

NAME OF PROJECT: *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII*
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NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Noreen Alberico (née Gaggi) & Linda Rosati (née Gaggi)
NAME OF INTERVIEWER: Melina De Guglielmo
NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER: Louanne Aspillaga
TRANSCRIBED BY: Lisa Kadey
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PROJECT NOTE:

Please note that all interviews have been transcribed verbatim. The language in this transcript is as it was provided by the transcriptionist noted above. The project staff have not edited this transcript for errors.

ABSTRACT

Linda Rosati and Noreen Alberico describe the experiences of their parents during the Second World War. Their father, Dominic Gaggi, immigrated from Bellocchi, Italy in 1927, and their mother, Yolanda Andreoni (?), was born in Toronto after her parents immigrated to Canada in 1910. Dominic moved to Sudbury to work in the mines, and worked for Inco Mine for 17 years. The couple got married in 1939 — the year war broke out. Despite Yolanda being born in Canada, she was designated an enemy alien during the war, and had to report to the RCMP. Dominic, who owned a firearm for hunting, was issued a Resident Alien Weapon Permit, and required to wear a red tag when hunting. Both were Canadian citizens at the time. Linda and Noreen also describe how their uncle and other Italian Canadians lost their jobs during the war, and relate the story of how their cousin had to pretend his last name was Kelly, an Irish name, in order to get work. Both interviewees describe how, as second generation Italian Canadians, they don't feel completely comfortable as part of the current Italian community. However, they

state that they maintain their Italian traditions, and they express their desire to spread information about this aspect of Canadian history to other Italian Canadians.

INTERVIEW

NA: Noreen Alberico, interviewee

LR: Linda Rosati, interviewee

MDG: Melina De Guglielmo, interviewer

LA: Louanne Aspillaga

MDG: Okay, so this is Melina De Guglielmo on July 14, 2011, at the Columbus Centre in Toronto. And my first question, uh, for you—uh, we'll start with, uh, Noreen, is your—please state your full, uh, birth name and your birth date, please.

NA: Noreen Lillian Lucy Jean Gaggi, and married to an Alberico.

MDG: Oh, I see. And, and your birth date?

NA: July 7, 1940.

MDG: Oh, okay. And, and you?

LR: Linda Louise Anne Theresa Gaggi.

MDG: Ah. What's with the—w—with the all—the middle names, that it was—

LR: Uh—

MDG: Who are you named after?

LR: My mother always gave us at least three names.

MDG: Okay.

LR: And then the last one is confirmation name that we throw in, right?

MDG: I see, neat.

NA: Yeah. She loved names.

MDG: Yeah.

NA: Gave me an Irish one.

LR: My mother—our own mother has four names, I believe.

NA: Mm-hm.

LR: She had a lot, too.

MDG: And what were your parents—your parents' names? Any—

LR: Uh, Yolanda.

MDG: Uh-huh.

LR: And Dominic.

MDG: And Dominic. And the—and their last names, as well?

LR: Oh. Yolanda Andreoni (?), and, uh, Dominic Gaggi.

MDG: Okay. And when did, um—we'll start off with your father. When did your father, uh, come to Canada?

LR: Our father came to Canada in January, 1927, he landed.

MDG: Okay.

LR: So, it's quite a ways away. [Laughs]

MDG: Yeah. And where was he born?

LR: He was born in, uh—help me out.

NA: Montgolf—

LR: Mondolfo?

NA: Mondolfo?

LR: No. That was Mom, wasn't it? No, that's Mom's side. He was born in, um, Bellocchi.

NA: Okay.

LR: Bellocchi, Province of Pesaro.

MDG: Really?

LR: Bellocchi. My mother instead—her, her side of the family was Mondolfo.

MDG: Oh, okay.

LR: So, it's the same region, just different towns.

MDG: Yeah, just different towns.

NA: Yeah. But she was actually born here.

MDG: Oh, okay.

LR: But she was born here.

NA: In Toronto.

LR: Yeah.

NA: Yeah.

MDG: It's—

LR: Her parents came over in 1910.

MDG: In 1910.

LR: Yeah. And got married here in Cobalt.

MDG: Oh, okay.

LR: Mm-hm.

MDG: And, and how did your parents, uh, wind up in Sudbury? Or your dad, how did he, um— why did he choose Sudbury?

NA: Well, I believe that there was work at the mines. Um, he had been actually out of work for ten years, and had been supported by his brother, and, and, family members and probably did little odd jobs here and there. But eventually, he went up north and, uh, he was working in the smelters in Sudbury.

MDG: Okay.

LR: Yeah.

MDG: And, um—

LR: He actually worked for Inco (?) for about 17 years. Right?

NA: In the end, yeah.

LR: Yeah.

MDG: Okay. And, uh, you were born in 1940, right?

LR: Yes.

MDG: And, so, um, did your dad ever tell you stories about, uh, the war years or about, uh, the years, uh, leading up to the, to the war? Was it bu—you know, you were born after the war began.

NA: Yeah, I don't, um—I don't recall too many stories. There were some, uh, things that my mother would tell us about. Uh, he would wear black, and I think it was, I guess, a Fascist thing and—but he really did it as a fashion thing. Like, he, it was, you know—he just loved the colour black. And I guess when he came over here, and she asked him to stop wearing it, because it was signifying something that wasn't good, which—it didn't start like that in Italy, right?

MDG: Yeah.

NA: So, that was one story. The other story was—you're asking for previous, right? Where—

MDG: Oh yeah, even, uh, uh, you know, where your parents were married and what year, if you can, uh, remember, um, what year?

NA: They were married in Toronto, 1939.

MDG: Oh, okay. So, when war broke out, that, that year, 1939.

NA: There—

LR: The war was in 1939?

MDG: Mm-hm.

LR: I thought it was '40.

MDG: World War II started in 1939.

NA: Uh, it was in October, they were [unclear 0:04:18.2], uh, ma—married October of—

LR: Of '39.

NA: Yeah.

LR: This—we have a photo of them just before that.

MDG: Do you have this one with you?

LR: This is a photo of them, it says 'May 1939'. [Holding up photo] So, they were just courting then.

MDG: Oh, okay. So, we'll, we'll turn it to the camera and show. So, they—they met in Toronto, then?

LR: Uh, yes.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: You think they met in Toronto?

NA: Well, I think what it is is because they originally came from the same area, Italians tend to live in the same area. And they just got to know each other. Uh, he had been around for, I don't know, obviously ten years before they got married. So, it was just one of those—I can't explain it. It, it, it was more like a community thing, and then they—as she got older, I guess, then he decided to get married [Laughs], you know. So—

MDG: And was the Ital—was the Italian community very important to your parents, or, or, uh, living in an Italian community?

NA: Absolutely, yeah.

LR: I think so.

NA: Yeah.

MDG: Yeah?

LR: I think so.

NA: There's ten years' difference between them, so she would have been fairly young when he was here.

LR: They actually had a problem, um, communicating with each other because she was more fluent in English, being from here, and he was strictly speaking Italian. And they wrote letters to each other.

MDG: Oh.

LR: And I have them today.

MDG: Oh, do you?

LR: They're this thick [Gesturing with thumb and forefinger].

NA: Yeah.

LR: Like, every three days, they would write to each other, and she started writing in Italian, and he misunderstood what she said and got a little upset. So, she says, 'Okay, from now on, Dominic, I will write to you in English because this is not working.' So, there was a little bit of clash there.

MDG: Oh.

LR: Because she was here and had, you know, an education here, and he didn't. There, there was a difference between them.

MDG: So, where was he at the time when they were exchanging letters?

LR: He was working for Inco.

MDG: For in—in Sudbury?

LR: In, uh, Copper Cliff in Sudbury, yeah.

MDG: Oh.

LR: Copper Cliff is a subsidiary of, of Sudbury.

MDG: Oh, okay.

LR: There's [unclear 0:06:10.7] Sudbury, uh, Copper Cliff, Gatchell, but it's all Sudbury. Do you understand what I mean?

MDG: Yeah.

LR: Inco is Copper Cliff, I believe.

NA: Yes.

LR: Right?

NA: That's where the entrance to the mines are.

MDG: Mm-hm.

NA: And Copper Cliff was the, the—it was like going uphill, it was the finest—last, final area before you went into the mines, and the Italians lived there.

MDG: Okay.

NA: And then just south of Copper Cliff, it was like—the French lived, and then the English. It was really, uh, very, very unusual. You knew right away when you were in a different area, you know?

MDG: Oh, really? Wow.

NA: Yeah, so.

MDG: [unclear 0:06:49.0]

LR: So, he courted her from there.

MDG: Uh-huh.

LR: And he came down back on the train every once in awhile to see her. And then he kept saying, 'Come up and visit with me, I want you to meet the people, like, my world up there, the people you're going to be living with.' And she couldn't do it. Her father would not allow it.

MDG: Oh, I see.

LR: You marry him and then you go up.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: And that's what they did.

MDG: So, 1939, they got married and moved, uh, to Sudbury.

LR: Yes.

MDG: To Copper Cliff.

LR: To Copper Cliff, yes.

MDG: Okay. And where—what street did they, did they move to?

LR: [Laughs] Marconi Street.

MDG: Marconi Street, yeah.

LR: Right? Are you going to confirm this?

NA: Yeah. [Laughter]

LR: Marconi Street.

NA: I had it wrong what—for so many years, so she got it right.

LR: What we did was, all three sisters—or, daughters, rather, all three daughters, we went up, we, we took a—what would you call it? Um, a, a weekend where we went up there and we went to the streets where we were born and looked for the houses, you know? And so that's how we know the names exactly.

NA: We had all the wrong names, and then—

MDG: Oh. [Laughter]

NA: —we had to clarify it, so—

MDG: Yeah.

LR: It was kind of interesting to see it.

MDG: Yeah. And, and does—did your mom ever tell you about her first impressions of moving to, to Sudbury and maybe how different it might have been from, from Toronto? Or—

NA: I think—

LR: From the pictures that I see, I can't recall her saying— 'cause I was young, uh—you were as well. [Laughs]

NA: Yeah.

LR: So—but from the pictures, you see a big smile on her face. She, she enjoyed it up there. She was a happy lady.

NA: Yeah.

LR: I think they both were very happy.

NA: They were. Uh, I, I, I got that impression. And, uh, what happens is the community, the Copper Cliff community is, again, is only about three streets, you know, and maybe there's a few more now, but, uh, then, they were all relatives of my dad's.

MDG: Ah.

NA: And, uh, so, any time you walked down the street, there was somebody you knew.

LR: Mm-hm. [unclear 0:08:37.9]

NA: And, uh, she learned a certain cooking, uh—like, she loved to cook. Certain, uh, ways of doing things. And, yeah, I really do think she was happy.

LR: She—yeah, I think they had a great life there.

NA: You know. And really, the only reason they ever moved down was, um, the mines, uh, because of the, the smelter and all that, was affecting my dad's lungs.

MDG: Oh.

NA: And they, they had to be, uh—I don't know what the word, uh, procedure is, but purified, I guess, is—you could say it.

MDG: Oh.

NA: And, uh, after that, they decided that they should move away because of that.

MDG: Oh, I see.

NA: So, they came back to Toronto.

LR: Yeah. The doctor told him, if you want a long life, I recommend that you stop smoking and move away from here.

MDG: Wow.

LR: And he lived to 95. And his relatives up there, 65, 66.

NA: Yup.

LR: They were lucky to reach that age.

NA: Most of them were gone.

LR: So, the doctor gave him good advice. But one of the other things I want to mention, when my mom was there—

MDG: Yeah.

LR: She had a lot of friends, and I still have papers that, that show this, that she was, uh, sewing wedding dresses.

MDG: Oh, really?

LR: But—do you want to say how much it cost to buy—have a wedding dress?

MDG: Sure.

LR: What was it? Two fifty? Two dollars and fifty cents?

NA: Yeah.

MDG: Oh my goodness.

LR: Something like that. And she would sew it for them.

MDG: Wow.

LR: I still have a paper there where she has people's measurements and what she charged them.

MDG: Oh, wow. So that—was that her, uh, full-time—

LR: So, when she came—when she got married, herself, she sewed her own wedding dress and then her sisters used it as well, the same dress.

NA: Yes.

MDG: Wow.

LR: Because times were hard.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: So.

MDG: Yeah, well that would have been just out of the Depression, basically, and into the war years.

NA: Yeah.

MDG: So, I'm sure that it was very difficult, um, financially—

LR: Yeah.

MDG: —for, for all families, right?

NA: Yeah.

MDG: Um, but you also have a story to share—or, a few stories to share about, um, what happened to your, your parents during World War II and the, the designation that, um, that was given to them. Um, if you'd like to sh—

LR: The only thing as a child I remember is Mom saying, she was designated an alien. And at the time, she told me, I didn't know what it meant, right?

MDG: Yeah.

LR: Now, uh, my older sister has better memories than I do. She's very good at that, actually. So, what happened was, when my parents were gone, we went through their papers. And I put them aside, and then when this came up, where you were looking for something to do with alien, and then I understood more of what it meant. We found these papers.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: Um, this first paper just says that he's got a license from the RCMP, uh, to possess a firearm. And this is in October of 1943. [Holding page up to camera]

NA: For the purpose of hunting.

LR: For the purpose of hunting, exactly. And then, the next year, it got change—it appears to have gotten changed, 'cause we are reading into what we have. In September of '44, it says, uh, 'Please find resident alien weapon permit.' [Indicating text on page] So, whereas this was just a regular—

MDG: Mm-hm.

LR: —doesn't even call it a permit, it's just you, you have a—yes, permit to possess a firearm, the first one. The second one says, 'Resident alien weapon permit,' carrying a new number. And here is the tag that he was required to put on his body when he was hunting. [Holding page with red tag up to camera]

MDG: Perfect.

LR: That's just the envelope for this. [Indicating envelope at the bottom of the page]

MDG: And what did that, uh, discovering, uh, you know, these papers, what did that mean to you, it—

LR: It meant more to me what Mom said about alien.

MDG: Mm.

LR: 'Cause before, I didn't know what it meant.

NA: Yeah, because, um, one of the stories I remember, um, was, uh, I believe war was declared in June, June 10th. And she was pregnant with me at the time. And, uh, I was born July 7th. So, there was that—roughly three weeks where she would have had to report to the RCMP. And, um, they had no cars. They, uh—there really wasn't much transportation, I would think up there. I don't recall anything. Um, because I remember when we used to travel up to Copper Cliff later on when we moved to Sudbury, we had to go through mountains and, and stones, uh, to get to a bus. So, she would have had to do that, now that I think of it, she would have had to do that, uh, when she had to report. And of course, she was nine months pregnant. And, um, I remember, uh, her telling me that Dad, uh, went to the RCMP and said, 'This is not acceptable,' in his own language, he said it wasn't acceptable. And, uh, so that's what she had to go through. He didn't have to report, but she did. So, that was one of the stories I really remember.

LR: Mm-hm.

MDG: And you also mentioned her, her surprise at—because she was Canadian-born, at having to go through this.

NA: That's right, she was.

LR: Mm-hm.

NA: She was Canadian-born, but she had, had, had married a person who had been here 13 years, and who had had a citizenship—

LR: Citizenship.

NA: —for three years.

MDG: Wow.

NA: So, that was all surprising, but I guess in those days, they just did what they wanted to do, I guess, the RCMP. So, but she survived. They both survived.

LR: They survived, yeah.

MDG: And were any other family members affected by similar, uh, designations, uh, as enemy aliens?

LR: We heard, again, you know—and we're going to say it's hearsay, because it is. It's something we remember hearing. And, and knowing about from our uncles. My father's brother, his name was, uh, Joseph. And, uh, he worked at the King Edward Hotel. And it was through Joseph that my father came over, he sponsored him. And, um, be—just simply because he was Italian, he was let go. He lost his job. And he had a good job at the King Edward.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: So, again, I believe he, he went looking for work. It was hard those days for the Italians. I think he went to Montreal at one time, he went to Timmins.

MDG: And was this all during World War II, or was this afterwards? Um, so, uh, like, during the 19—early 1940's? Or, uh—

LR: What would you say?

NA: I would think so.

MDG: Yeah?

NA: I would think so.

MDG: Yeah.

NA: 'Cause he lost his job immediately.

LR: Yeah.

NA: You know. He and his own boss, who was Italian. I—

MDG: Wow.

LR: Now, the King Edward, as I understand it, he went to work there again. They took him back, eventually, later.

MDG: Later.

LR: But I can't even tell you dates. I just know as my uncle, we know this information. And we have pictures of him in Timmins and that.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: I know it affected him.

MDG: Mm-hm.

NA: And his, his, uh—the story I remember, was, um, I call it the Kelly story, because, uh, it was a cousin of my mother, uh, who had—who was Canadian-born and had, uh, been in the war, uh, and had fought for the Canadians. And when he came back, he, um, he was looking for work. And he went out day after day. And at that time, you didn't have to put applications in, and you didn't have any paperwork, you had no Social Security Number or anything. And every time he went out and told his name, he was refused the work, even though he knew there was work there.

MDG: Mm.

NA: And, uh, so one day he came back very angry, and he said, 'That's it. Tomorrow, I'm going to go out and be a Kelly.' And, uh, that was an Irish name. And he did that, and, uh, he got the job. [Laughter] And so that goes to show you how, really—

MDG: The discrimination.

NA: —the Italian name, yeah. You know, and, uh, I think we have stories of—of ourselves, like, I just, just talking to my sister about it, I, um, don't speak Italian very well.

LR: Oh.

NA: And I think in my formative years, I only spoke Italian until I was about five, and then went to school and there was French and English. And, uh, I didn't understand them, they didn't understand me, and—so I kind of stopped talking for a year, my mother said.

MDG: Wow.

NA: Roughly, I don't know what she meant by not talking. And then when I did start to speak, it was only in English. And, uh, and, and now to this day, I really cannot speak the Italian properly. Now, I think my sister has her story [Laughter], which I had just heard.

LR: Oh no, it's very short. It's just to say that I recall, uh, this, this is—I think there was a house, so that would be Sud—yeah, I was, I was Gatchell, Sudbury. [Tapping on table] It wasn't Copper Cliff, right?

NA: You were in Gatchell. She was in the—another suburb.

LR: So, I was out playing with the friends, and I come home crying. So, that I recall, even though I was tiny. What could I have possibly been? Three, four years old?

NA: Yes.

LR: And crying because they're—they're making fun of me, I'm only talking Italian.

MDG: Oh.

LR: I didn't know any English yet.

MDG: Wow.

LR: Yeah, so, at one time [Laughs] it was only Italian. Now, it's the reverse. Now, it's only English and—

NA: Yeah.

LR: —my Italian's not good.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: It's just—it just shows you that our—in our household, actually we communicated better with my father when we were tiny. Because as we got older, we spoke only English to Mom, who was—who spoke very good English, and we tended to ignore Dad and not speak Italian with him.

NA: That's true.

MDG: Yeah.

NA: It's too bad. And I think, even to this day, I've been affected by it.

MDG: Mm-hm.

NA: Because, um, I'm trying to join different, uh, Italian groups, and, and I feel quite comfortable there, but they're uncomfortable with me.

MDG: Yeah.

NA: Uh, you know? So, it's, it's—

LR: That is sensitive for me.

NA: really—so—

LR: I'm in the Italian community, but I'm not quite them.

NA: Yeah.

MDG: So, yeah.

LR: Because for me, Canada's number one. For them, Italy is number one.

MDG: Do you think it, it might also be the difference between the, um, pre-World War II settlements with a group that came here first like your parents and your grandparents on your Mom's side, um, and, and now, all these—the, the, you know, Toronto-Italian groups are mostly run, er, by the post-World War II group that came in the 50's and 60's? Do you think it's a different—

NA: I totally agree. Absolutely.

LR: It's possible.

NA: As a matter of fact, one of the reasons we're doing this is to let those people know—as we were preparing for this, we were, uh, telling people that—what we were doing, and they're in awe. They have no idea. Even our husbands, our husbands are both Italian—

MDG: Mm-hm.

NA: —from Italy.

MDG: Okay.

LR: From Italy.

NA: And, and they were, 'Oh, really? Did that really happen to you?'

MDG: Wow.

NA: You know? So, there's, uh, definitely a message has to be sent out.

MDG: Yeah.

NA: You know.

LR: Mm-hm.

MDG: And was it important for you growing up, then, to even maintain—like you said, maintaining those Italian, uh, roots and—or, traditions? Do you still maintain—

NA: Oh, yes.

MDG: —like, even cooking?

LR: I believe we do. Oh, yeah.

MDG: Yeah, yeah.

LR: I believe we do.

NA: And, and, and I think it, uh—I, I get the enjoyment out of some of our Italian [Air quotes] friends, and—we love dearly, who are in shock. ‘Oh, you still make homemade pasta?’ Like, they don’t anymore. [Laughter] ‘Do you still make soup at home?’

MDG: That’s good.

NA: ‘Do you still do those things?’ So, it’s kind of funny.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: It is funny.

NA: It is. And—but we’re always proving ourselves, you know.

LR: I was just showing the other day that my, my hairdresser—I have a picture of, uh, the table that our grandfather made. And the, the rolling pin to make—

NA: Oh, the rolling pin.

LR: But they're long. What's it, what's it called, a skidoor (?)? What was it called? The big long rolling pin, homemade.

NA: Long ro—

MDG: Yeah.

LR: That they'd make pasta. And I was showing it to her almost to prove to her that see, see my roots? See my—like, I'm not just Canadian and ignore me, see? And, uh, she kind of went, 'Oh, your family made homemade met—pasta?'

MDG: Wow.

LR: Obviously, theirs didn't. I was going—

NA: No, before the machines came out.

LR: Okay.

MDG: Wow, wow. That's fascinating.

LR: I always say this is how I feel. I have one leg in the one door, and one leg in another.

MDG: Wow.

NA: Mm-hm.

LR: You know, 'cause the Italians don't quite accept me because I don't speak all the—

MDG: Their language.

LR: Yeah. The, the different, uh, languages that—not languages, what is it? The, um, if you're Abruzzese, you speak Abruzzese. If you're—you know, whatever. To me, it's all Italian.

MDG: Yeah.

NA: The other thing—

LR: [unclear 0:20:29.4] speak it perfectly.

NA: —we've been doing is, uh, is that we have a picnic, uh, annually.

LR: Mm-hm.

NA: Almost annually, um, and, uh, we—our—I know that the—there are what? Uh, there was 15 first cousins? I think.

LR: At least, yeah, I think so.

NA: And, and we are more the Italian.

LR: Yes, right.

NA: Partly because we have married Italians and kept the tradition. And we are constantly bringing pictures or we'd, we'd—we brought the rolling pin once, as you said, I brought the—I still have my grandmother's table, where she made the pasta on, you know? 'Cause you have to have a wood one. And, uh, we are constantly, between her and myself, bringing information to the immediate family, and trying to introduce that to the—well, now it's almost the—

LR: It's like a bit of history—

NA: —fourth generation.

LR: —for their own parents, though.

MDG: Mm.

NA: Yeah, even for their parents, you know?

MDG: Yeah.

NA: So.

MDG: And, and being Canadian-born, how, how, um, did it wind up that you both married men that were born in Italy, as you mentioned? How did that—

NA: I really think because we were very traditional. We did—we kept the music in the house, we kept the food, we enjoyed, uh, being around Italians, I—more so.

LR: Well, my mother had a lot of dinners. She—for someone who—they didn't have that much money to put together, but one thing they did not stop on is having people over and having meals. And she worked hard at them. And so we had constant—I couldn't even tell you everyone. I'd—sometimes I'd go to her and say, 'Who was that person again who was at our home?' So, one of the people she had over was my husband.

MDG: Oh.

LR: Because there's a relationship there in that she knew that they had just come over from Italy and they needed a meal. Not needed a meal, put it that way.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: Just, you know, wanted to have them over to welcome them.

MDG: Mm-hm.

LR: And, uh, so he was at our table, but I did not meet him at that point, I met him a few years later.

MDG: Oh, okay.

LR: Through a wedding.

MDG: Oh, I see.

LR: So—

MDG: That's so interesting.

LR: That's how it happened with me.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: I don't know, Noreen, you—

NA: [Shakes head] [Laughter]

MDG: [unclear 0:22.38.5]

NA: Mine was a blind date. [Laughter]

MDG: Oh.

LR: There you go. There you go.

NA: I know, don't do those things anymore. Anyway, it was a blind date, but again, it was because he was Italian, and you know, loved the Italian music and all that. So, that was where it was geared for.

LR: Yeah.

NA: And I think, um, you know, once he became involved with our family, he realized the tradition. He also knew an uncle of mine when he eventually found out, and he liked that person a lot and I guess judged me by that, so.

MDG: Mm.

NA: Yeah.

MDG: Yeah. That's [unclear 0:23:08.3].

LR: Still, I think it's—I'm listening to how she's putting it together, it's always the Italian community, that's why.

NA: Yeah. I feel we're very Italian.

MDG: Yeah.

NA: Very, very. That's why we're here.

MDG: Yeah. That's great.

LR: I'm proud of it, too.

NA: I'm proud of it, yeah.

LR: I'm proud of it.

MDG: Are, are there any other stories that you'd like to share with the, um—with the group? That, that, um—did your Mom ever speak about the—

LR: Oh.

MDG: —em—enemy alien designation afterwards, or, um, refer to it?

LR: You know what? My memory is whenever it was mentioned, she just—it was almost like, let's not talk about it. Remember? Like a hurt.

MDG: Yeah.

NA: Uh, yeah—

LR: Do you recall her saying much?

NA: You—really it was. Yeah.

MDG: Mm-hm.

LR: I remember her saying the word alien, and looking at her, like, what are you talking about? So, she stopped, 'cause she saw I wasn't understanding it. You know?

NA: Yeah. You know, I can't—really can't think of any others.

MDG: Mm-hm.

NA: Um, no. They—I mean, they belonged to different groups. Um, but no, I cant.

MDG: No? And, and now seeing projects, well, like this one, uh, where we're looking to commemorate what happened, uh, to the Italians that were either interned or in—designated

as enemy aliens, how do you feel about going back to this chapter in history, and, and looking at that? Do you feel it's important, um—

NA: I think it's very important.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: Yeah, so do I.

NA: I want—I would like it in the schools, uh, the way, uh, I think there's Black history and there's, you know, the Chinese history and all that. And I would really, really like this in the schools. I really do. And, uh, uh, I know that there's a play that's out there about this. I can't remember the play right now, but, um, I really wished it were, uh, known to more people and, uh, I, I really think it's a great idea, I really do.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: I, as well. Especially since I, I saw those and didn't know what they were. And I say no, if there was a mistreatment, and I believe that's what that was—

MDG: Mm-hm.

LR: —a mistreatment of a Canadian citizen, you know. Canadian citizens, they're both, because one is born here and one is not, but you come to a country, and you say, 'I'm going to become a citizen of this country,' that's a step. A step that not everybody takes. 'Cause I know a lot of Italians here who've not bothered to do that.

MDG: Yeah.

LR: And it bothers me, 'cause this is my country, okay? And I say no, if you're living here, and you're living so—why not make a commitment? My father made the commitment, and my mother was born here, so what's the problem? So, why mistreat them? I know that they weren't interred, and I know it wasn't as severe as other people.

MDG: Mm-hm.

LR: But I still say no, this is wrong. So, if you want to document it, by all means. You know?
[Laughs]

NA: I agree.

LR: Our government did something wrong.

LA: Yeah.

LR: That's for sure.

LA: Well, thank you so much for coming in today and sharing your—your stories with us. Um, yeah. So, I think—

LR: You're quite welcome.

LA: —that's, that's it for the vid—the



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NA: You're welcome.

LR: —the video portion.

[Fades out at 00:26:05.8]

[End of interview]