

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

**DATE OF INTERVIEW:** August 17, 2011

**LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** Ottawa, ON

**NAME OF INTERVIEWEE:** Gloria Giroux (Costantini)

**NAME OF INTERVIEWER:** Travis Tomchuk

**NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER:** Stefanie Petrilli

**TRANSCRIBED BY:** Krystle Copeland

**DATE TRANSCRIBED:** November 4, 2011

**ACCESSION No.:** ICEA2011.0011.0002

## **ABSTRACT**

This object story features Gloria Giroux (Costantini) at her home in Ottawa, Ontario on August 17, 2011. The object story is in regards to a small bone carving that her father, Giuseppe Costantini, created during his internment at Petawawa. Gloria explains that the carving was made from a soup bone after her father and some other internees began cooking in the kitchen at Camp Petawawa, and that he brought the object home with him after his release. Gloria is surprised by the artistic quality of the piece as she states that he was not known as a particularly creative individual. When asked what this object means to her, Gloria responds that it represents, "A life that was taken away." The skilled and delicate carving features a floral motif on the front side and the inscription "P/W 189 Petawawa" on the reverse.

## **INTERVIEW**

**GG: Gloria Giroux (Costantini), interviewee**

**TT: Travis Tomchuk, interviewer**

**SP: Stefanie Petrilli, videographer**

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:09]

TT: What can you tell me about, uh, this carving you have?

GG: [Reaches for object on the table, lifts it up and holds it while speaking] Well, we, uh—it was never really talked about while my father was living. But it's always been something that was in, um, in the house, and then, uh, for some reason, I guess later on we found out that that's—was part of, uh—he brought this back when he was, uh, released from, uh, Petawawa, from the prisoner of war camp. And, uh, he never really discussed it and I was—you know, everybody was quite surprised to see the carving and this—because we didn't know that my father did anything of this, uh, type of work at all so it, uh, it was quite, uh, uh, it was, it was, it was nice [clears throat] to know that at least he could do something like that. No—normally he wasn't that artistic [flares hand in air] or anything like that. At least I don't remember him being artistic in any way. [Subtly nods] That's, uh, that's about it. As I say, it's been in the family for [shrugs]—ever since he came back from, uh, from the college let's say. [Laughs]

TT: And, and what is the...

GG: It's a soup bone. My father and a few, uh, a few men took over the cooking at the camp. Because the, uh—I guess when they first arrived there the soldiers were the, were the, uh, ca—uh, in the kitchen and, and of course when you get all the Italians together the food wasn't the best compared to what they were used to. So my father and a couple of other gentlemen decided that they would take over the kitchen and I guess they brought in soup or bones to make soup and all that sort of thing and he just took it home one night and—or one day and, and, uh, [places carving on table in front of her] and did a little bit of carving on it. That's, that's the story that I hear anyway. But I know he did, did a lot of work in the kitchen with a lot of other men. Yeah.

TT: And is—does this—what does this object mean to you?

GG: Um, a life that was taken away. Um, you know, he had a very good life before, uh, before he was interned. And, uh, you know, the fact that he was arrested and put, put away for a while for no reason at all, he was a good Canadian and all that sort of stuff, and to have, have him be in an, in an internment camp treated like a prisoner of war when actually he was—there was nothing that he ever did to even say that he was against any—like he certainly wasn't a fascist. He certainly wasn't, uh, the type of person that was going to fight for the, the homeland or something like that. So, that's it, it means a loss of his—a lot, lot of his life was, was, uh, affected by, uh, by that. [Pauses then looks to right at SP] Good?

SP: Yeah. Do you want to hold it up to the camera—

GG: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

SP: —and we'll just have you holding it—

GG: Yeah.

SP: —so we can see.

[GG picks up object and explains details]

GG: Well there's the, the front. There's some kind of a flower in the front. It's all carved. And at the back [camera zooms in slightly] it's a, uh, it says P.I.W. 189 Petawawa. [Says while reading then turns the back of the carving to show the camera] It's marked in there.

[Cross-dissolve between clips 00:03:11]

[Close-up of GG holding the carving with a view of the front of the bone carving with flower motif. GG then flips the carving to show the inscription on the back. Camera zooms in to show close-up of inscription]

[Fades out at 00:03:38]

**[End of interview]**