

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

**DATE OF INTERVIEW:** August 15, 2011

**LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** Ottawa, ON

**NAME OF INTERVIEWEE:** Pasqualina Pat Adamo

**NAME OF INTERVIEWER:** Francesca L'Orfano

**NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER:** Travis Tomchuk

**TRANSCRIBED BY:** Louanne Aspillaga

**DATE TRANSCRIBED:** November 8-10, 2011

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Pasqualina Pat Adamo is the adoptive granddaughter of Italian immigrants and grocery store owners, Francesco and Filomena Guzzo. During World War II the Guzzos were declared enemy aliens and were required to report to the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) in their hometown of Ottawa. In this follow-up interview, Pat tells the story of how in Italy, the Guzzos lived across the street from her father, Pasquale Adamo and his big family. Upon leaving for America, they offered the Adamos a proposition: to adopt Pasquale and take him to America with them where he could live a better life. The Guzzos were childless and always shared a special bond with the young Pasquale, so the Adamos willingly accepted. Pat explains how her father and adoptive grandfather established their grocery store business in what became the Little Italy in Ottawa. She also recalls the story of how her parents were set up and subsequently married. Although Pat did not meet her father – as he passed away unexpectedly three months before her birth – she is able to speak of him and his various business endeavors. Pat speaks fondly of her adoptive grandparents saying she owes her “Italianism” to them, having been brought up by them. Pat feels that Ottawa did not suffer as much as Montreal and Toronto during the war years because it only had a small Italian community. She is also thankful that her grandparents were not interned.

**INTERVIEW**

**PPA: Pasqualina Pat Adamo, interviewee**

**FL: Francesca L'Orfano, interviewer**

**TT: Travis Tomchuk, videographer**

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:09]

FL: Okay, um, thank you for meeting with us again to, um, continue our discussion of, uh, your, uh, grandparents and parents, uh, in relation to the internment of Italian Canadians and this project. Um, we'd just like to ask you, um, some, some, uh, more details if, if we can, uh, about, um, first your grandparents, uh, Francesco and Filomeno—Fi-Filomena Guzzo. Um, just when they first came to, to—the details about when they came to Canada and if you know why they came to Canada?

PPA: Well, in fact, uh, like everyone else, they came, uh, because there was no work in the south of Italy and no ways of making a living. So they came here to make a better living. And of course the mecca was, uh, the United States, where they first arrived, New York City and then Canada. And they came up to Canada because some of their *paesani* came up here and they said, "It's great you know. It's better than New York City, for example." Because New York City was, uh, very dangerous and they could work, but it was, uh, physically dangerous. So they came here and like, uh, most immigrants, uh, to, uh, make a better living for themselves. [Nods]

FL: And, uh, do you remember the year?

PPA: Uh, they came about, uh, I would say 1896, '97. I'm not too sure because you know in those days, uh, we didn't talk much about it. I didn't think to talk to them about it. But I knew it was before 1900, that's for sure because even on my mother's side, the Capello side, my, my mother was born here, in, uh, uh, in Quebec just on the—uh, where my grandfather Capello worked on the railway between here and Montreal. And she was born there in, uh, 1899, so, uh, they were—both sides were here before, before 1900.

FL: And were your grandparents, Francesco and Filomena, did they actually come as a couple? Were they already married?

PPA: Yes, yes, yes. [Nods]

FL: So this is the Guzzo. And when you say your mother had Capello, how does—I—where's—is it your grandmother was a Capello?

PPA: My—yes, my mother's single name was Maria Capello. And her father wa—and mother were here in Ottawa. And my father, Pasquale Adamo was here. They had the store and they used to deliver down to Rideau Street to—they were the only Italian grocery store so they served and when my father was about 30 years old, my grandfather said to him, "Time you got married." Well there weren't very many Italian girls who is—"Well, there's Maria Capello, who's very nice and I know her." And she was 14 and a half. [Chuckles] So, they married them off...together.

FL: Okay, but your father was a Gu—uh, an Adamo.

PPA: Yes. Well that, that's a long story. It's a kind of complicated story. [Laughs]

FL: Okay. [Laughs] This is part of the reason we're trying to keep the family—because your grandparents are the Guzzos...

PPA: Yes.

FL: ...and they're parents to your father.

PPA: Yes, they're kind of adopted. Actually—

FL: Oh, okay.

PPA: —I have to call them adopted grandparents.

FL: Okay, okay.

PPA: It's, it's a nice story. When the Guzzos came from, uh, when the Guzzos came from, uh, San Giovanni in Fiore, they didn't have any children. So, um, my father who lived across the street from them, uh, uh, was always in their house, 'cause they spoiled him. [Smiles] And the, the Adamos had a lot of other kids and, uh, my real grandparents, uh, the Adamo grand-grandparents, technically. And, uh, so when, uh, dad was, uh, young—I think he was about 10 years old—the, the Guzzos decided to come to America. They used to call it America then, okay.

FL: Mm hmm.

PPA: Because they would go to New York. Nobody came directly here...uh, to Halifax. And, uh, they said, uh, casually, "We're going to America. You have so many kids. How about us taking

Pasquale and we'll make a good life for him in America?" And the Adamos said, "Take him, but don't change his name." [Chuckles] And that's the story of, uh...

FL: Okay.

PPA: ...the Guzzo-Adamo.

FL: Okay, okay.

PPA: Yeah. [Smiles]

FL: And so, Capello then was?

PPA: My mother's family.

FL: Family, okay.

PPA: Yes.

FL: Okay, so that's when they married. Alright, okay, that's—makes more sense now. [Chuckles]

PPA: [Laughs]

FL: So—and Pasquale, uh, was 10 years old then when he came?

PPA: Yes, he was.

FL: Okay.

PPA: Yes.

FL: And when your parents married—when, when this marriage took—

PPA: In 1915. [Nods] Mm hmm.

FL: Nineteen-fifteen.

PPA: And mother was 14 and a half. [Nods] And it was a fix-up marriage, you know.

FL: Okay.

PPA: Yeah. "You're not going to school tomorrow, to the Rideau Street Convent, uh, Maria. You're..." "Why?! Why?! Why?!" "You're getting married." "To whom?" "To Pasquale Adamo." And in her case, she was lucky to know him because I think in those days your parents could fix you up and you wouldn't really know who you're ma—but she knew my dad because, uh, eh, he—my grandfather who had the store used to deliver groceries to her, to her family, so she knew who he was to see. You know. Yeah.

FL: And when your grandparents, the, the Guzzos, first came, um...what kind of work did they do?

PPA: Manual labour. [Nods]

FL: Manual—

PPA: They did manual labour. And of course the city of Ottawa was the marketplace, so that's where they lived. And, uh, they, they did, uh—my grandfather did manual labour. [Nods] Yes. Both grandfathers did manual labour. And at one stage I think my grandfather Capello had put sort of, um, a little shop down off of Rideau Street...uh, eventually when he got older, you know.

[00:05:23]

FL: And the Capellos, did they have any—when, when—I'm, I'm jumping ahead to the internment—

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: —we'll go back—but were they affected by the internment at all then? The, uh—

PPA: [Inhales heavily]

FL: —your mother's side of the family?

PPA: No, they weren't because [clears throat] I think because of, uh, living down in—on Rideau Street and being sort of out of the Italian community type of thing, they were not really affected. No.

FL: Okay, okay. Um, now going back to your grandparents and this family store. Um, from your early—our earlier interview, you talked about them building their store, in 1912 I believe.

PPA: Yes. [Nods]

FL: So how did that—how did the impetus to, you know, build a store, how did that all come about?

PPA: [Inhales heavily]

FL: In terms of your grandparents?

PPA: Well, at the time, uh, as I say, the city of Ottawa was essentially, uh, uh, downtown in the market area—not even downtown, but the, the market area and, and Besserer Street, that's where the Italians lived and, and so on. And, uh, I, I think that my grandfather, uh, Guzzo—Francesco—he used to say that well when he and my dad were thinking they were going to want to establish themselves, they built, actually, uh—they didn't built, they rented a store on Albert Street actually, because Albert Street was open, as far as maybe, uh, Booth Street or so on. And they opened a store on Albert Street. And then eventually they thought, Well we, we want to build something. And they moved out a little further and there was, there was, uh, a li—it, it was the edge of the city. Preston Street was the end of the city at that time. Because I remember even as, uh, a young lady, that, uh, the end of Preston Street down near Dow's Lake was gravel road, even when I was a kid. And, uh, we're not gonna say how, how long ago that was. [Smiles] But, uh, but essentially it's in our time, the end of Preston Street was still gravel road from say, uh, oh, I would suspect from about, uh, Norman Street, even Beech Street, going down to, to Dow's Lake. And so they decided that was the edge of the city for them so they, they thought well they would buy a lot there and build a store.

FL: What was the—when, when they rented a space on Albert Street, what was the name of the store?



PPA: Uh, uh, I really don't know, but I suspect it was Guzzo-Adamo. Yeah, I, I would suspect it was that.

FL: And that was then the new store they built—

PPA: Yes, the new store then. That's the name they put on, yes.

FL: Guzzo-Adamo.

PPA: Guzzo hyphen Adamo.

FL: Okay. And that's, uh, with a double zed, right? G-U—

PPA: G-U-Z-Z-O hyphen Adamo. A-D-A-M-O.

FL: Okay. And, um...and where on Preston? You said—

PPA: It was at 36—the address is 362, which is essentially the corner of Aberdeen was the— which is now in the very heart of so-called Little Italy of Ottawa. [Smiles] And about halfway between Carling Avenue and Somerset. Yes.

FL: And, and this was a store that both your father and your grandfather ran, I guess, or was it the family—

PPA: Yes. [Nods]

FL: But—okay.

PPA: Yes, essentially. And, and then, like I said, they wanted him to get married then and settle down so they, uh, married him off to my mother, who was 14 and a half. And then she essentially helped him to run the store with my grandfather. And grandmother looked after us, uh, children.

FL: Okay. And your grandparents did not have any children other—

PPA: No.

FL: The Guzzos did not have any other children.

PPA: [Shakes head] No. They didn't, no.

FL: Yeah.

PPA: They only had my dad, yes.

FL: And in—you mentioned a brother, what is his name? Your brother?

PPA: Oh, my brother's name is Joe. And Joe then, being the man of the family, as he grew up he went into the business and he spent, uh, 40 years, uh, with my mother in the store from, uh, the time he grew up until we closed in 1977, which was approximately 40 years. And of course Joe became known then as, uh, the, uh, the Mr. Guzzo-Adamo of Ottawa. Because in those days there weren't very many stores and then we delivered, we always had a car, we never, never got to a truck in those days, but, uh, we delivered all over the city. [Smiles]

FL: Okay. Uh, going back to your father, um, you said he passed away...just after you were born or you—

PPA: No, three months before I was born. [Nods]

FL: Three months before.

PPA: Yes, ye—

FL: So, so your fa—your brother is the oldest?

PPA: Yes.

FL: Older.

PPA: Mm hmm. [Nods] There's just the two of us because of that I guess.

FL: So how old would your dad have been?

PPA: He would have been about, um...well let's see, um [looks off and moves lips while silently counting]...he must have been about 40.

FL: Forty.

PPA: 'Cause he was older than my mother. When they married him off he was, maybe in his 30s. And then mother was young, you know. [Shrugs] And, uh...so he was quite a few years older than mother, my—twice her age. Yeah.

FL: Okay. And was he ill?

PPA: No, well he had an appendix attack and, and went to the hospital. And, you know, in those days, apparently, um...they weren't as, uh, efficient as they are now and so he died on the table. Yeah.

[00:10:12]

FL: Okay. And so at this point, you, you and your brother were still children—

PPA: Yes, well I wasn't born.

FL: Oh yeah—

PPA: I wasn't born, 'cause he died in July, like now, and I was, uh, born in November, so—and my brother was older. Yeah.

FL: Okay. And that year was 19...what's—you mentioned—

PPA: Uh...

FL: —the year he died? Nineteen...

PPA: Uh, '27. Yeah.

FL: Twenty-seven. Okay. And so, the, the family store when you closed, or when your brother closed it in 1977, was there a reason why it closed? Was he just retiring?

PPA: [Inhales heavily] Well, yes, but actually it was my mother's, uh, reason. My mother was 77. She went with the years, you know. She was born in '99, in 1899. And it—she was 77 and my brother was in his mid-50s I think and, um, it came the time—well people were after her of course too—but it just came the time that she should retire. And rather than retire and rent and all this stuff, uh, we decided to sell the store. Uh, that means plus the building, you know, because the building has two apartments above it. And so the, the whole thing was sold and mother retir—mother and Joe retired.

FL: And what, what became of—what, what is there now, at the store?

PPA: There is a, there is a restaurant now and the, the two gentlemen that bought the, uh, the store at that time, uh, put a restaurant. Yeah. They, they wanted to put a restaurant there. And then, uh, they eventually sold it and I think it's gone through two or three hands since then and it's, it's actually a very successful restaurant. It's called Giovanni's now and—

FL: [Unclear]

PPA: —the owner that has it is a very—and my mother used to give—[slaps hands on legs and smiles] well, uh, give bubble gum so to speak—but my mother used to give bubble gum and the, the girl that owns it was a, was a young lady, a kid when she came and lived at her, at her aunt's behind the store and... So, it's kind of interesting that someone like this—it, it just shows you how wonderful Canada is, that one of our immigrant children that came over in our times, came into our store as, uh, uh, immigrant child, and now owns my mother's store. She was a good friend of mother's. [Laughs].

FL: That is interesting. Um, going back to the time when your grandparents purchased this lot and—

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: —uh, as you mentioned this—the Preston Street area was not developed at all. Um, uh, you talked about your grandparents, um, helping to contribute to building St. Anthony's Church.

PPA: Well, yes.

FL: Okay.

PPA: Well, yes because of course, uh, my grandparents, and of course including my mother and, uh, so on, and dad, uh, they were the—amongst those first few Italians that were here. There may have been maybe 20 or 30. And, uh, most of them in the beginning lived downtown on, uh, Besserer Street and those streets, St. Andrew, and so on. And, uh, I guess the next thought came up, We should have a church, you know. And as a matter of fact, it was interesting the other day to hear about St. Anne's closing because that's where the Italian priests used to go some time. There used to be a Father Fortunato from Montreal. I remember he even came in my time and said mass down at St., uh, St. Anne's Church down in, um, just off of St. Patrick's Street. It's just closed the other day, now, August of 2011. And, uh, they, they would say an Italian mass down there. And I, I guess that was the next step for a group of, uh, Catholics from Italy to want a church. And, uh, I don't know how they picked that particular lot, but St. Anthony's, uh, corner, was—the corner of Booth Street was, um, purchased. And there might have been a handful of Italians here at that time.

FL: And how did your grandparents contribute? In what way?

PPA: Well, uh, [clears throat] I think physically, because I'm sure they worked on it. I don't think they actually built the church, but they helped to build it. And my—financially, of course, that's the important part is financially, from all of them.

FL: Okay. So they gave money or did they help with fundraising?

PPA: Well, I don't, I don't suppose they would have called it fundraising, but I guess a gang of them got together like we are here. "We have to have a church," uh...Francesca.

FL: Mm hmm.

PPA: You know? "Uh, we got to chip in and have a church." I think that's the way it went.

FL: Okay. And—

PPA: Because none of them, n-n-none of them except, uh—like for example my grandparents and I think 90 percent of them in those days were, uh...couldn't read and write. Now my father could, 'cause they made sure to send him to school, so he could do it in English, French, and Italian. But at the time, I would imagine it was a gang like us said, "We need a church—an Italian church!" You know.

FL: Um, and, uh, just, just, the point you just made about your father going to school. So, uh, how far did he manage? Did he go to college, university?

PPA: No, no, no. I, I don't, I don't remember ever hearing exactly, but apparently he was well read and, uh, in the three languages. And he, uh, uh, because of the store and the location and so on, uh, uh, at the, that time he was a-also providing quite a bit of, uh, service to those other

Italians in the community to write home, because they couldn't read and write. And to also send money home to, to them to use and also send money, and eventually arrange for them to come over with their families, like the people—the men who came here. Because I remember, uh, we used to have in the store, uh, a, um, a large certificate from the Bank of Naples, that my father was representative of the Bank of Naples initially. And he would arrange the physical paper arrangements for—because most of them that came over were, were men. And then once they got established and so on, if they were married with children, they would eventually send for their families. And, uh, my father at the time, uh, would do a lot of the paper work, if, if not the priests at the church, you know.

[00:15:57]

FL: So the store, uh, uh, was more than just a grocery store? It was—

PPA: Well it was a grocery store. If you came in, you did the papers in the kitchen behind the grocery store—

FL: Okay.

PPA: —you know. There wasn't an office if that's what—

FL: Okay.

PPA: —but there was a desk. I have a desk here [gestures off to her right] in fact, a roll top desk, which my father eventually had bought for himself and, uh...

FL: And that's what he...



PPA: ...and that's, yeah. But you know, you did it in the kitchen, the same as I did, you know.

FL: Okay.

PPA: A lot of paper work in the kitchen.

FL: Okay. I'm gonna stay with the community—

PPA: Yes.

FL: —um, both, you know, they helped build the church. You also mentioned in our previous interview, that, um, when immigrants did, uh, show up at the train station—didn't know where to go—that often times they'd, they'd...be presented to your—

PPA: Yes.

FL: —your grandfather or your father. How, how did ha—like was that the Albert Street store as well as the Preston? And how did—

PPA: Not at the time, no. At the time it was the one on Clarence Street. When they first came they lived on Clarence. And as a matter of fact, uh, e-eventually there was a young Italian man, who was, uh, one of the trainmen at the, at the station. So he knew that there was this fa—uh, uh, *fam-famiglia* Guzzo down there, where he can send somebody who came.

FL: Oh, so it was—

PPA: Got off the train.

FL: —it was the person at the station—

PPA: Well, not of—not is—not initially because he wa—this is a man who's in our times.

FL: Okay, okay.

PPA: Yeah.

FL: Okay.

PPA: So, uh—but initially, uh, the people at the station I guess, because of the, the bit of transit, what they knew there was an Italian family down there. [Gestures with hand] I mean it was only two blocks from Clarence Street.

FL: On Clarence Street. Okay—

PPA: And I sus—

FL: —on Clarence Street was the, uh—that was where they were renting a shop? No, it was—

PPA: No, no. On Clarence Street was where they lived in-initially.

FL: Okay, so—

PPA: When they ca—

FL: —people would be brought to their home.

PPA: Yes.

FL: Okay and—

PPA: And they'd take them in. Yes.

FL: Okay, and that's how the boarders started.

PPA: Yes, exactly. Yes.

FL: And, and then, um, that just continued, uh, when they had the place on Clarence? Uh, sorry on, on Albert Street? Was that—did they also live there or they just rented the store—

PPA: No, no, they lived there, but they didn't have boarders there anymore, no. Nor on Preston Street.

FL: Okay—

PPA: No.

FL: —so it was just that—

PPA: It was the initial, the initial thing. [Gestures with hands] Yeah.

FL: Okay. And then later, um, these migrants would come—or these immigrants would come for help with the financial—that, that carried over into—

PPA: Yes, that carried over. Well, as I say, you—there weren't too many people who had—who were educated and spoke the language, so essentially, uh, they would go to either the priests at, at St. Anthony's, it was—whether he was Italian or not, had to speak Italian, or to my father. And there were, as I recall, there were a couple of other pe-people, I don't remember their names now. Um, but, uh, as I grew older, I know there were a couple of other people that would have been of my father's age group that, uh, helped a few pe—that did a little bit of paperwork.

FL: Okay. Um, and, um [long pause]...do you remember s—other stories about, um, how the Italian community came to be? Wa-was it the church, uh—the church came after your store, right? When your, your—

PPA: Yes, because we were 1912 and I think the church was started to be built in 1913.

FL: Okay. So was there somehow a concerted effort or, or it was, it was just to make this, uh, sort of an Italian area or just it happened by coincidence? Was there any—were there people—the few people in the community—

PPA: Yeah. I, I think the—frankly, I think that it was a coincidence. Because you know, if you would, like say, come to the station, at, uh, Union Station originally, uh, and you didn't speak the language, somebody there knew that there was this Italian guy on Clarence Street, who was my grandfather. So they'd send you down there automatically. Whether you would stay there or not, they didn't know. But they would send you there and they would expect my grandfather to help you to, uh, set you up or whatever. To tell you where to go. And, uh, and then I think the same thing happened with Preston Street. I think that when, uh, my grandparents moved down to Preston Street that, um, people coming in and some of the people who lived down there, essentially on Besserer Street and down on Clarence Street—because there was a small

Italian community—that some of them who wanted to expand, you couldn't expand up there. So, they came down to Preston Street. And eventually I guess people—you know, anybody who would get off the train, uh, or so on—because that's where they would come, they would normally be coming from Montreal, from the boats from Halifax or New York. And you would come and get off the train and, you know, you didn't know anything, some—uh, you were Italian, they'd say, "Well, go down to Preston Street." [Points off to the side] You know. You were kind of referred automatically. It wasn't done by anyone on Preston Street, let's—if that's what you're asking. I think is what—

FL: Well in terms of even choosing this—the location of the church, just—

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: —off, off of Preston Street—

PPA: Yes, yes.

FL: —just a couple of blocks away.

PPA: Yes.

FL: Whether that was just, Okay, there's a lot here, it's, it's available...

PPA: Yeah, I suggest that's what it was.

FL: Yes.

PPA: I, I suggest it was done without any, uh, special...sp—

FL: It was just people knew people—

PPA: Yes, that's right. And they, they probably thought that's a good lot. Maybe the price was good and it was on the corner. It was a very well located lot, which it is. [Gestures to size of lot with hands]

FL: Okay.

PPA: Yeah.

[00:21:11]

FL: Okay. Um... [Long pause] Alright, I just wanna go back to now the time period where your grandparents had to—uh, were, uh, you know, defined as enemy aliens and they had to go—

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: —and, and register once a week. Uh, you spoke earlier in our previous interview where, um, the store wasn't affected, um, in terms of people still continued to come to the store.

PPA: Yes.

FL: So just the store itself, was it, was it primarily when it first opened, uh, or even when your father was in business, uh, on Albert Street, the store, uh, was it primarily Italians who would go to the store, uh—

PPA: Always. It was the, the first Italian, uh, grocery store in Ottawa. Essentially what I mean by Italian grocery, that specialized in Italian groceries. So, uh, of course the, the, any of the Italians were here would essentially come to us. There were no supermarkets in those days and eventually some of the other stores, uh, down on Dalhousie Street, there were a couple of, uh, Italian stores and, uh, they eventually bought from us actually, to sell to the few Italians that still remained down in the market. [Smiles] It was interesting. And, uh, uh, but we became, uh, specialized, yes, in Italian gro—and in fact in those days [sniffles], uh, we even imported from Italy. Some of it, not all of it. Most of it came from M-Montreal. But essentially we had to import some things. [Nods] Yeah.

FL: Do you remember at what point—uh, because you mentioned in your—in our earlier interview, that your mother spoke English and, and the clientele—

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: —uh, that she dealt with a lot were, were English—

PPA: Yes.

FL: —or spoke English. Uh, how did—do you remember stories of how the transit—the transition happened from just catering to Italians and then non-Italians coming to get Italian—

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: —food as well? Or like the, the greater Canadian than just the Italian—

PPA: Mm hmm. Well essentially that, that wasn't the point. We weren't opened as an Italian store only, you understand? So that, um, there was never any—I don't think that distinction was particularly made. It was an Ita—an Italian grocery store, but it had—we had everything. And if you came, you came in the store, my mother spoke English and she spoke, uh, some Italian at the time. And, uh, because remember she was born here and so when she got married she didn't speak much Italian. She was going to the Rideau Street Convent, so she spoke English and French. Which was a good thing, because next door, on both sides of us, of the so-called Italian community, there was, uh, the French community of, uh, St. Gerard's, uh, uh, and, um, and also, um, the other French church on So—off of Somerset Street and, uh, the name escapes me for a moment. But in any case, um, she spoke English and French better than she spoke Italian. She spoke a little bit of Italian, so—

FL: So the clientele at the stores were not only the Italian community?

PPA: No, no, no, no.

FL: Okay.

PPA: And it was never—it never, ever, um, was intended that the store should be exclusive type of thing, you know.

FL: But during the time of the internment—

PPA: Yes.

FL: —you know, you mentioned RCMP officers coming to the store—



PPA: Yes.

FL: Did people stay away? You know, there was fear—

PPA: Yes.

FL: —in the community.

PPA: Yes, I think English people stayed away. Uh, uh, now, yes, some stayed away, not very many, not very many. Uh, I think that as far as, uh, the war and internment and all that, I think the Italians in Ottawa, we were so few, that we were not, uh, we were not dominant in any way, [makes a circle with hands] dominant in Italianism let's say. And, um, I, I don't think that we suffered as much as maybe we could have as the other. And my grandfather being elderly, uh, number one, he wasn't, uh, as I say, he was not an educated man, so that he was not very much involved in, in any, uh, uh, things [says while making hand gestures], which were either— even community or so on except for contributing and giving of his time and money. And mother, mother was, uh, a widow now with, with us and she had to work her fingers to the bone in the store. So she was not, uh—and she didn't speak good Italian—so she was really not very much involved in the Italian community such as I am for exam-example being with, uh, the different groups and, and different, uh, uh, associations. So they ran the store and, and—but the RCMP used to come in all the time. I think they also came in to inquire...try to get information on people. [Nods] And we were worried, we were very worried because [shrugs with hands out] we were obvious, [smiles] we were the centre of the community. But, uh, I think by the grace of God, my grandfather was just too old at the time to be taken in and then my father was dead so, and my brother was young. So there was no—uh, we were lucky. I think we—but we had a lot, a lot of visitors by the, uh, RCMP in the store, yeah. [Nods]

FL: And you mentioned your father being involved with the financial—with helping—

PPA: Yes.

FL: Did, did that stop after your dad passed away—

PPA: Yes.

FL: Okay, so—

PPA: Yes, because my mother didn't speak Italian well enough and she couldn't write Italian. My grandfather couldn't write it. Mind you later on as I grew up, uh, I did some of that, eventually, you know, but that's, uh [gestures with hands], 20 years later, 25 years later. Yeah.

[00:26:27]

FL: And in terms of that time period of, um, of the RCMP, etcetera—

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: —um, we know that, you know, families in the Ottawa community were affected. That there—

PPA: [Nods] Yes.

FL: —were other, other families who had, uh, family members interned.

PPA: Yes.

FL: Um, difficulty with the, you know, the—

PPA: Hmm.

FL: —income earner is gone now. I know you mentioned in our earlier interview, that, uh, your, your, uh—the business did often give credit even under, you know, non—

PPA: Oh!

FL: —internment time, non-war time.

PPA: Absolutely. I—we—I still have the books here with the credit.

FL: And did, did that go—did that get, you know, more, more families needing help during that time, do you remember?

PPA: [Nods] Yes, yes, yes. We, we, we had credit at the store. We gave credit to people at the store and, uh, I would say 99 percent of them paid up. But if—we have a few books here still; we have a few names, but, uh, negligible, very negligible. [Shrugs] Yeah.

FL: And do you remember for how long—I don't—I know you mentioned every Friday your, your brother would drive your grandparents down, uh, somewhere on—

PPA: Uh, it was on—some place on Sparks Street.

FL: Sparks Street.

PPA: It was on Sparks Street and I think it was once a week. And they would go up there and, uh, they, they'd have to sign, sign in type of thing. And I think that again, because of their age, we were lucky that my grandfather wasn't sent to an internment camp. And I think also, uh, by the same, uh, luck of Ottawa being such a small community; I think that's why we didn't have very many people here who were sent to internment camps.

FL: And do you know for how long they had to go sign in? Was it—because—

PPA: [Inhales] Well, they just—well, well I mean, uh, the—

FL: For months? Was it a year? Was it—

PPA: Oh no, it was during the war. Yeah, during the—

FL: So it was—

PPA: —the whole—almost the whole period. Yes. They went for a long time. I, I wo—don't—how long was the war then? I can't remember exactly.

FL: Well, uh, I was just thinking in terms of the internment. They were—the last internees were released—were they—was it '43 that they were released or was—

PPA: [Nods] Mm hmm.

FL: —I think there were a couple—

TT: Some, some stayed till—

PPA: Well it was during the same time. It would be the same time period as of the internment.

[Gestures with hands] Yeah.

FL: 'Cause that—well that varied with different in-individuals—

PPA: Yes.

FL: —but it was—

PPA: It was a long time. I, I, I'm—

FL: So it was—

PPA: —sorry that I don't remember. But it was, it was a couple of years at least.

FL: Okay, okay.

PPA: Oh yes.

FL: So it wasn't, uh—

PPA: Yeah, yeah. And it was some place on Sparks Street. Mm hmm.

FL: Um, and you, you mentioned then—just, just to talk a little bit more about that and, and I think, uh, I think that probably is it in terms of our questions. Um, you mentioned that you, you

didn't feel there was a stigma, uh, at the time, uh, that your, your—you were, you—your family was grateful that they did not intern your grandparents.

PPA: Yes.

FL: Uh, but even going down, um, to sign in, that you, you felt that it—that you understood the situation, your family understood.

PPA: Yes.

FL: Is that, is that how, is that—uh, for that long period of time—did, did it change? Did the, did the stigma—was it never, uh, you know, something that stigmatized your grandparents and...

PPA: I, I don't think it's—no, I don't think there was any stigma attached with—in our family particularly. There was some, uh, ov—you know, over those few years, I heard a few little remarks. And I know at school someone said something to me one day and I, I reacted a little bit, uh, aggressively and you know, "Don't talk about Italians that way." But, uh, essentially, I think because my grandparents were elderly that they were not kind of, um, looked at in that way. But I think also because the Italian community in Ottawa was small that, uh, the, the few people who were, uh, interned and the, the bit of activity that went on, was not—I don't believe it was as, uh, noticeable as it would have been in Montreal or Toronto. And I think that the people who were involved, um, their families, I don't think were stigmatized too much. There was some of course, you know. And you yourself would feel—we felt something about it because we were Canadians. You know, we didn't think we were Italians. [Smiles] I mean I never thought of myself as an Italian. I—my mother was born here. I was born here. My brother, my—you know, so I, I never thought in those terms. So, so to be, uh, uh...picked on because you were Italian was very, very strange to me.

[00:30:48]

FL: Um, I know that you were, were not yet born when your father passed away.

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: What were you, what were you told about your dad in terms of the kind of person he was? You know, uh, did your mother—you know, what, what did she try to tell you so that you did have a s—an understanding of who your father was?

PPA: Yes, well, you know, I think, uh, this is g—I don't want this to sound, uh...like bragging or whatever, but I think at the time, um, my dad was one of the few—you have to look back that this was 1900—my father was one of the few who, who was educated enough and spoke English, Italian, and French, uh, had a business, and, um, was doing—as a matter of fact he even worked for a time for the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] down on LeBreton Flats. Uh, there was a freight station there. And, uh, they opened a business; they had a store. So, my father was I guess in those days, uh, a pretty, uh, a forward type of, uh, person, uh, for my mother to even know or to marry. And, uh, and as I say, at, at his time, he was certainly, uh, amongst a few at that time who was educated enough to be able to, uh, help some of the Italians by, as I say, writing letters to Italy, sending money when they wanted to call their families over—the immigrants wanted to call their families and, and so on. Which essentially, uh, even I did and my brother did—I did more of it after the Second World War, uh, when people came in. Uh, we lived behind the store at the time and, uh, I would, you know I, I did the same thing myself and my brother did some too, but I did more of it because I had more time. And people would come in—I did exactly what my dad used to do: to write letters and fill in papers, and immigration papers, uh, income tax.

FL: And what about personally though? Did, did your mom—was he—did he have a sense of humour? Did he like music? Did—

PPA: Yes! He was very, very cultured. [Nods] Yes, as a matter of fact I found a lot of—I found an old record player. Uh, you know an old wind-up record player and a lot of Italian records; Caruso records. Yes! Very much, he was very, very—I would—you know I, I, I'm...I'm finding it now a little embarrassing to talk about it because he was, I guess for his time, he was—it was pretty far ahead in—uh, culturally and education-wise, uh, for the times. And, uh, as I say, he even worked at the fre—the freight and that was difficult at the time. That's a government job, you know. And, um, uh, like I say, he was known as the local, uh, person to go to to have any help of writing letters or going to a lawyer. But even my mother at the time, uh, when she was young, would quite often accompany people to the lawyer's offices because they didn't speak English and, uh—enough to try to explain to them. We all did that. But, uh, dad at this time, I think, uh, like I said I [stutters and smiles]...I don't want to...brag about it, but at the time he was pretty well advanced.

FL: And how, how many years, how, how many years older is your brother than you are?

PPA: He's six years older than I am.

FL: Six years.

PPA: Yes.

FL: So does he have any memories of your dad as a dad, you know—



PPA: Uh, you know I've asked him that sometimes and he says, "Yes. But not a lot." He says he remembers him as a, as a, a man coming in the house. Because at the time there was my grandfather, and my father, and then there were a lot of people coming in and out because of the store. And there were like two rooms behind the store—the kitchen and so on. And he said he remembers him, but not a lot, not a lot.

FL: And your grandparents, because it sounds like they, they—you know, your grandmother raised you.

PPA: Yes!

FL: Especially after—

PPA: Yes.

FL: —uh, your, your dad passed away—

PPA: Yes.

FL: —and then your mother went to work. Uh, what do you remember about them personally, as, as grandparents, as people?

PPA: Well I think they were very far advanced for their age. For example, my grandmother was like the local, uh, Italian, uh, uh, lady doctor, you know. She pierced ears and she set, uh, uh, broken arms, and, uh, re—you know, uh...

FL: Deliver babies.

PPA: Uh, deliver babies. Absolutely! Deliver babies, yeah, yeah, yes. [Nods] And I was delivered at home, upstairs. [Smiles and nods] Yes, I, I was washed in the bathroom sink. And, uh, yeah she did all that. She was really very well versed. She was, uh, very well known for that. And of course, my grandfather was considered, uh, you know, a, a, uh, formidable man in the community. Although I would say he wasn't as, uh—the same as my grandmother; my grandmother was sort of really into it, you know. And, uh, and mother of course was 14 and a half, uh, so they, they raised her too. She didn't speak Italian when she went in the house. [Chuckles] But then because of my father dying so unexpectedly, she had to take over the business. And, uh, and she did, with my grandfather. So, um—and luckily for us, my grandfather did live a long time. Uh, I guess I was maybe 18 or 19 when he died. So which, which means that we were, we were brought up, and of course brought up very Italian—that's why I speak Italian because I had to speak—well I didn't speak Italian, I spoke Calabrese. [Smiles] But I had to speak it everyday to my grandparents, especially my grandmother. And that's why I never ate a sandwich in my life. I'd come home from—for lunch and my grandmother had pots on the back of the stove and in fact, uh, my therapy doctor was asking me, "You know you're in quite good health." Uh, physically for my age. And I said, "Yeah, well I never ate a sandwich!" I said, "My grandmother, when I came home for lunch, you know, there were big pots on the back of the stove and everything was home cooked." You know, I never ate...cold meat from the store, you know. I, uh, I was always so—and Joe too of course, you know. So, uh—and then if—it was normal for Joe to go into the store.

[00:36:36]

FL: How did your parents communicate with their new daughter-in-law then? It's, it's—

PPA: Well, you know it must have been—you know, that's a very interesting question. I never thought of it before, but my mother must have had a hard time because she didn't speak

Italian. Like I said, she was going to the Rideau Street Convent and, and spoke Ita—uh, English and French. But she didn't—oh, I—well, like, I guess my, my father would translate. And then she was a kid! She was 14 and a half. She ran around—they married her off at St. Joseph's where she belonged and then they had the party in the store. And, uh, and she was running around picking, uh, the actual candy, confetti, off the floor that people were throwing—you know, the way they do? And, and money, they always throw money at Italian weddings. And she was going around the floor picking up the silver, silver money on the floor. And my grandmother was, uh, whacking her in the behind and telling her, "You're the bride." You know, and [chuckles] so, they—I think they, they actually raised my mother.

FL: Okay.

PPA: Yeah.

FL: Okay.

PPA: In fact, uh, it's interesting because my grandmother at that time, in the store—the store grandmother, the, the Guzzos—she had—her mother was with her. And my mother I remember used to talk about combing her hair. Combing the hair of this—at the time the oldest grand—my grandmother was not 86, but her, her mother was 86. And so my mother had three old people in the house, but, you know, she was a kid and I guess, uh, she did what they told her you know.

FL: And was your mother an only child or does she—

PPA: My mother?

FL: Yeah.

PPA: No, my mother had, uh [FL speaking in background, unclear], six brothers or seven brothers. Yeah, there's quite a few Capellos, uh, in the city.

FL: Okay.

PPA: And they're doing well too. I'm very proud of that part of the family. In fact there are no Adamos. There were never any Adamos in the family here, although there are a lot of them in the United States, but not here. But I have a lot of family and they're all doing well and very proud of them too. And they've contributed to the city of Ottawa. [Long pause] [Inhales heavily]

FL: Um...I'm not sure if there's anything else you want to share about your grandparents or, uh, anything in terms of, uh, maybe my final question might just be in relation to you spending a lot of time with your grandparents, especially during the time of the interment.

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: Um, do you ever recall them...saying anything to you? You were 12 I think you said—

PPA: Mm hmm.

FL: —at the time—uh, how they felt about having to go in on Fridays, uh—

PPA: No. Uh, I don't think they really kn—understood what they were doing. I mean yes they knew. They knew the RCMP. They had to go and sign because Italy went to war. Why did they go to war against us? You know, I mean, that was not—that would not have been normal for—

my, yes, my grandfather was, uh, had been in the army when he was a young boy. And the, the—there was a feeling, I remember, I always got that impression that, How come they went to war...with whom they did? They should have...you know. They would have gone normally with Britain. But, uh, uh, they, they knew that. Of course, my grandfather—yeah, they were intelligent enough. But they were—they never spoke about it to us or anything like that in that way, but I understood that from them. I got the message very much, that you know, "What was Italy doing with the...? Got crazy?" You know? And, uh, like you said, I was brought up by wonderful grandparents. They gave me my Italianism, my lang—Italian language, which always looked good at the bottom of my applications in the government, that I was fluent in Italian. [Smiles] I was asked about it all the time. So, uh, I'm very, I'm, I'm very happy that I have, uh, another culture. I think essentially anyone, whether they're from a Russian background or a Polish or whatever, that it's very wonderful and not all of us had that at—I realize now—I mean I've realized since I've grown up, that my grandparents gave me, uh, another culture, another life to live. You know and, uh, it opened—it has opened all sorts of doors, culturally, for me.

FL: [Long pause] Alright, thank you very much for your time today and for sharing, uh, even more information about your family.

PPA: [Smiles and laughs] Well thank you very much, it's been an honour and a pleasure and, uh, thank you very much. [Smiles]

[Fades out at 00:40:32]

**[End of interview]**