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MSS 179 Robert H. Richards, Jr., Delaware oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

## **Contact:**

Special Collections, University of Delaware Library  
181 South College Avenue  
Newark, DE 19717-5267  
302.831.2229 / 302.831.1046 (fax)  
<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec>  
[askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu](mailto:askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu)

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# Mr. Joseph Rizzo

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Okay, Mr. Rizzo, let me start by asking you where were you born?

Mr. Rizzo: I was born in Italy, Montalto Uffugo Provincia Cosenza.

Interviewer: The province of Cosenza.

Mr. Rizzo: Montalto Uffugo.

Interviewer: Montalto Uffugo.

Mr. Rizzo: Uffugo.

Interviewer: Well I'm going to spell this now because the lady who types this doesn't always understand these words in fact. Montalto M-O-N-T, right, alto, A-L-T-O, fugo, F-U-G-O?

Mr. Rizzo: U-F-F-U-G-O.

Interviewer: Offugo?

Mr. Rizzo: Uffugo.

Interviewer: Uffgo, U-F-F-G-O?

Mr. Rizzo: No, U-F-F-U-G-O.

Interviewer: oh U-F-F-U-G-O?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. All right now, where in Italy is this located?

Mr. Rizzo: In the province of Cosenza, south Italy.

Interviewer: In south. Did you go to Naples?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, the first time, the boat Italy yes. I was in there.

Interviewer: You're supposed to be in there. Is it in Campania?

Mr. Rizzo: No, we Calabria.

Interviewer: In Calabria?

Mr. Rizzo: In Calabria coast ends but I see the boat in the coast ends, probably it's coast ends.

Interviewer: Okay. What year were you born?

Mr. Rizzo: 1895.

Interviewer: 1895?

Mr. Rizzo: Yes.

Interviewer: What did your father do in Italy?

Mr. Rizzo: Well my father was a *[inaudible] [0:01:27]* who used to manufacture line, lumber line, it was a kilo line, he used to get all of the pears when the season is coming.

Interviewer: What, do they squeeze the olives?

Mr. Rizzo: They squeeze all of the olives and just as they're finish, they sell, they buy and they sell them. They used to *[inaudible] [0:01:46]* to sell them. So that's what he basically do.

Interviewer: So he used to process plastic pears, olives and lime.

Mr. Rizzo: And limes and also used to sell some wine. So they would buy the wine and the people wine or two.

Interviewer: Oh he used to wholesale and retail wines.

Mr. Rizzo: Yes, everything that point that wine. Also they had building homes. There have been a little city there, they build their own home and build a house and give it to there ladies and everything *[inaudible] [0:02:24]*. They had a man working in the construction and build a home.

Interviewer: So your father is also a building contractor?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, no my grandfather, but my father didn't. My father only sell wine but they used to have that, the father support. Over there, they used to

work like one family. That's the one. This *[inaudible]* **[0:02:44]** meaning to build my grandfather and my father, see they all have found and build a city.

Interviewer: So they built a city, was this a family thing?

Mr. Rizzo: Yes father. I like to hear like *[inaudible]* **[0:03:01]** like what was it like in the city. That's the work we used to do over there. Now in 1912 my father died. He left me to complete the work when he showed me the lime support and one year, 1911 he died, he made a plaque for me to take. It took me two years to complete all the work and finish all the work, contract there that we had to use and out of this country.

Interviewer: Now I want to ask something before you got to that point. Did you go to school on Italy?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, I went to third grade, third grade.

Interviewer: Okay, how old were you when you started school?

Mr. Rizzo: Seven years old.

Interviewer: And how old were you when you finished?

Mr. Rizzo: Nine, well 10 – nine because six and a half because the class was nine and a half years old, 10 years old.

Interviewer: When you finished school, when you finished going to school, did you start working for your father?

Mr. Rizzo: I worked, even when you go to school, you come back that's it. When you live in the school in the summer time when the – after school, we got two hours in the pier, no playing there before we used to go and teach him. We used to have a great father and we used to stay with them all the time running the day. People work, knowing we had to work, we have to go back to stay there, meaning to watch what they're doing their little thing. We all have to stay watch run the table.

Interviewer: Now did you have the time to watch your grandfather *[inaudible]* **[0:04:31]**?

Mr. Rizzo: Everything and he had his children doing along the summer along the side tailor and they go to go to tailor, some shoemaker go to the shoemaker all in one – all they had to do that.

Interviewer: So this is what the answer...

Mr. Rizzo: The answer was before when the kids stayed to the teacher.

Interviewer: I see. Now when did you first start thinking about coming to the United States?

**[0:04:53]**

Mr. Rizzo: Well it was a friend of mine who's coming a vacation, a woman, we call her, Rosa Filapelva, she come in this country and he stayed there. And he was sick and he stayed there a year and a half. And he worked with us. Of course he started work because we had a woman working cars over there, everywhere and the men were working, cable and stolen and taking this and he stayed to work. And my father coming in – he was coming when my father died and he told them after this, why would you come to America and I stayed working over there and we had trouble collecting money over there, do the work and then repay you. You had to pay them sometime and then you borrow money. It was a struggle to leave. And he convinced me to come to this country.

And the first country I went 1913 was December I went to New York and then I went to *[inaudible]* **[0:05:48]** coal mine.

Interviewer: Okay now, when you left Italy, where did you leave from? Did you leave for Naples?

Mr. Rizzo: No, I live from Naples, I board in Naples, yes.

Interviewer: How did you get to Naples from your home?

Mr. Rizzo: From a coast ends named Paula, Paula, we got it from a worker *[inaudible]* **[0:06:09]**.

Interviewer: Right.

Mr. Rizzo: We knew we got to Paula and take a train in there and it take 12 hours to go to Naples. And then we board in Berlin, a company was German, a German company called – the boat was called Berlin and that was a good boat.

Interviewer: That was the name of the boat, Berlin?

Mr. Rizzo: Berlin, yeah.

Interviewer: And do you remember how long it took you to get here from Italy.

Mr. Rizzo: Twelve days.

Interviewer: Did it stop anywhere?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, it stopped in England.

Interviewer: It stopped in England?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah.

Interviewer: How was life aboard ship?

Mr. Rizzo: It used to board like it is when we used to go and lie and take with it. When we go to the board, we used to go to the line and everybody got the canvass *[inaudible]* **[0:06:52]** you're going in line and you pass like a sergeant going in and get your stuff. Then you go to the boat where there were like one, two, three, four floors, the one *[inaudible]* **[0:07:03]** like a big room like this now. This should be black as it should be, one, two, three, four.

Interviewer: The boats were probably four high.

Mr. Rizzo: Four high, some three, some four, depending on the room how it was decked out. That's where we would sleep.

Interviewer: And how was it, did they keep it clean for you?

Mr. Rizzo: They clean up. They clean, they follow when we sleep everyday, but before it was pretty good, clean. The wine was good. They give you wine. They give you a thing, but some would get sick, some would get confused to and nothing to eat. Some would have a good time, they had a good time.

Interviewer: Were there most all Italians aboard in the ship?

Mr. Rizzo: Most Italian was there, yeah, oh yeah. There were a lot of English because we stopped in England and my brother and I we couldn't understand. Most of them know *[inaudible]* **[0:07:50]** language, they know we don't understand. But I know we put a lot of people in England and stuff.

Interviewer: Now when you left England, did you come straight to New York?

Mr. Rizzo: New York.

Interviewer: Now, did you have any trouble getting off the ship in New York?

Mr. Rizzo: Huh?

Interviewer: Did you have any trouble getting off the ship of New York?

Mr. Rizzo: No, we don't have no trouble.

Interviewer: Did they give you...

Mr. Rizzo: Other thing that we go in a custom house, we go in there, you pass examination. You go in there while you do in there. And the only trouble that we had was we exchanged the money, Italian money, they'd give you whatever is worth American money, they give you *[inaudible]* **[0:08:25]** and you said, I'm going straight to Uniontown Pennsylvania. They put you in a boat and send there.

Interviewer: Why – excuse me.

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, some of them got back, some of them got passed *[inaudible]* **[0:08:37]** some sick, some things, someone got away. But I don't have no trouble.

Interviewer: Why did you go to Uniontown Pennsylvania?

Mr. Rizzo: Well that's because this lady was living out there, see. And he send me the – he send me the fare to go there, you see. He send me the fare and everything, he paid to the cottage de Guzman Pennsylvania. There were a coal mine there, I've never seen a coal mine, I want to go back anyway. But I had to *[inaudible]* **[0:09:05]** convincing me after two or three weeks, they put me in the mine, the *[inaudible]* **[0:09:09]**. They back them aboard. They put all this money it was all *[inaudible]* **[0:09:14]** work there.

Interviewer: You work in the coal mine?

Mr. Rizzo: In the coal mine for six months, I left after the seventh month.

Interviewer: What were the conditions like working in coal mine?

Mr. Rizzo: The condition wasn't good that time. It was bit, it was bad. You couldn't feed. I wasn't feeling before, but that's the work you get used to, you don't care tomorrow night whether it's cold, nice air, nice – you like better anxieties on site if you don't feel the danger. But today was good. And the coal mine was looking a bit of money. Of course everything was all right until on the site, a little room, a little sick. I don't eat nothing, but everybody was happy.

Interviewer: How is the pay in the coal mine?

**[0:09:59]**

Mr. Rizzo: They use to pay me \$0.50 a ton.

Interviewer: A piece of work?

Mr. Rizzo: A piece of work, oh *[inaudible]* **[0:10:04]** came in and then you suddenly then make a one ton \$0.50 that time. So you pull the ton and you get \$2. And each time you get \$4 and most of it I couldn't shovel.

Interviewer: Yeah, we were just talking about piece work. Now you said you're staying there six months?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah.

Interviewer: What was life like in this town where you were living?

Mr. Rizzo: Life was small country, country like. I was happy because I think all of us are friends there that we used to come with some beer every Saturday, crack a beer in a country side with some of us playing on *[inaudible]* **[0:10:40]**. It was alive, it was very half alike, it was very half life. But I don't like the south and I got *[inaudible]* **[0:10:49]** and I want to go back. And I had an uncle over here.

Interviewer: Where, here in Wilmington?

Mr. Rizzo: In Wilmington, see he was working in factory work just that motor company. And the car over there was making what I'd guess is double and a half and there he used to make. And he told me, what I want and I want to go back *[inaudible]* **[0:11:09]**. And he said, "I will go back before you go." And he sent me the fare from here and he come over and see me he said, you can go back from here. And it was good to come here. It



wasn't on 10 months I work in the coal mine, 10 months because I come here in October in here.

Interviewer: And what year was that, October in what year?

Mr. Rizzo: 1914.

Interviewer: 1914.

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, the time I was coming in, it was October, see. But to the work I work in the coal mines and soon I want to get in there it was about seven to eight months most I work because I was clear by the time I was going to leave. And coming here part in their work was scarce. And they put me – I had a friend of mine – I had two uncles here. One who worked for **[0:12:03] [Inaudible]** company. He wasn't doing that work, everybody work because he can't talk. And another one, he was working on a railroad, in the station. Then he asked me, he said, "Do you want to a railroad work here?" And when that company – a lot of my friends, again, there were younger men in there and I come to like. I was starting like I lost a few going into the mine. I was more like that **[inaudible] [0:12:38]**. And I worked in the railroad.

Interviewer: What's your work in the railroad?

Mr. Rizzo: In the railroad we work – me, I was young and I was 18 years old, they put me – and Mr. Kane was the superior in the station. He **[0:12:54] [Inaudible]**. He put me in the close station, the post where most of the grease. Then he put me to fix them and make them think **[0:13:04] [Inaudible]** with two or three men there. I stayed there for about a year, not quite a year, part than a year. Not quite a year because it was in the winter, I stayed with them in the summer in June by six to seven months. They sent my uncle when I came in, called me to ship, I mean what is it worth it. He said, **[inaudible] [0:13:28]**. He said, "You got to load something. Come with me." **[inaudible] [0:13:33]**. First of all he was a mechanic, he can't talk, but he know the trade. He was a good mechanic. He still is a good. But he called me over there. And the later first day where he worked with me, he put me to \$0.50 an hour while I was working there to this work. Most of which was shipping yard in that **[inaudible] [0:14:02]**.

Interviewer: Where your neighbor was?

Mr. Rizzo: Where the neighbor was. It was just that motor and paper company. When we worked then \$0.50 an hour worked 10 hours a day. And we're

happy. Sometime we'd dig and we would fix and we mix them in by hands in there. Sometimes then we would come back and *[inaudible]* **[0:14:19]** and we put then in *[inaudible]* **[0:14:21]**. It was pretty smart to talk and my uncle know the work and we just young and talk fast and my uncle do the work and me and I talk. And we start to go in there and we take a part until we paid all this yacht. And so I have to stay there a couple of years going in and come to the war. And I was saying there one year, that was 1918 I think I went to work in that one year in that. And I come into the war and come to – everybody want to go on the army. And me too, I want to go in the army, back in Italy, I want to go on.

**[0:14:58]**

And I went to sign in and go to Italy.

Interviewer: When was this, around 1916?

Mr. Rizzo: 1917 I think, it was '16, it was '16 between the '17, it was in the summer time. I think it was 19 – very close, but it was 1916, yes, '16 in July, see I remember that. And I went to see my parents to go up and find a good man there and *[inaudible]* **[0:15:20]** my mother died, my father was there, I had a sister to support. And he told me, why are you going with that for? He said this could be *[inaudible]* **[0:15:29]**. He said, why don't you go to work in a shipyard and he said, he was serving the country just a civil. And I said, my friend, *[inaudible]* **[0:15:37]** you could buy the plain. He said, if you die, you're sitting with us. He convinced many of us.

Interviewer: What was this, the American?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah.

Interviewer: Were you ever called to go back to Italy for the Italian army?

Mr. Rizzo: No, I wasn't called. I want to go there because I had a brother and I got no brother and I couldn't call anyone. When I had the fare, two years the fare, but I want to go to do it themselves. And this man talked me up. And now I work on a shipyard company.

Interviewer: Harland Shipyard.

Mr. Rizzo: That's right. I work there partly 1916, '17 and till the war end. And that was when I start working it \$0.49, \$0.47 an hour working. And I end working myself up. and after one month I spent – I had my uncle came with me. And my uncle came just work up and then put them on the ship

and I started coming out. Within six months I work at doorman core like the rest of us was in there. I went to *[inaudible]* **[0:16:44]** and that was pretty good. Now we're working everyday. Now, I should go to school at the vicinity on that time, but I never go to school. All I like to work. So we got a school free in there and staying there. I got money afterwards. I went back in my trade in Berkeley that what I got something.

First I went to work at the – that single company I want to build that Brooklyn Mill, I stayed there for like for years. And then I said, I'm young, I said I learn nothing in the end. All the ways you the thing you learn and I know the ball and I know the thing. And I said I want to go out and I want to work in the construction company in Berkeley.

Interviewer: Do you remember what year that was?

Mr. Rizzo: That year was 1920, 1920, '21, I work from that company. And thus so I stayed with them quite long. I stayed with three to four years I think at the *[inaudible]* **[0:17:58]** and we worked together. He said, come and work with me. I want to work with him, run the job of putting 17 years I stayed with him running the job and then that was it. But the wage of young man, to cut to the wage, I met, at that time, when I work, we make a dollar and a quarter, super tin, running the job anything that work has a high wage, but still we were happy. We did make a life. All we had were nights to join because we had a time where everything is worth, we had a good life. So by the way in 1919, I got married. In 1919 I got married, this is my wife. And we had 10 children. And we have 18 months we had a child, we were happy and now we had 10 children, we got *[inaudible]* **[0:19:12]**. Thank God they were good and healthy, but other than that what we came there was that in 1930, I worked for him, then come the depression. We built a nice school and he got a little heartache and he quit for a little while. And I went to work with *[inaudible]* **[0:19:32]** construction company about 10 years running the job. Then come the war you see. Coming the war...

Interviewer: Now this is the Second World War, right?

Mr. Rizzo: The Second World War yeah, the Second World War. To me, I had Mussolini is a *[inaudible]* **[0:19:48]** in Italy. Everybody get to see him in paper because of the time you need, wherever you come in here to make it to another country, see. And to me, I know least nothing. I don't go to this war. I like to work and the children where I need to worry, right?

**[0:20:01]**

And they decided that it didn't work. Then we go to Mexico. When we come in that, I think it became too tough. I started going to school. And I go 1937 I started going to school. And I go to school and I learned all the depression and everything. But when I got money I had no trouble. And my wife called Angelie and I used to call her Juliet. And I put the money after Juliet and in paper it said Angelie and he said, you to two wives. And it came in the paper. And I said I got a wife, I got children and I got children in the war and I bring them in Philadelphia, so **[inaudible] [0:20:52]** when we come back and mixed it to the paper was several years charged of **[inaudible] [0:20:58]** the papers and said, this name is all right, and let it drop and they gave me the paper. Then I went back to work in that day. So we got had a little difficulty to work to the war. But after that, we worked for 10 years and then in 1941, we come to the point, it was a little bit – that's the time, 1941, I got the paper and I got the paper and I want to start a business **[inaudible] [0:21:28]** build some house and after the ledge. And he knows me, we worked together. And he said, come on, build some house with me. I got money and I can put it up. And I said, all right. I said, I need a job back because this is – the condition it too much. And then he said, I got you work like I used to work. Now this man, he knows me, he got jealous. And this friend of mine, he used to come to me on a job to this house and this house. And I said, don't tell me, tell the man there because he elected me. And so **[inaudible] [0:22:10]** they're not bad. And that man, he got mad. I had him and despite me he fired my boys. He said, "I don't like your boys anymore, they're slow." I said, "What do you mean by slow?" I don't like it, they do it slow. And I said no. And I said, you used to love by my men as I told them to do, I quit. I quit. I was coming home. And at that time, he said come on, do you want to take them out all of them? Sure. And he said, **[inaudible] [0:22:42]**. I got no money, I said. I said if you pay me 90 percent, I'd take your work. That's what we paid 90 percent, figure out what we would to today, tomorrow every week. Then he would pay me 90 percent of my work and I start. I worked 110 house for that man. That's when I started my business with nothing. And my boy when **[inaudible] [0:23:05]** and I worked then. I built 110 and got 100 and that was a good start that year and my boy came back **[inaudible] [0:23:19]**. That's the life.

Interviewer:

Okay, a couple of other questions I would like to ask you going back a little bit, about the conditions when you first came here. For example, when you first came in this country, what were the houses back then? Where were the Italian people were living and what were the houses that people came?

Mr. Rizzo: The house was *[inaudible]* [0:23:43]. The house was the house like it was still today, no heater that it turned out the container. Well there were a day we used to go on the side of the toilet and we used the room with one board, they used to call a board in the house. They used to have a six or seven sleeping in one room, six, seven people sleeping in one room. That's all we had. And we organized the cook a little bit for me, a little bit *[inaudible]* [0:24:08], but we were happy. We were going in with kilos of beer and thing was it was cheap. I think it was cheap.

Interviewer: Right.

Mr. Rizzo: But it was happy. Everybody were friends. The life was loveable before. Today nobody got any time. Anybody just going to support. Life was very subtle but we were enjoying it before. I had a moment when I was poor and now I'm like poor, but I had a lot of joy.

Interviewer: Now when you were young then when you first came in this country and maybe say about first 10 or 15 years, were all the people that you associated with were also Italians?

Mr. Rizzo: All Italian. All, I'd say it could be anybody but most, the working men were Italian, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, so most of the people you're working with were Italian.

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, all were Italians, yeah.

[0:25:00]

Interviewer: Now, when you did find yourself in the company of other people, did you – did they ever treat you any differently than they would treat anybody else, did they discriminate against you because you are Italian?

Mr. Rizzo: Oh, yeah, a lot of times they use to called is *[inaudible]* [0:25:11]. They used to use call us that. Now, we used to take it. But when they come, they come back off. *[inaudible]* [0:25:22] was Italian people. They were treating colored people by ourselves. And there were certainly people they were discriminates *[inaudible]* [0:25:36] they don't like I was told, see. They come in and all they come *[inaudible]* [0:25:42].

Interviewer: And so they'll always treating you worst than anybody else?

Mr. Rizzo: Well that was some part in my trade, yeah. Well I know somebody in my way, but we were in other words all the time. I don't know *[inaudible]*

**[0:25:53]**. You see they couldn't do it. All **[inaudible] [0:25:59]** strong people that work hard. They have to give the work. We know we're going to get the work.

Interviewer: When you went to work, at any time you went to work, say for a contract who is not an Italian, most of the Italians, again Italians who came to this country work as laborers.

Mr. Rizzo: That's right.

Interviewer: That's what they would do. Did they contact you or gave you a chance to become a mechanic, become a great lad or became a master mason? Did they ever give you an opportunity to learn the trade or do you have to learn it by yourself wherever you could?

Mr. Rizzo: Oh they give you a pretty support, but they only pay you \$5 a week. I know it for myself **[inaudible] [0:26:41]** on my own, but when I went to work with them, see they had paid me \$0.50 in. I know already, they don't pay me enough. It's nothing to **[inaudible] [0:26:55]** so you would know a little bit. You use to know more when you use enough just to stay four years. We used to pray and we used to learn because it's a good job. Today, when **[inaudible] [0:27:08]** the first year, they don't learn today. They used to have an opportunity if anybody want to learn, yet it is.

Interviewer: If you want to learn, you could learn?

Mr. Rizzo: Oh yeah, you could learn yes it is.

Interviewer: And nobody took you by the hand and do this and that?

Mr. Rizzo: No.

Interviewer: Nobody did anything for you, you do it for yourself?

Mr. Rizzo: You do it for yourself. I used to be on top of the work, I wan to learn and they give you the chance to learn, yes.

Interviewer: So it was strictly up to you if you want to learn something.

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay now, I ask you what the houses were like when you first got here.

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now you got here before World War One started.

Mr. Rizzo: That's right.

Interviewer: Did you notice as much of a change in the way people live and the standard of living from before World War One and after World War One?

Mr. Rizzo: Oh my God, the standard of people, I couldn't teach you know. People come better now and you only *[inaudible]* **[0:28:00]**. I mean we sleep on a bench. We stay in the house with no sheer, and nothing in there and little stove. We only got a room where we stay. We have a little hot stove and it was only one, we go up stairs and we go up in a room. And when we get up in the morning, I see all these sheets, dirty and nobody could clean it. And *[inaudible]* **[0:28:25]** no cleaner, no nothing, nothing could clean it. Today everybody look like a cake. I couldn't preach it myself.

Interviewer: Now but the principal change I was interested in, the change from before World War One not World War Two, before World War One and right after World War One, did you noticed much of a change in the span of about four years say?

Mr. Rizzo: Year after War One, it was 1920, '22 after the war, we started to bloom. We started to making a lot of money. You started seeing more people. You started getting more luxury, more of the things. After World War One, we started to come out, everything started to change. 1918, 1920, 1919, we started to change a little bit better. We started to come up a little more better.

Interviewer: Yeah, what would you say was the same greatest change from before World War I and right after World War I? For example, would you say that when it changed from oil lamps in the house to gas lamps?

Mr. Rizzo: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Went to electric lighting?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah. They went to this side to come out with a heater first then they started to come out the electrical lamp. It wasn't before we had the gas you see. Then we started to come with electric, then we started to come with steam heat, then we come out with coal, maybe come out with a *[inaudible]* **[0:29:41]** with a stoker. Then it come out with old burner, old burner start to come out in the '37, yeah something like this.

Interviewer: Now, before most of the houses just had plain white pine boards for floor, right?

**[0:30:00]**

Mr. Rizzo: That's right, all big board with old white pine that have – actually they had some fire place in the old house, yeah.

Interviewer: What is it they started the change from the regular pine board to a hard wood floor and when did you start seeing that?

Mr. Rizzo: After World War One.

Interviewer: Now after World War One, did you just sit in the most expensive houses and the very best houses or would you say that all the new houses that they are building around the period of time, did they have the hard wood floor in them?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, to some. But most of them had the pine floor like a free wood in World One. They would take a – of course a **[inaudible] [0:30:37]** on the side of Wilmington, in the Union Street, what do you call it?

Interviewer: The Union Garden.

Mr. Rizzo: The Union Garden.

Interviewer: Right.

Mr. Rizzo: That's the first we used to go there. And then the, see I don't work that much on the project there, but they were pretty good lumber up there and they had a good lumber. Whatever they're putting there is better than what was put today. But they started putting wooden floor there and I think it was a tender one, just a cover.

Interviewer: Just like **[inaudible] [0:31:08]**.

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah. And then they would tie it in the floor, but they had to put it on the floor. See at that time, they start to make it back in the World War – 1924 or '22 they start to build a good home and it's getting better and better all the time, better all the time.

Interviewer: Now when Mussolini first started to come in power in Italy, now he first started to come to power in the '20s, in the early 20s and the man made a name for himself. He was know throughout the world. What did most



of the Italians here in the United States think of him or at least the ones that you knew that ones that...

Mr. Rizzo: Well the one was he like whispering, when we were here, we think we're doing great because I tell you why, when we were there, the rich people over there, they would control all the people. See they were like – the one of the rich men had all that they had and you had to – like you may have 20 people that came by the lake, you had to work with *[inaudible]* **[0:32:09]** half for you and half for them.

Interviewer: Well you have to give them half.

Mr. Rizzo: That's what you do. You stay in there in the house, the country house and so forth, dirty, and you got to give them the half. And then many of them, that's all their work. If you don't do the work, if you surrender over there, you've got – it used to take a week or months before you get your money out of that people, they're very strong. That's why *[inaudible]* **[0:32:35]**. And we thought it was good in one way because it would have ruined the country. Because if we are under the same leader, to me, because actually this country I worked in a lot *[inaudible]* **[0:32:49]** but that's good. They used to take money off of their people in the bank and invest and go out to mankind and make a road and so forth. And like the one in *[inaudible]* **[0:33:01]** to when I went and make a good road. Before it was a country with poor roads, you came driving and you came and you want to kill yourself, he had done a lot of good to Italy. But they've done a mistake afterward. For the first time we've got a great, great leader.

Interviewer: Were there any organizations in the United States at that time that were classes or organizations who supported the Mussolini or any sort of meetings here in this area?

Mr. Rizzo: No, no, no, no, no, not that I know off.

Interviewer: And you don't know of anything of it.

Mr. Rizzo: No, no, I don't know nothing about it, no. Not actually. *[inaudible]* **[0:33:39]** some time about the *[inaudible]* **[0:33:49]**, the two people.

Interviewer: The *[inaudible]* **[0:33:54]** case.

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah and that was the case there and I think that had nothing to do with it. But nobody knew about it about a year or two. We know some people in *[inaudible]* **[0:34:06]** neither was it in.

Interviewer: I know there was one organization in here that it was the fastest league in North America.

Mr. Rizzo: If it were in Italy *[inaudible]* [0:34:20]. I work in there, but I know there were some kind of an organization that was a combination was *[inaudible]* [0:34:36]. I know that because I know of other people who belonged to that, but there were small. But I don't remember anything if there was anything.

Interviewer: Okay. I would ask you a couple of other questions too about the church. Now, when you first came here there was no Italian parish?

Mr. Rizzo: No.

[0:35:00]

Interviewer: Where did you have [Foreign Language]. *[inaudible]* [0:35:06]?

Mr. Rizzo: No. When I got to this country, there was somebody – all I could recall somebody was up there. Somebody in 3rd Street that used to live here.

Interviewer: St. Mary's.

Mr. Rizzo: St. Mary's. Also Saint Peter, Saint Peter had a mass for Italian people, nine o'clock mass. Anyone who believe at mass would go. And at the same man he was an like English mass and *[inaudible]* [0:35:35]. But some they used to have Italian mass with Italian, speaking on Italian and everything. But at one time, I don't know if they've changed the time to the war.

Interviewer: When that changed, didn't I say.

Mr. Rizzo: They mass the time and they taken mad, they got mad and they've changed the *[inaudible]* [0:35:57]. At that time people started to come send revolution and father thought they have to come. And they started to come back and...

Interviewer: Now, what happened in here now at Saint Peter's? Now the Italians had a nine o'clock mass or eight o'clock mass?

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, it was a nine o'clock. Then they got 10 o'clock and then they changed them up. And then *[inaudible]* [0:36:16] the nine o'clock mass used to split up. People said, well we didn't know. See some people they don't read before like me. I came to read English. They don't go to church

every Sunday. They *[inaudible]* **[0:36:31]** they got soon a little bit. And then they found out, this father talked, the people he noticed don't come or whatever. They start to organize to give Italian a church.

Interviewer: Now, when they put the Italian people out in Saint Peter's church, now you only had to get one mass on Sunday?

Mr. Rizzo: Only one mass in a Sunday, that's all we take, all nine o'clock mass.

Interviewer: So how did Father Tucker get involved with the Italian people here in Wilmington? Do you have any idea?

Mr. Rizzo: I don't have any much idea about it because I go afterwards. Practically I come to the colony. See Father Tucker called *[inaudible]* **[0:37:09]** he stayed in Rome. He learned to talk good in Italian. And when he come back here in 19 – I don't remember we start in 1916 during the war or '17 during the war. And he came back *[inaudible]* **[0:37:22]** do you know what I'm saying. See he started to get those boys in the 19 – it was 1914 or '15 I think. It was during the war when there was a change of people. There was on live there. And Father Tucker that's where they come in then. They're coming in 1916. I am not sure of the year. He build a chapel on the side of the street in here.

Interviewer: I think it was 1923 he built the chapel.

Mr. Rizzo: 1923?

Interviewer: '23. I think that might be the year I think. And in 1925 they started building a big church. I'm not sure, but I think it might be around that year some time.

Mr. Rizzo: I don't know, but they started and when they started, they organized at that point then *[inaudible]* **[0:38:04]**. And Father Tucker was young a man. He was this *[inaudible]* **[0:38:10]**. He was like that and he met a lot of people and see the other world. And he started going in and he start to make a leader. And he start to buy the lot and he started to work. And they all liked him. And they've done a good job. I think he'd done the best job and a better man that can do it.

Interviewer: Yeah. Now, in the early years here, there were a lot of Italian people who left the Catholic Church. They were Catholics and they left the Catholic Church and became Protestants. A lot of them did.

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah, I know a couple of them. There was one that a couple of them that **[inaudible] [0:38:48]** again. I couldn't think of a name in there. I know a couple who convert against, but I think a lot of them entirely, a lot of them changed religion. A lot of them changed their names too, they call different name for some reason.

Interviewer: All right. And when Father Tucker started the Italian parish, St. Anthony's, a lot of these people came back.

Mr. Rizzo: Come back, they changed about **[inaudible] [0:39:12]** yeah.

Interviewer: Now, I think it's about enough on that. Now when World War Two started, the United States and Italy were on different sides. How did this affect a lot of the Italian people in this country?

Mr. Rizzo: Well they like this country they never refuse. But the prayer was in need of hope **[inaudible] [0:39:33]**. They're not affected in that thing because I tell you when Italian people, when they go, you find one that's right, but you **[inaudible] [0:39:43]** than I was.

Interviewer: It was a difficult situation.

Mr. Rizzo: It was difficult because the people were going in especially when they go, if someone is on the city, you talk some people you go back and it's on the city.

**[0:40:01]**

That's what make it hard because **[inaudible] [0:40:05]**, but they're not the people who want it so bad they worry about that. They work like fine. **[inaudible] [0:40:12]** go and come back and they fight with the American people with their own country but they die to know. I thought they fight like was an American soldier. A lot of the people who want to go to fight his own country, his own town, that's what it meant a lot with them, you see.

Interviewer: Now you've lived through the prohibition era, the period of prohibition.

Mr. Rizzo: Yeah.

Interviewer: What was it like during prohibition? How did it affect, say the Italian community, did it have any particular effect on the Italian community?

Mr. Rizzo: I don't think they have much affect at all because they – Italian people, they used to make, I don't know if they make a wine, I don't know, but I used to make a little wine with little grape, I make a few little thing in that. I don't think that they had much effect with the Italian people. Well I think I remember we used to buy summer wine from the *[inaudible]* **[0:41:21]**. I don't think we had so much, so I don't we had much trouble with that. Of course there were a lot of selling a lot of liquor stuff *[inaudible]* **[0:41:35]** in there, but the fact that I had a little trouble.

Interviewer: Now if you were to look back on your life here in the United States, what would you say was the biggest change? If you had to pick one, I know there have been a lot of changes since you've been here, what would you say was the greatest change that occurred since the time that you came to this country? If you could pick out one, which one would you say it was?

Mr. Rizzo: Well it take me to come, one night, I went a business to myself and it opened the door to make me just opportunity to make myself like you want. I think this country is giving opportunity to any man that wants his family, anybody who worked hard and this thing and idea that you can succeed whatever you want, but take a hard labor. You got to work for it. That's my thing it was 1942 when I time when there was no serious own, nothing to work to sell in the arm, six more children to support. And they come, the man, they come in the door and said, come on and work for me.

Interviewer: The work.

Mr. Rizzo: That's it, I start to breath succinct and I make that much money and succinct. But it would take a hard work and take a look too for God. I had a help, I went to work and this country was the best opportunity and they give it to me. And they give it to a lot of people and anybody want to work. And I know that in my friend *[inaudible]* **[0:43:14]** I had this friend. This Mark and I but it was luxury the one who want to going a good time. They want to have a good time. They want to go there. They have to make out of nothing. And he was asking me, how do you pay? So unless you're going to have a good time to spend the morning, I work night and day *[inaudible]* **[0:43:30]** so I think I have to build something up that's because I might. That's what I said.

But this country give opportunity for any man, anybody who want to work, any country who is going to start a little business and make a money if you got people on your team, you got a lot of work to spend

your time. Any man could work. They don't care of its color, or white, any man, any body, any creed that can make money.

Interviewer: Have you ever desired to go back to Italy?

Mr. Rizzo: No, I did go back. I wanted to do. I went there twice...

Interviewer: You just go back for business, but you never really want to go back?

Mr. Rizzo: Oh, no, no, never, I never could go back.

Interviewer: Were you ever sorry that you came to this country?

Mr. Rizzo: No, sir. No, this was my good luck. I decided the first month I come in that I was to go back. But afterwards I went to go back to Delaware.

Interviewer: Now, just one other question I'd like to ask you, you know what your life was – life when you first came here and you yourself told me that you were happy and everybody was happy. Nobody had a lot of money but everybody was happy.

Mr. Rizzo: Oh no, everybody was a bit *[inaudible]* **[0:44:42]** they have a good time. They drink a little whatever we've got. Some would make a home brews or whatever could it be some added things. I mean we shared that.

Interviewer: Just having a good time.

Mr. Rizzo: A good time. We were just trying to have a good time. Today we don't see that. It was a better life.

**[0:45:04]**

Interviewer: Would you say that it was a better life in the old days than today?

Mr. Rizzo: Frankly yeah, but money wise and the luxury wise, no. Today you got a car. You got it all. But the human life, I enjoy the friend so forth today's issue, it's a better life that way were.

Interviewer: Would you say that people have changed a lot from what they were like before?

Mr. Rizzo: Oh my god, yes. People today, you don't know. Before it was like everybody know one from the other, a cousin of a cousin, a friend of a

friend. There was more respect. There was more today than the last. To the school *[inaudible]* **[0:45:46]** they lost empty.

Interviewer: And all these people are much colder today than they were.

Mr. Rizzo: Oh yes it is cold today. Yesterday has changed 100 percent yesterday.

Interviewer: Well I've asked you just all of the questions I've asked. IS there anything else you would like to add to what we've already talked about?

Mr. Rizzo: Well I got nothing to talk. I'm glad I come in this country America. This country adopt a country. And I had worked hard to give me the things I wanted. They give the part of what I desire and that's all I want to take it for. It's always stuck in the head.

Interviewer: Okay, I want to thank you, Mr. Rizzo for the opportunity to sit here and talk with you this evening.

Mr. Rizzo: It's my pleasure too.

**[0:56:30]** **End of Audio**