

NAME OF PROJECT: *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII*

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LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Ottawa, ON

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Gloria Giroux (Costantini)

NAME OF INTERVIEWER: Francesca L'Orfano

NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER: Travis Tomchuk

TRANSCRIBED BY: Francesca L'Orfano

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ABSTRACT

Gloria Giroux (Costantini) is the daughter of Giuseppe (Joe) Costantini who was detained on June 10, 1940 and interned on June 12, 1940. He was released on January 29, 1941. She was about nine years old and at home on the day the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) came to search their house and take away her father. Nine months would pass before they would see him again. Gloria recalls a lot of crying that day. She also recalls trying to run away with a Mussolini statue hidden under her shirt. This was the second tragedy to befall this family, as her mother Teresina Sabetti had passed away in 1938. Giuseppe (Joe) Costantini was devastated at the loss of his wife but because he needed to care for his seven children he quickly became both mother and father to them. When he was interned, his eldest daughter Kay took over this role, making a decision to leave school in order to get a job to help support her siblings. In addition she was entrusted with the role of lobbying for her father's release. Mrs. Giroux, like her niece Mrs. Trina Costantini-Powell, also feels that it is important to make sure what happened to their family is never forgotten.

INTERVIEW

GG: Gloria Giroux, interviewee

FL: Francesca L'Orfano, interviewer

TT: Travis Tomchuk, videographer

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:09]

FL: So just we'll, we'll start first of all with you telling us your name.

GG: Gloria Giroux...Costantini.

FL: And, uh, we are interviewing you today because?

GG: My father was interned during the, uh, Second World War as an enemy alien, enemy alien.

FL: [Says quietly] Okay. Um, what, uh, what do you remember about your childhood? Even—

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: Not necessarily just around your father's internment, but just, uh...

GG: Before then you mean? Bef—

FL: Before then, yeah.

GG: Yeah. It was good. It was always a full house all the time. There's seven kids and seven kids have lots of friends and friends and the house was always full. The only sad part about it we,

um, my mother passed away when we were all quite young so it was more or less left to my father to be the mainstay of the family and all that sort of stuff, so.

FL: And your mother's name was?

GG: Uh, Teresa Sabetti.

FL: Okay. And she had passed?

GG: Nineteen thirty-eight.

FL: Nineteen thirty-eight.

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: Okay. And, uh, so you mentioned that in your home you had, um, it was, it was, it was, uh, it was very social.

GG: Oh all the time.

FL: Or tell us about—

GG: All the time. Yeah. Of course with all the, uh—and very musical. My father used to have musical evenings and, and, um, two of my brothers were, uh, professional musicians. And, and, um, it was, uh, it was, you know, there was always lots of people in the house all the time. Yeah.

FL: Okay.

GG: At all times. Yeah.

FL: And, um, do you have any specific memories of your childhood that, that were the most special in terms of with your parents or your siblings or...

GG: Um, I'd have to, uh—I don't know there were so many things that you just can't pinpoint one at this time. Yeah. If I think of something I'll let you know. [Smiles and chuckles]

FL: [Laughs] Okay. And, uh, in the time period just before, um, uh, 1940, in June before the internment. Uh, you mentioned that your mother passed away so that was just the year before?

GG: Um, well he was, he was interned in 1940. Nineteen thirty-eight, April 21, 1920—38.

FL: Thirty-eight.

GG: Yeah.

FL: Okay.

GG: Yeah.

FL: Okay, so that was... And how old were you at the time?

GG: Nine, eight, nine? I'm eighty-three now so. [Laughs]

FL: Okay, okay. So tell us about the time period just before, um—and your father's name?

GG: Joseph.

FL: Joseph.

GG: Peppino [says with emphasis]. Everyone called him Peppino.

FL: Okay, okay, okay.

GG: Yeah. Giuseppe.

FL: Okay. And the time period just before, um, this, this one event and, and, uh, and then I'll ask you to recount, uh, what happened—

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: —in terms of your home. Um, was there anything that you as a child remember feeling about the community or about war or—

GG: No, I don't think anybody really, um, thought anything [clears throat] would, um—you know the war was, was starting and I don't think anybody realized that it was going to be that severe, uh, an event—you know I shouldn't say event. Uh, you know, Italy getting into the war when no one ever thought that that was going to happen. But it was a, you know, normal childhood, everybody went to school and did our normal everyday things and yeah.

FL: Okay. And then on that day?

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: What do you remember?

GG: [Clears throat] That day? Came home from school and, uh, I guess we were all in the, in the house or something. I can't remember the exact, uh, consequences. But the, uh, the RCMP came to the door and just went through the house. And, uh, just, uh, kind of, um...didn't even tell us why they were there, they were there or anything. And, uh, just, uh, kind of looked for different things and picked up different things and then called my father and, and he was working at the, uh, Union Station at that time. And, uh, they, uh, had to—he came home and they arrested him and took him off and we had no idea where he went. For days we didn't, uh, we didn't know where he was or anything. So, and that was the thing that I remember most about that.

FL: That, that they didn't tell you where they were taking him?

GG: No, they just said they were taking him to jail. That was it. And then of course at that time nobody, uh—we had no idea what would—what jail was like. [Shrugs] It was always a good family and nobody ever, uh, ever, ever you know, had anything to do with the police or anything like that in the family so, yeah.

FL: Okay. And who was home? Were all the children home?

GG: Uh, I remember my sister Kay being there. And I think Eleanor, my sister Eleanor was there. I don't know whether Rudy was there. [Looks off thinking] Um...

FL: And you were eight or nine at that time?

GG: I think I was about eight or nine. Yeah.

FL: Okay. And so who was the oldest at that point who was home?

GG: Kay.

FL: And how old was Kay?

GG: At that time, she must have been 18, 19? [Looks off to her right] Yeah.

FL: Okay. And you had lost your mum so she was the—was she the, the person who...

GG: She, yeah, she more or less took over. My father did, uh, um, you know he was, uh, he loved to cook and he took over most of the cooking. But it was up to the three girls to kind of keep up the house in good condition and all that sort of stuff, so, yeah.

FL: And how long was it before you actually knew where, you know, you said they took him off to jail, but where you knew that—where he was or—

GG: I think about three or four days or two to three days later that, uh, someone, uh—I think at, at that time, um, my father must of, you know, had somebody call his lawyer or something like that.

FL: Okay.

GG: And then the lawyer contacted us to let us know where he was.

FL: And so in those two or three days, you were basically—you said your sister was 18—was she the oldest, the eldest?

GG: Mm hmm. Well, uh, my brother Frank, but he was, uh, uh, he was, uh, he was in Montreal at the time. He was working as a musician in Montreal at the time.

FL: Okay.

GG: Yeah.

FL: And so you, for three days you basically were—

GG: Yeah we kind of didn't know what was going on.

[00:05:51]

FL: Okay.

GG: Yeah.

FL: Do you remember—did you go to school? Did you stay home?

GG: Oh yeah, I think so. Yeah. [Nods]

FL: Okay. You just carried on.

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: And, and how did the, the community respond?

GG: I think when we went back to school, went to school, I think there were two or three other, um, uh, students at the school that, uh, had gone through the same thing. And I guess, uh, the teachers more or less, um, I think they took us—there was a Sister Bertha there that took us aside and, and, you know, helped us, uh, trying to cope with what was going on and all that sort of stuff, so.

FL: Okay.

GG: Yeah.

FL: Okay. And, uh, do you remember anything else about other children and how they, how they treated you at that time?

GG: Um, not really. It was, uh, I guess it was one of these things where everybody kind of [clears throat] held together sort of thing. And, and, uh, there was, uh, I guess there was one other girl that I was friends with, uh, um, Tootsie Scarsella[?], her father was picked up. I don't think he was—I think he was just processed and let go right away [motions with hand]. So she and I were the two closest ones that, uh, were, uh, in the same situation.

FL: [Quietly] Okay, okay.

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: And do you remember any other details about the, the, the event of, um, when the RCMP came to the house? Do you remember what your sister Kay did? Do you remember what you did specifically?

GG: Well, yeah, do you want me to tell you about that? [Laughs] Well we used to have a, uh, statue of Mussolini on a, uh, on a pedestal [gestures a pedestal with hands parallel] in the, uh, in the—I guess it was in the living room or in the front, front entrance or something. [Scratches arm] And of course the, the RCMP had told us because my father was—belonged to the Sons of Italy [gestures in a circle with hand] it certainly had to do with the w—declaring war against, um, uh, Canada and all that sort of thing. So I picked up the, the statue, hid it under my blouse, whatever I had on, and ran with the RCMP chasing me. And finally they caught up with me and, uh, brought me back to the house with the, with the statue. And they confiscated that. Never saw it again. [Laughs]

FL: [Laughs] And, and you said they, they took other things from the house?

GG: Uh, I think they took a lot of papers and things. Uh, from, uh—my father used to have a safe up in the, uh, in his bedroom and they took—they opened that up and, uh, I think they took a lot of things out of that. But, uh, other, other than that I don't, I don't imagine they took—uh, you know, just papers and things like that. They couldn't really find anything else. Uh, I think something to do with—all the papers might of had something to do with the Sons of Italy association and all that sort of stuff, so.

FL: So your dad was a member of the Sons of Italy?

GG: [Nods] He wa-was president of it for—

FL: Okay.

GG: He was one of the, uh, one of the organizers, I think of that, uh, association at one time, yeah.

FL: Now did the RCMP mention to you that, that, that—did they say anything to you as to why they were searching? Or just—did they say—

GG: They, they, because they, uh—[shrugs] I guess they did it as a, as a precaution. I guess maybe they thought he was a, a member of the Fascist Party or something like that, which is so far [shakes head and laughs] and, um, you know, unbelievable that, uh, he certainly wasn't like that at all. Yeah.

FL: Now, just, just to stay with the, the day a little bit more, um, can you put yourself in your— you know, I mean you recounted the story of, of running off with the statue, so somehow knowing that, you know, somehow—

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: —the Italian connection was—

GG: Right, yeah.

FL: —the problem.

GG: [Clears throat]

FL: Um, and I know now as an adult, you know, looking back on that, but do you remember what you felt as a child?

GG: Scared [says with emphasis and nods]. Scared. Because they were, you know, they were— these are great big men and anything to do with the RCMP at that time, my goodness, you, um, you know, you're afraid of them more. Yeah.

FL: Okay. And, and your siblings...you know, do you remember sort of any—

GG: I think a lot of—there seemed to be a lot of crying. And now that I remember back everybody was crying, more than anything. Because when my father came home he was trying to calm, calm us all down and that sort of thing and, “Everything will be okay. Everything...” ‘Cause my father was a very quiet man, you know he wasn't, uh, rambunctious or anything like that. A very simple man, you know. Yeah. His family was the most important to him, yeah.

FL: Okay. And, uh, the days now, um, you know, there were the three days you, you carried on as usual—or tried to I guess—

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: —and then you found where he was—

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: —through the family lawyer.

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: Um, what do you remember after that time period? When, um, um—how long, do you remember how long your dad, how, how long he was interned, how long he was away? Or, or...

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: Um...

GG: Now I can't remember how long he was away. I don't—it might have seemed, seemed like years [shakes head], but I don't think it was that long.

FL: Okay.

GG: You know, I think it was what somewhere around nine or 10 months, or something like that, yeah. [Looks off to her right].

FL: And, um, in that nine or 10 months, um, [long pause], uh, did you get to see him?

[00:10:26]

GG: No, no. [Shakes head] I, I don't even know whether my sister went down to, uh, when he was still at the police station, whether my sister went down. I don't know whether, whether the lawyer took her down there or not. Um, you know I can't remember the exact things that happened [gestures with hand] in, in, in those, uh, days after he was arrested and everything.

FL: Okay.

GG: So...

FL: Um, uh, so you carried on your life—

GG: Mm hmm. Oh yeah, yeah.

FL: Okay.

GG: Going to school.

FL: And what about your siblings, did, did everyone try to carry on?

GG: Oh yes. We, we—you know, everybody, uh, we all did—went about our—you know, everybody was in school. Well of course, uh, I think, um, uh, Albert and Eddie were both, the—they were both going to Tech. And Eleanor and I were—I think Eleanor was going to Commerce and I was going to the Dante Academy. And Rudy was probably a student in, uh, in grade school too at the same time.

FL: And how did the family, um, handle—I mean I'm assuming your dad was the breadwinner?

GG: Oh definitely, yeah.

FL: So, so how did, how did that affect the family? I mean—

GG: Well that's what—I, I think that was the main concern of how are we going to survive without, uh, him working or anything. We didn't think it was gonna be—we thought maybe it was just gonna be a couple of days and then he'd be home and back to work and all that sort of stuff [gestures with hands]. So we had no idea what, uh, what the financial situation was gonna be like. And, uh, as it turned out I think somebody—uh, there was a trust company that took

over, uh, his finances because he, uh—they—you know, we had to keep up the household with all, with all the kids at home, so. And we used to get something, get something every month [gestures a circular motion with hand] that we had to, uh, make due with, uh, trying to feed ourselves and, and, um, clothe, and clothes and all that sort of stuff, so.

FL: [Says quietly] Okay.

GG: But I think it all came out of my father's savings.

FL: Okay.

GG: More than anything so, yeah.

FL: And, uh, during that period do you remember what you felt like in terms of—

GG: Oh God, it was awful because they—not that the people—you weren't ostracized or anything, but people felt, felt sorry, you know, how are you going to manage and all that sort of thing. And I guess one of the terrible, terrible things in those days was if you had to go on relief.

FL: Mm.

GG: In those days, you know, God that was, uh, nobody wanted to do that. You know, how are you going to survive? Would you have to go on relief or something like that? But, uh, other than that, uh, we just kept on and, and took care of the house and, uh, and, uh, made sure that there, uh, was always food on the table and all that sort of stuff. So, yeah, mm hmm.

FL: And so—

GG: I learned to cook when I was eight or nine years old. [Says laughing] Yeah.

FL: Okay, so that's a, a change.

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: An eight or nine year old sometimes learn to cook for, for enjoyment—

GG: Right, yeah.

FL: —but not for necessity. Okay. Um, and during that time, um, that your dad was away, um, definitely his income was affected, your income was affected.

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm. I don't think he got—he was, he was working for the, uh, Union Station as a, uh—they used have a little space [gestures with hand] in the, in the Union Station where they, where they kept all the luggage and he was—he took care of all of that. And, uh, I don't think he was—I think he was union so maybe he might have gotten something from the union as being, uh, because he wasn't able to work there.

FL: Okay.

GG: So I don't know, uh, you know, I don't think he got a monthly paycheck or anything like that.

FL: So whose life do you think—you know, your dad was interned definitely his life was affected, but in terms of his household, um, you just mentioned that, you know, you had to learn to cook—

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: —so your, your responsibilities increased at that age.

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: Did, did that change for everyone? I mean you carried on to school, but then your home life changed right.

GG: You know—

FL: So, so what—

GG: I think, I think at that time, um, I think Kay had to go out and get a job and I don't know whether, um, I think...Eleanor did too. I can't—you know, it's so hard to remember back in those, those days how, uh—'cause, you know, if I was eight, Eleanor was—would only have been 13 so she couldn't have gone out to get a job. But it was, uh, it was difficult, uh, uh, you know, to, um, try to keep going sort of thing with, uh, limited funds and all that sort of stuff.

FL: And so would Kay have—like so this was a change. She would not have gone to get a job if, if—

GG: I don't think so. [Shakes head] No, no.

FL: Okay, okay.

GG: 'Cause she was more or less, uh, keeping the house up when—uh, looking after the family. She, uh, the, uh, mother replacement sort of thing so.

FL: Okay. And you mentioned a lawyer so how, how did your family handle, you know, sort of trying to keep in touch and know what was going on with your dad? Was, was there somebody's responsibility to do that? Or, or did you—

GG: Kay did most, Kay did most of that.

FL: Okay.

GG: She, uh, she with, uh, um, along with Rosie Tiezzi—who was another, her husband was interned—the two of them would, you know, up at Parliament Hill and the lawyer's office and, you know, they'd go back and forth to find out what was going on and all that sort of stuff. So she was the, the, the mainstay that she, she looked after all of the, uh, the legal part of it and that sort of stuff so. Yeah.

FL: And, and she spoke good English I'm assuming?

GG: Oh, Kay? Oh, definitely, yeah.

FL: What about your dad's English? Was his—

GG: Oh his, his English was very good and he spoke perfect Italian, well of course with the, with the *Abruzzese* accent, but he spoke good Italian and good English, yeah. Well, you know, he, he had a good job—well to them in those days that was a, you know, a fairly good job. And he had

to communicate with, uh, people at all times, so. And he also had the, uh, the hotel so he was able to communicate in English with all the people in the hotel and all that sort of stuff so.

[00:15:45]

FL: Okay. Uh, do you want, do you feel, um, that you can give us more information about this hotel and what happened?

GG: No, I don't think so. [Shakes head] Not at this time, no.

FL: Okay. Um, the, um, afterwards, uh, did you have any warn—did you—were you told that he was going to be released? Did you have any forewarning?

GG: I can't remember whether—I think he just came home. You know, that was, uh, that there was ta—I think there was talk that they, they were going to be releasing. I think they released a couple of people at, at one time and then they waited [gestures with hand] and then well somebody else is going to be released and all—they didn't let them all go at one time. It was, uh, one of these things where they, uh, every couple of days somebody would be coming home sort of thing, so.

FL: And then for your dad, he just showed up at home?

GG: [Nods] Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: And how was that?

GG: Oh, it was good. God, we couldn't believe it. [Laughs]

FL: Okay.

GG: Yeah, yeah. He was so happy to be home, away from the—he looked terrible, uh, from what I can remember. He was, he lost quite a bit of weight and all that sort of stuff, so. My father had a very bad, uh, leg. He, he used to limp, I guess he had an, an accident when he was younger and of course never properly taken care of and he had a limp. [Leans to one side] And it was more pronounced and seemed like he was, uh, in maybe not pain, but a little more pronounced limping in his, uh, in his leg.

FL: Okay.

GG: Yeah.

FL: And, I'm, I'm going to try to ask you questions about the time period when he came back.

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: And whether or not he shared stories, um, with you about his experience?

GG: No. He would tell us stories about some of the, the people that were in. You know he says, here you are, um, working all your, you know, working hard in, in Canada and you got millionaires that were in there and treated just like everyday—you know he wasn't treated any differently from what the millionaire was treated, you know, that sort of thing. But, uh, it was, uh, I don't know he said it was—it wasn't very good. Yeah, I don't think he was, uh, not the most enjoyable experience in his life. It wasn't, it wasn't a vacation. [Smiles]

FL: Yeah, no, no. Did he—do, do you recall any, any specific stories that he told you of, of things that happened to him particularly? Um, you know talking about even the food?

GG: Mm hmm. Oh the food was terrible he said, that's why he took over as cook. [Laughs] Yeah, they, they, uh—we used to send, um, uh, care packages to him and with all the food that they all liked. And of course I think maybe every—anybody, that, uh, whose husband or father was interned, they, uh, they would sent packages of, of food, Italian food, because all they had at one time was just meat and potatoes. What, my God, what happened to their pasta! So, uh, that's, you know, that's what they, uh—then he started preparing those dishes for some of the, um, the, uh, interns and, and, uh, then it got to be a point where he started cooking a little more, a little more [gestures with hand] and then finally they, I think they got rid of the, uh, the army chefs or whatever it was. And, and all of the Italian men just got together and I think there was also a-another chef from, um, from the Chateau Laurier [Carlo Scarabelli] and I think they all got together and, and prepared decent meals for all of the, um, the interns, yeah.

FL: How did they pass the time?

GG: [Shakes head in wonder] Oh, God, I don—I think a lot of them did, uh, just manual type things. Like I don't know whether they had to work. I think they did have to work when they're, uh, doing some sort of manual labour. But I think a lot of them, you know, lot I guess, a lot of the Italians were artists of some kind and, and they would do all of their artistic work and all that sort of stuff. N-n-now I can't remember exactly just, uh, what, uh, in those days I don't recall him, you know, telling us all about, you know, what his day was like, his full day was like at the, uh, the camp.

FL: Now would that—

GG: At the "college" as they used to call it. [Laughs]

FL: The "college." Would, would, would that have been because your dad was a private person and he didn't want—

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: —he wouldn't—like why—do you, do you feel he didn't share that with you?

GG: I don't think he wanted us to really to know what was going on.

FL: Okay.

GG: No that was, I guess to him it was probably—he was, uh...embarrassed. I, I don't know whether embarrassed is the same way, but I guess he was, felt that he, um, was betrayed more than anything, to have to be, spend that time in, in a, uh, a concentration camp. I mean he did nothing wrong, you know, so.

FL: Never, he was never charged?

GG: No, no.

FL: Okay. And when he came out, what, um, you know, the family was very happy to have him back. What about his job situation?

GG: Well that's, that's one of the things, that, um, uh, he, uh—because I, I guess he was a member of the, the union [gestures with hand], I guess, the railroad workers union, I think they,

they were obliged to give him his job back and, um, he, uh, after, after he got back to work and, and, um, he was there a couple of years and they made him an Assistant Station Master. So he was, um, very well liked in the, uh, in the whole Union Station thing. That was his home, really. That's where, uh, he knew everybody there, yeah.

[00:20:45]

FL: Was he ever compensated for the time lost?

GG: No, I don't think so [shakes head].

FL: [Unclear] work.

GG: No, I don't think so.

FL: No.

GG: No.

FL: And um, so he—and what, what about your household? You know, from the, the time period before he was interned to after, did things go back to normal?

GG: Yes, more or less. Yes. Yeah. Mm hmm.

FL: Okay. And um, how—do you remember, you know, maybe your dad didn't tell stories, but do you remember how he, he, you know, he felt betrayed, but is there anything, um, how did he feel, um, about, um, uh, that whole experience in terms of—

GG: Well, I guess, I guess, he was kind of, um, um...I guess a lot of things happened, um, uh, you know, he built up, you know, um, a, a business, and to have that taken away from him, more or less, I guess that more or less affected his, um, affected him, definitely, yeah.

FL: And then, how did that affect you?

GG: Well I, you know, we all kind of had to, uh, to make—no I shouldn't say make do—but we had to kind of go along with, uh, how, how he felt, um, by, uh, you know, being, I guess, just being there for him. That's about, uh—you know, he was in—there were periods there, I guess he was angry, you know, to have, uh, these things happen to him. And, uh, the, um...not that he, I don't think he—he tried to start his own, another business by himself, but, uh, it just never, never worked out that way, so. He had too many obstacles. Because one of the reasons why because he was, because he had been interned they thought he was a, uh, a prisoner, you know, had a criminal record, but he never, he was never charged in anything so he didn't have a criminal record. So that was one of the reasons why he couldn't start his own business again.

FL: Okay, so that, that was something that in terms of the after-effects of the internment—

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: —um, that, um, you know that negative experience that we covered.

GG: Right.

FL: And, and in terms of, you know, the other, the outside community, um, didn't necessarily put it in the past. I mean they, they sort of held it over him as if it was something...

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: Okay, okay. So did—so was this the community, like the business community, um, that would've considered this...

GG: [Thinking] Um, no, I'm trying—I don't think so, no.

FL: Okay.

GG: Because everybody really thought, uh, he should, uh, he should have, uh, uh, should have—you know, because he was such a, uh, a good...person, that everybody wanted him to succeed again, if he wanted [gestures with hand], if, if, if it'd be possible for him to have another business he would probably would have succeeded again. Yeah.

FL: So who was it that stopped him? You said, a while ago that it was, that they, they sort of wouldn't because of the fact that they sort of felt he had—

GG: I guess it was politics in those days.

FL: Oh, okay.

GG: Yeah.

FL: Okay. So that continued even after he was released?

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: Now was that—when you say he tried to start a business, was that in the immediate time after or was that years later?

GG: Oh, a couple of, maybe seven or eight months later or something like that.

FL: He tried.

GG: Yeah, he tried again, yeah.

FL: And then he never tried after?

GG: No, no. Once he was refused I think he more or less gave up. And, uh, and that was, uh—he just decided that was, he was never going to do it, so there's no sense in, in, uh—the frustration was enough, you know—

FL: Okay.

GG: —of not being able to, uh, to have another, uh, place.

FL: Okay.

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: And just, um, both sort of in the time your dad was interned and, and then also in the time after he was released. Um, you mentioned that, you know, as a child you were supported at school, there was a particular Sister Bertha.

GG: Teacher, yeah. Mm hmm.

FL: Um, do you remember anything else in terms of the community, the—both either supporting or not supporting both the Italian community, first of all, and then the, the larger community. Both, you know, just in, in terms of your experience in, in feeling, um, the consequences of, of this having happened to your family, both, you know, while your dad was interned and after.

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: I mean do you, do you remember any experiences—

GG: Hmm. No, I don't—no, not that I can recall, no.

FL: Okay.

GG: No.

FL: Okay, okay. And...the, um, the um, [long pause]—if your dad was here today—okay, now as I'm gonna, I'd like to sort of approach this—

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: —and your reflection on this time period. Um, do you remember your dad talking about the “college”?

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: For—

GG: Well, a lot of times he'd do it jokingly. Yes, refer to it jokingly as it wasn't a very pleasant experience for him, for him. But he—

FL: But was that just in the immediate years after the internment?

GG: Right, yeah.

FL: Or was it...

GG: Oh, I guess, even when he was around friends that, um, you know, that were interned at the same time, I guess, they all, they all referred to it as the "college." You know, "I remember when we did this at the 'college'" and all that sort of thing, you know.

FL: Okay.

GG: But, you know, nothing in particular, no.

FL: Okay, okay. And, um, how do you think he would feel today about, um...you know, compensation? This, this issue that has arisen in the past about that, you know, this, this group of Italian Canadians, you know, most of them men, who were interned and never, you know, in, in your dad's case, you know, definitely lost that, that money.

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: —you know your, your financial well-being, your emotional well-being as a family. Um, that somehow there was never—or, or how would he feel about restitution?

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: Would he, would he—did he, did he just, you know, how did he—

GG: I don't think that even, that even occurred to him in those days. [Shakes head] No, I think maybe—what, what he was mainly concerned about was in getting his good name back.

FL: Okay.

GG: Yeah.

FL: And do you feel that he did get his good name back?

GG: I think so. Definitely. Yeah.

[00:26:37]

FL: Okay.

GG: Mm hmm.

FL: How old was he or what year did he pass away?

GG: He died in, in, uh, '50...'51. He was 50, 53 years old. Very young.

FL: Okay.

GG: Yeah.

FL: So not a lot of years after.

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: And was, was—there was no health issue related to him being interned?

GG: No, I don't think so.

FL: Nothing, no connection.

GG: No, 'cause he, uh, died of a heart attack. Yeah.

FL: Okay, okay. And how—now in terms of you and your, your siblings, I'm, I'm sure you've have talked about this experience. Um, how do you feel about, you know now as an adult—

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: —or looking back at that experience—

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: —um, both from the issue of compensation and, uh, righting this wrong, in a, in a, you know, sort of a much more official way?

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

FL: Or, or just how do you feel about that?

GG: Well I think if, if we had spoken about it I think it, it, it was so hush, hush and I think if people had spoken about it more maybe more would've, um, would've been done, the wrong could've been righted sort of thing. But, uh, we didn't, I guess we didn't talk about it enough, um, between ourselves.

FL: Do you know why that is?

GG: No, I don't know, I don't know. In those days, I guess it was not like it is today where everyone has these [gestures with her hands] intimate discussions between families and all that sort of stuff. So, I don't think we were that, uh, that type of family. Of course we, in the, you know sitting down to a Sunday dinner sort of thing, I don't think, um, the conversation never turned around, it was not, it was not that it was unspoken, but it was just something that was never openly discussed, dare I say.

FL: And did your father get back involved with the Sons of Italy after?

GG: Oh yes, oh yeah, definitely, yeah. [Nods]

FL: So that went on. And what about politically? Has—was your family, I mean you mentioned how social—

GG: Oh, he was, he was a Liberal. [Shakes head and laughs]

FL: Okay, okay, okay.

GG: Yeah.

FL: And, and he, he—did he get back involved in—

GG: Uh, he did at one time, yes. I think the, the Member of Parliament at that time for the, for the, riding that we lived in, it was, uh, George McIlraith and anything George McIlraith did was great with my father. Yeah. And he was, uh, as I said, he was a true Liberal. I guess because, um, George McIlraith was the one that, uh, got him, um, the license for the hotel and all that sort of stuff, so.

FL: Okay, okay. And so looking back or, or not looking back, but today, you know if there, if there are some, um, you know, if there's a message that, you know—you, you've agreed to be interviewed today, to tell, you know, share with us some of your memories [long pause] are there, are there—you know, what is it, you know, that is most important for you to have people know about that time, um, about your father, about, that, that you know you'd like to share with us?

GG: Mm hmm. Yeah. Well, not only for my father, for I think quite a few of the men that were interned in, in, in those days. They were all good people, hard working people, family people. And to have something like that happen to them, it was unfair, unfair. Definitely. And it's something that, I think, lived with most of them for the rest of their lives. You know, that I guess it's not something that they never forgot, that, uh, that something like that in, in Canada, that something like that could happen. In the country that they chose to come and live in, so. To have something like that happen to them.

FL: And how did it live in you?

GG: Well, you know [laughs], as I say, I wish we had talked about it more when we were younger, to get a better understanding of, uh, what was going on and all that sort of thing. It was, it was more or less, um—not that it was hidden or anything like that, but it was just something that we just, you know, after we all grew up and, and left home, not something that we all discussed or anything like that, so. Yeah.

FL: Okay. And is it important for you to be able to talk about it today?

GG: I, I think as long as it, uh, it doesn't make it into a, uh...it's ok—yeah, it's, it's fine. I'm, I'm, I'm, you know, I certainly would like to, uh, to help, uh, contribute to the, uh, to let people know how something like this could happen in a, in a country like ours, you know. But, uh, certainly I'm, I'm not looking for compensation or, or any kind of retribution or anything like that from the, um, for, for what happened, so.

FL: Okay, okay. Well thank you very much for, for, for sharing this.

GG: Well thank you.

FL: And, you know, if there's anything else you'd like to tell us about your dad in terms of the kind of person he was? Um, just some memories that you'd like to share with us.

GG: As I said he was a good man. And, uh, he was good to his family. And, and a hard worker and he loved Canada, he thought it was a good country. And he, uh, as I say, he was always, he was always—I can still see my father at the kit—at the, uh, at the kitchen stove with the cigarette hanging out of his mouth [mimics a cigarette hanging out of mouth] cooking up our

meals. That's, uh, that's what I—you know, after my mother passed away he, uh, he was devastated. 'Cause she, she was very fast, very quick when, uh, when she died. So he was kind of devastated with that. And, uh, he just took over the household. 'Cause she was, you know, she was the everything, she did everything in the house, you know, so. But, uh, he took over and, uh, set a good example for the, uh, for the family, definitely, yeah. And for the community, I think everybody in the community looked up to, um, to my father. They, uh, they knew he was a—you know the Sons of Italy he helped so many people that were, uh, you know, that lose their job and they'd be right there, you know, with food baskets and money for them. And, so he was always the leader in, in that sort of stuff. So, I think the community really looked up to him too, yeah.

FL: Thank you very much.

GG: You're welcome.

[Fades out at 00:32:17]

[End of interview]