there. You ought to see the poor people come up at twelve o'clock for lunch. You don't know if he was white or was a negro.

INTERVIEWER: You couldn't tell what...

ANTONELLI: No. All dirty, you know.

[44:59] (End)