

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

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NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Gina Benetti

NAME OF INTERVIEWER: Raymond Culos

NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER: Anna Wilkinson

TRANSCRIBED BY: Krystle Copeland

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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

Gina Benetti was born in Anyox, BC on March the 21st, 1928. She was the first of eight children born to Angela and Amelio SanVito. Her father arrived in Canada first in 1923 to find work, and then brought his fiancé over in 1927. Before his arrival, Amelio served under the British army in the First World War. As a child, Gina attended Seamore Elementary School and then Templeton Junior High School. She explains that she did not face any discrimination from fellow students, but was once embarrassed and anxious when a teacher taught a social studies class on “enemy alien” countries such as Italy. Gina believes that her community so understood during the war because it was very multicultural: with Yugoslavian, Russian, and Italian neighbours. She recounts how a Japanese Canadian friend of hers named Kasako Suzuki left for Japan with her mother in grade 7 and Gina thought she had been killed during WWII until they were reunited over 60 years later. During the war both her mother and father were designated as enemy aliens, however only her mother was forced to report monthly to the RCMP in Vancouver as her father was out of the city for work. She remembers going with her mother and 4 siblings down

to 33rd and Cambie, where they took two street cars before returning back home. As an adult, Gina married John Benetti and they had a son together, John junior. Gina went to university to study education and worked as a teacher before she was married. In later years she was instrumental in developing an ESL program in the Vancouver area, and taught through the TEAL program and the church.

INTERVIEW

GB: Gina Benetti, interviewee

RC: Raymond Culos, interviewer

RC: Uh, this is Raymond Culos uh in conversation with uh Mrs. uh, Benetti. Uh, Gina Benetti. Uh, and the project title for today is Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of World War Two. And Gina, I wonder if you could uh tell us um, uh about the beginnings of your family in Vancouver? Did your mother and father come from Italy to, to Vancouver uh, how did that work out?

GB: Well uh, let's see. My father came to Canada in 1923. He was sponsored by a brother and I believe he landed in Vancouver because this is where the Italians were originally. And then he called for uh my father uh, he called for my father. My father came to Vancouver. Uh, he came alone. He came in 1923 whereas my mother came in 1927. Now, my father was sponsored by an uncle. One uncle went to Quebec and remained there and lived there and married a French Canadian and whereas my father and two other brothers came to uh, Vancouver area.

RC: And ah, after some time he called for your mother?

GB: [nods] Well for that he had to go to work, he had to earn some money. Don't forget that the, they left Italy because of the economic reasons so therefore he had to find a job. And I believe his brother ah, Giovanni introduced him to uh possibly working in the coal mines or in the woods. But eventually he went to Northern BC. Anyox, BC. Which is at the head I believe, or along the way to Observatory Canal I believe. Or Obser—Observation Canal I can't quite remember the name. But he worked there and um, I suppose he made a little bit of money and he sent it home for his fiancé to come to Canada. And she arrived in Vancouver in 1927. That meant my father had to ah, take the steamer uh, somehow get to Prince Rupert, get the steamer and come all the way back to Vancouver to pick her up. He took her back to ah Prince Rupert, and they were married there in 1927.

RC: There's a romantic ah, vignette that ah, ah, ah regarding uh, how your dad uh committed himself to your mother. By giving her a ring and then...do you recall that story?

GB: Yes. Well, the point is that he had given her this engagement ring and ah had his family buy the engagement ring for my mother and my mother said she never liked it but of course she accepted it. He says, "I don't know why they bought that ring for me." [Laughs] But anyway, it was very interesting. My sister Elda has that ring today, as a memento. But it was very interesting, my mother says no she never really liked it, but she was very happy. My father was a handsome young man. He swept her off her feet. [Laughs] Really. Anyway, I was born the following year in Anyox. Now, Anyox was a copper mining town and you can imagine the pollution. Those were the days where everything went into the creeks.

RC: Yes.

GB: I don't know how they survived it but they did. Um, I, I can remember water in front of the cabin. Or the house that ah, we lived in. That's all I can remember. I remember climbing onto a

fence. And looking at the water, but that's all I remember. And then in, there was a large strike in Anyox in the early 30s. I think 1930 or something and my father left there in 1931 and he made his way to Vancouver. Now in Vancouver there were quite a number of Italians. Uh, one family was the Saurofino Fauro. Who lived in the 600 block Georgia Street. And that was more or less their base when they came to Vancouver. And I think it was through them, through both he and his wife, Maria, that they found a house to rent at the ah, 885 East Georgia. That is, two blocks east from Maria's house. And uh, fortunately, my parents lived in that house for well, all their lives here in Canada. They never moved. That house was rented to them by an Amy Barker. Her parents rather. Amy Barker the house was built in 1895. Now, I um, from there I went to school. I went to Seamore School. My mother enrolled me when I was five. Now, those were the days before people had to show the birth certificates. And anyway, naturally I had trouble in grade one because I had only heard Italian. Mind you, I heard English outside because our next door neighbours were Croatian. And to communicate with the two girls, I had to speak English or try to speak English.

[5:31.8]

GB: [pause] ...and those were the days too that if my mother had to go someplace. Ah, for example say Woodward's I would have to go with her, to try to interpret, you know what the sales ladies were telling her. But anyways, we managed somehow. Um, um, it was in grade one that they changed my name. They changed it to Jean. Now, of course those were the days when the parents would never question the teacher. The teacher was always right. So, I all through school I was known as Jean. Jean Sanvito.

RC: Oh my.

GB: Now today that wouldn't be, that wouldn't go.

RC: No, it wouldn't go.

GB: No, but anyway I was happy. As a child I was happy.

RC: Your mother ah, when um, before she was married what was her maiden name?

GB: Meneghetti.

RC: Meneghetti.

GB: Yes.

RC: And the town that ah, your dad and your mother were originally from, what was the name of that?

GB: Ah, my mother was from San Vito del Tiole. And my father was from the next town, Spinetta. And I think mother often went to the church in Spinetta. And maybe that's how she met him. Because they had a beautiful church in San Vito. They still do today. And as a matter of fact they have a couple of marble statues. that ah, I think Venice would like to buy them but they will not sell them.

RC: I see.

GB: They're very beautiful, very beautiful. But uh, they lived in the neighbouring towns I suppose like Vancouver and Burnaby. But, towns, little villages so to speak.

RC: And your father was still ah, a teenager. He was ah, conscripted into ah the army—

GB: Yes.

RC: In the latter part of the First World War.

GB: Yes, I believe the picture that ah, I have a picture of my father as a soldier. He was a military policeman because he was tall. He did not; he was not the typical size of an Italian. He was taller and he was more Germanic looking. I believe. And uh, so he was the military police and he joined when he was about 17. Or they called him up. And he joined because the picture's of him at 17.

RC: So he was born around 1900.

GB: 1900. He was born in January 1900. January the seventh, 1900.

RC: And ah, so now he's, he's actually been in active service—

GB: Yes, they did serve ah as ah, with the British. I'm sure he did because he often talked about it.

RC: Yes.

GB: Uh, talked about serving with the British. But then, I didn't hear anything more. [Says with hand extended] And the economy as I said in Italy was so, so bad. And there must have been 11 or 12 children in the family. And he may have been in the middle. And the only thing for them was to immigrate. And ah, as much as a country hates to lose its young people, as a mother country this is please go and make your living, I bless you. Go with, God go with you.

RC: What was your dad's full name?

GB: Amelio Fortunato Sanvito.

RC: And you mother's again, her full name?

GB: Her name, she only had the one name. Angela Sanvito— Angela Meneghetti. I, I don't think she had, she never talked about a middle name.

RC: And ah, together, how many children did they have?

GB: Well, all uh, eight children were born. One died at 3 months. So we more or less say 7 children grew up.

RC: And who was the eldest? [Clock chimes in background]

GB: I was the eldest. So I was the eldest and so I had to be the interpreter. And I had, and I was the built in babysitter. [Laughs] Which is lots of fun. So, uh, yes I had a lot of experience. And I was responsible for a lot of things. There's, there's no doubt about it.

RC: So, your brother Menio would have been second?

GB: He's second, he was about 13 months younger than I was. And then came uh, my brother Romano, who's born in uh '33. 1933. Albert was born in 1934, Elda was born in 1939. Now, there were five of us then when my father left to go back to uh, uh, Stewart BC to work in the goldmines there. And so my mother had five of us to look after. And she, she stayed put in Vancouver. She was a very wise woman. Uh, let me tell you uh before also, uh I think my

mother had an opportunity to go back to Italy, um, maybe in 1929, 1930 but my mother said no. She would not go back. Because he says, "If I go back, there's no guarantee that you can come back." And she did not want to lose the family. So, therefore she stayed with him and then when the depression came and my father had to leave to go to work. My mother stayed put in Vancouver. The same house. She was very wise. Very wise indeed.

[10:33.1]

RC: And she was wise, and she was very clever for the times if I may say. Because isn't there a story about how she squirreled away some of the housekeeping money?

GB: Absolutely. [Nods]

RC: And would you tell us that story?

GB: Yes, I'll tell you. Naturally, people were surprised. I was very surprised to hear that she had 750 dollars to pay for the house on Georgia Street. 885 East Georgia. She bought that, they bought that house in 1939. Well, of course my father was working at that time and had gone up to Stewart, BC. And ah, he'd sent his money, you know cheques back home and she would really budget very tightly. How she ever managed I don't know. It's wonderful.

RC: Now the house was sold a few years ago. For what, what...

GB: Oh, a million, I think 150 thousand. And turned over I think for even a bit more. Yes. And I remember my father saying, he used to enjoy you know sitting on the front porch, talking to people, people would walk by and they would say "we like your house." And my father would say, "So do I." And then they'd say, "How much do you want for it?" "Oh, a million dollars!" And

I'm sure my father would turn over in his grave if he really knew what it really went for. Just as anybody else today who bought a house in those days. Really. So—

RC: So, when you left Seamore School, did you go directly to Britannia High?

GB: No. Uh, I uh, let me tell you. Uh, I spent six years, ah the elementary schools were arranged a little differently then. There were six years for Seamore School. And then we went on to Templeton Junior High School. Now, I can remember the first few days that I went to uh Templeton. I was only 11 and I had to walk a mile. Straight up Georgia Street. But there was another family...uh, Winnie uh and uh Rita Paven and I think their brother Franky Paven. And she was a, ah two or three years older. She accompanied me to school those first few years because I mean—I shouldn't say those first few years because the first few months because you know an 11 year old walking a whole mile. But those were the days when you knew a lot of people along the way. We weren't afraid.

RC: Yes.

GB: But anyway, let me tell you, alright, here's, here I, I'm, I sleep in the front bedroom of this house, upstairs. And one morning, as I'm getting ready to go to school, I hear "Extra! Extra! Extra!" I look out the front window and here I see the paper man or paperboy in those days. I— calling out extra because the war has begun.

RC: The war with Germany.

GB: The war with Germany had begun. So, I was really amazed— I didn't know, of course I didn't quite understand what was going on. Until we did get to school and they did mention the, did mention the war. But it wasn't 'till a social studies class. Not that first year, maybe the

second year I was at Templeton. That ah, that in social studies class they mentioned uh something about Italy being an alien country now. Now, nobody—I don't know whether people knew that I was Italian or not because my name San Vito does not sound Italian I see, I was so embarrassed I think I just turned red I think. But it was just me because it wasn't the teacher or the students looking at me it's just how I felt, I felt so upset.

RC: And what were you upset about in particular? How—

GB: Well just upset at the fact that I thought people would be looking at me and pointing at me. That I was an alien. But all of us children were born here in Canada. All of us were born here. And I never felt that way. And neither, for example I never felt as an alien in the class at all. Not at all. But let me tell you too. That summer, before I started school, it was a Japanese girl called Kasako Suzuki. Her father was the editor of the World News I think for Japan or something. And somehow her mother was getting ready to go to Japan to take her older sister to Japan to go to school in Japan. So, I remember going down to the foot of Victoria Drive, and seeing one of the Japanese steamships there, I forget what the name—of course it ended I think with "Maru" which means steamship or something. She was on this steam ship to go back to Japan, and that was. She had already— No [pointing at RC] she had already started uh, grade seven, no I think I'm getting a little bit confused here. Uh, she had already started grade seven and uh, because I have a photograph of her in grade seven.

RC: My god.

[15:41.6]

GB: And do you know, that I met her 60 years later when Seamore School had their 100th Anniversary. In 2000.

RC: My Go—

GB: Now, how did we, I thought that she had been killed in the war, but no. She—We got uh news of her through Hannah Bazubiak's daughter.

RC: [unclear] daughter?

GB: Now, Hannah Bazubiak became a professor of childhood education at UBC and uh, she had made contact I believe she had gone to Japan and studied their uh kindergarten uh set up, as she had gone also to Russia. And I believe she met Kazako's sister Margaret there, and so she knew that Kazako was there and Kazako ended up teaching at college, teaching English and teaching teacher methodology. It, it absolutely remarkable. Now, I met Kazako, she married uh uh, a, a an American. Uh David. [nods] Ah, ah Eda. And uh, we communicate, we write, at least once a year. But it was just wonderful to see somebody after 60 years thinking that the person might have been dead. But. That, that to me is just fascinating.

RC: [unclear]

GB: Now, uh, he's these classes at Tembleton there were three grades there, grade seven, grade eight and grade nine. And each of the, and each ah we were, we were, well we were in class— raised in classes according to IQs. Again, another thing they would never do today. But anyways, we were in the classes that were I think I was in a class that was very academic. The ah, inclined. So ah, and then there were classes for commercial students. Those were the ones who were in commerce. And those who wanted technical studies. So, uh, we, we really reached for the top at each of the grades. And this is why I think the junior high schools are much more valuable than the senior high schools where they take in the grade eights.

RC: Yes.

GB: Because they— in each grade levels there were 800 in each of the grades, so 24 hundred students. And they had the best of the teachers. Because there was another school on the uh west side, Point Grey Junior High and it was comparable to Templeton, they put the best teachers in those two groups, because they— it was more or less and experimental uh, group. [Nods] So uh, um, by the time we got to grade nine, we really did reach for the top. And we—. And those of us that got to the top, we got a silver "T" if we got whatever activities there were. So, it was really wonderful.

RC: And was that the time when you were uh, attending Italian language school, or around the same time.

GB: Well, at the beginning. At the beginning, 'til 1940. But uh, then no, there was no Italian school.

RC: But you did quite well. As you were pointing out earlier, in your studies of Italian.

GB: Yes.

RC: And ah you were awarded with a medallion.

GB: Yes, I did get the three gold medals and I can't remember who presented them, but the fact that as a child, you receive a medal that's something. And I was very proud of it, yes. And ah, I also got a, a Shirley Temple doll. But, some there were collectors after me to buy it, so I did eventually sell it. I'll tell you why because I had two granddaughters, and I couldn't give one, one, I only had one doll. [Laughs] But there was another girl, Gina Baracello. Uh, that uh, got a

doll too. My doll was blond, because I was a fair-haired girl and her doll was a brunette. But that's a lovely memory that we have. And, and also now, I did put my Italian to use. Because this was the time in 1940, I guess my father be— not being a Canadian citizen, he was evacuated to Alberta, or the Kootenays. And uh, it was a rather...I wasn't home when anybody, when the police or whoever came to the house and notified him that he had to leave. I was at school. So I don't know the circumstances. But my mother took it in her stride.

RC: And he was gone for how long?

[20:24.3]

GB: Uh, I believe he was gone for a good two years. I'm sure for two years.

RC: There must have been hardship. Economic hardship.

GB: Oh, absolutely there was. I think by the time I was uh, 13, I worked at the grocery store across the street. After school. And then I also worked in the butcher shop. So I learned to cut some meat. [Laughs] And I even, well, I even pedaled the bicycle because one uh time, once my brother Amelio was sick and he couldn't go. Out. To get the orders, pick up the orders, bring in the orders— nobody had a telephone then. Take the orders back to the meat market. Then Festi, Grant La Festi and Toni Negrin. And they would uh, do up the orders and put them in the basket and away we trundled. And go, uh Keiffer, Georgia, Union, and Prior Street. And deliver the uh meat.

RC: Isn't that—

GB: Every day. It was a marvelous thing.

RC: And uh, about your dad now, did he communicate on a regular basis with the family while he was away?

GB: Oh yes, he wrote to my mother all the time. But um, money, the money he had to use to pay his board. And what money could he get? And especially he worked in Calgary where it was freezing cold. It was absol— it was I think it, that was the worst time. Well, Anyox was cold too, but uh, it was a different situation there. He had a home there. But in Calgary, there were kind Italian people; I can't remember their names gave him room and board. But working outside, he was a framer, a carpenter. He had to frame houses and buildings. But it was so cold. They couldn't work in the cold. So he got word of uh, families in the Kootenays in the [Tel.] In Furgie and Sparwood. And it was Eliza and [Jo- Jordetto Degrin] that uh, commun— he communicated with them and he lived in that area now. I don't know whether he lived with them or in one the neighbours houses but he went to work in the Kootenays there. So, he, he was it was a much better time for him there.

RC: Now, I'm just going to ask you to go back a couple of years, because there's a wonderful little story about— well wonderful in the sense of sacrifice. Your dad was away how long uh before coming home?

GB: Oh, before coming home. He would go away, every year, I'd say about six years. He'd come home once a year at Christmas time and we children would be afraid of him. Because we didn't know him. We would gather around my mother's skirts so to speak, but we didn't really get to know him. And he was home just a short time. I would imagine for three or four weeks and then he would return to his job, so that was really. I don't know how my mother did it. But you know, those were the days, when people, not having a phone they would walk by the house, they would knock on the door; they would be on their way to the bakery to buy bread. Or to

buy meat, and they would knock on the door and they would come in and visit and have a cup of coffee.

RC: So you had a wonderful uh...

GB: A wonderful group. A wonderful group of people really. Absolutely. I, I can't say that the, the people were very, very good. I must say that. And the community was a cosmopolitan. Yugoslavian next door. Uh, Slovaks, so Czechoslovaks across the street. Italians on the right. Jewish people that spoke English or Hebrew. Alright, and uh, Chinese, we had Japanese, Swedish people, it was really a cosmopolitan area and people got along with one another.

RC: Your father how, must have uh, uh, really felt uh, must have felt terrible to have to leave his family.

GB: Absolutely.

RC: Was there discrimination because he would have been classed as an enemy alien? Uh, by the government. Did anybody ever—

GB: Never. [Shakes head] Never. I must say I can't remember ever having people saying well, "you're an alien." No. Never. [Shakes head no] I think people, people were all struggling to make a living and I think they had other things on their minds, they had to work hard. And they were tired at the end of the day because they had to struggle. And they had no time for this business of racism.

[25:08.7]

RC: And you point out, very uh, very properly about the eth-ni-thit, ethni-thith city of the of community [laughs] that there was just every ethnic group—

GB: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely, ah it was just wonderful. It was really wonderful. Oh, and uh, uh during the time that my father was away, one of the neighbours, Alice Pasqualini then D'Appolonia now, she realized that I had gone to Italian school and I was older than her children. And she asked me to write in English for her. She would want to write to her husband who was in the internment camp. Uh, Santo Pasqualini, and she would ask me to write in English for her. She would uh dictate more or less in Italian, then I would translate it into English and I would write. And then I would read the letter and if there was anything she didn't like I would change it, but I did that for two or three years. [Smiles]

RC: Isn't that wonderful.

GB: It, I was an interpreter and a writer. [Laughs] Early on.

RC: Well your language school provided other opportunities as I recall. One being that you were among those performers in Cinderella.

GB: Yes, yes, yes.

RC: What was that [about]?

GB: Well no, I wasn't with the dancers because I was young. I have a picture. I have a picture of the group. Uh, and ah. Yes, it was marvelous because we uh, the uh, Sacred Hearts school down on [unclear] Street didn't have ah a stage, or if they did it wasn't large enough. We uh, they rented uh, a [Biathstrascona School] that was a beautiful performance. And we had, we had to

go to a costumer to get our costumes. Because uh, we were dressed as uh, well uh let's see dancers of the what was it Louis, Louis, what era was it? [Laughs] Louis the—

RC: [unclear]

GB: The French era. Yes, yes. And uh, we had costumes and wings. Yes, I was a boy. Yes, I was a boy. [Laughs] Uh yeah, and my partner was Gloria Gionevesse. Who's still living today. And some of the uh people in it are still living today. And one of them, one of the ugly sisters, who's really beautiful was uh, Carmella Stancato. Today she's sister Carmella Stancato, and she's a year older than I am. 84. [Smiles] and I'm 83. And uh, she's ah, spent a lot of time here in Vancouver, although she's spent a lot of time with her mission, you know missionary work in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and also in Eastern Canada. But she's going to return to the mother house in New Brunswick. I believe shortly, 'cause she sees, she says, "Well, they'll look after me if I need help."

RC: Wonderful. Woman. [Unclear] She's—the whole—

GB: Wonderful person.

RC: Wonderful family.

GB: Yes. I often see her at Holy Name Parish Church. You know. I often see her and she always remembers I say, "Oh sister, you were a beauty." [Laughs]

RC: Now, on the day, on Monday, June the 10, 1940.

GB: Yes.

RC: There was of course, the event that uh caused Canada to be at war with Italy.

GB: Yes, yes.

RC: Do you have a recollection of uh, how you uh, met the news? What was going on?

GB: No, I have no recollection of that. You see I was so, I really don't have any recollection at all.

RC: Yeah. And so, what ah, what happened immediately thereafter was—

GB: My father had to leave, yeah. Yes. Well, of course to us children that was a shock. It was a terrible shock because my father had got a job in Vancouver and he was working in Vancouver after spending oh, six or seven years away. Uh, and so we were quite happy. And so they had just bought a house, the year before. And you know, he was ready to get it uh fixed because he didn't have time to do anything to it when he was away.

RC: So perhaps around 1943 when Italy, uh the fascist Italy, uh, uh, [unclear]

GB: Uh hmm. Yes.

RC: Your father would have returned.

GB: Yes, he did return home.

RC: And did the family come together quickly uh, and—

GB: Well, I think we did because my mother was a great uh, she was great at getting us all together. She was good. She was very good. But we still had to help with the family. We had to uh, I know uh, when I was about 16, my mother wanted me to quit school 'cause she felt that I should help support the family. I revolted, I said "no." I said, "I will go to work after school but I will not quit." Years later my mother says, "That would have been the biggest mistake if you had done so and I'm glad that you did not uh, quit." Because although it took me a long time to go to get uh— well I got my high school education no doubt, but then to get my University, I had to work through it. I managed to get two degrees in education, and uh I was very happy. Uh, it was the hard way of doing it, but that's it.

[30:36.2]

RC: There was a compromise I believe on your part, you continued your studies but then you went and sought out uh, part time uh, jobs during—

GB: Yes, yes. Of course—

RC: To help the family—

GB: Yes, yes, I did.

RC: How did you do it?

GB: Well, I still did the, the clerking so to speak. Yeah. I did the clerking. That's how I managed to do things. And it was just close, across the street from home, so it didn't involve travelling. And I was very happy and the people knew me, and I could talk Italian to people. I learned a few words of Russian, I would learn a few words and of ah, ah, Croatian. And I learned a little

bit of everything. So, to this day, when a person speaks in their language, I can almost tell what language they're speaking.

RC: Isn't that remarkable.

GB: It's all from, what one learns as one is growing up.

RC: So, when uh, you ah, attained your degrees and you're now ready to uh become uh, and active uh educator, where did you first uh—

GB: Start?

RC: Apply for a job? How did that work?

GB: Okay, uh, I had been offered jobs by uh, some Catholic schools before I took ah teacher training at normal school. Uh, teacher training at normal school was superb. I don't think the universities could ever have matched it. Although they took over. It was absolutely superb. I was still in, at normal school in 1947 I think. When I was offered jobs in the ah Catholic school but my mother said, "No, you finish." [Laughs] That was what my mother had realized she said, "No, you finish." So when I did finish I, I uh, I applied to Burnaby and I got my first job in Burnaby in 1947. I remember I haven't got my first degree, I've got part of my education, but they still took me on. And I was at the high school, Burnaby South for one year. I substituted for a lady who had gone overseas to help— I think she went to Germany I think with the military program. If I'm not mistaken, I'm not quite sure what they call it. But uh, I was there a year, and then I was transferred to North Burnaby to Gilmer Avenue. Uh, it was ah, it was an elementary and junior high school together. I spent a couple of years there and I was put in charge of the health and physical education program. So I guess I was doing my job. And then we moved to

Alpha. Alpha Junior high school. And it became— it was a junior high school. It must be 1950, 1951. And I was there; there were only seven of us teachers there. It was a marvelous time. Because whenever one was, one needed help we would pitch in. See when a school grows too big, it's very difficult to do so, but there it was a marvelous time. We would just saw the school, the art teacher would send her students out to where Brentwood is today, "go and sketch the trees, sketch me a scene here." It was all treed no Brentwood, no Brentwood. [Says while smiling] [Phone rings in background] So, this is what happened, it was marvelous. People can hardly believe that today, and I say yes, that's what happened. At the uh, it was just all trees, and then they gradually built up. I, I left permanent teaching in 1956 [phone rings again] because those were the days when he says, well you've got to have a family and you can't be teaching. Because I'll tell you, in those early days, if a teacher married, they'd post her out to the boondocks.

RC: Oh my.

GB: Yeah, to the boondocks.

RC: That's pretty unfair.

GB: Oh, terribly unfair. It was aw! Terribly un— but anyways, they only had unmarried teachers. Lady teachers. The men could marry, but not the ladies.

RC: Now ah, in your career, um, you were introduced uh to the ESL program.

[34:33.4]

GB: Yes. Well, let me tell you, in 1956 Father Delleto, from the Sacred Heart Parish came and he says, "Gina, I need some help because we have some children from Italy that can't speak English." Oh, I says, "Father, I don't think I'm really trained for this, but I'll try to help you." And I remember I, I did and Nick Morelli was in one of my classes. And later years, he was the department head where I taught. [Laughs] So it was really a small world. Ah, I did do, I dabbled a bit, I dabbled uh, I'll tell you that uh, yes. Somewhere along the line there too, uh, one of my teachers from uh Britannia, Dr. Flather. He asked me to substitute at King and George High school in the night school program with the adults. So he too called me, and I said, "Oh, Dr. Flather, I don't think I can manage." and he says, "Yes, you can." So here I trot off. I did the best I could, but that experience ah, inspired me to apply to the uh Vancouver School Board, to go to eastern Canada, to go to Toronto to take special courses. Now, I didn't go until later, until 1963. Because I, uh, John Junior our son was born in 1959. But in '63 on my 10th wedding anniversary I left Vancouver and I went there for a couple of months. [Says while laughing] And I took uh, courses related to uh second language teaching. Uh, which were provided by the department of immigration and citizenship. That opened the door, it, it, its funny how a door's closed and another one opens. And one has to be uh optimistic at all times. Absolutely. So uh, that, when I went back, I brought back some of the teaching methodology— uh methodology and uh, it resulted uh in ah 1957 that they started a, they finally started these basic courses for second language teaching methodology at UBC. And also we founded the uh, we founded the TEAL association. Teachers of English of an Additional Language. Now, we didn't say second language, because many people from Europe came who spoke more than one language, so English was a third and fourth language.

RC: Interesting.

GB: It is interesting. [Looks at camera and waves hand up high] Did you?

RC: Can you tell us ah, a little bit about meeting— [camera fades out at 37:17.4]

[Camera fades back in at 37:19.4]

RC: Would you mind telling us a little bit about meeting John, your husband? [Clock chimes in background]

GB: Oh, oh yes, I must tell you that [grandfather clock chimes in background and GB pauses and points towards the sound] Uh, you know one of the questions that might have been asked is what kind of uh, social activities we had or sports activities. I didn't have, I didn't have time to participate in sports. Because I had to get to work, that's all there was to it. Didn't have the leisure time and you know, the church was our community centre. Absolutely, because ah we went to church. From there we had the Italian school remember. And from there we had. There were sports. Although I didn't participate because I was the oldest. My sisters and brothers did. And ah, from there we had choir. And we had drama. So, it took the place of the community centre. The community centres came in after the church. It was just marvelous. Sacred Heart church was just, just marvelous. It can never be forgotten really.

RC: Now were they provided the CYO?

GB: Yes, yes.

RC: And uh, your brother and I we were the altar boys?

GB: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. So now, what was I going to say? Talking about something else now.

RC: Well, perhaps John.

GB: Oh John. Well, my mother knew— had met John's ah mother in Italy, because they came from the same town. And once what John said to me, to my mother, "you know I'm older than what you think." She says, "Oh, no you aren't. I remember seeing you when you were six months old in a baby carriage." [Laughs] Of course, he was just teasing my mother. It's true. So my mother was still in Italy when John was born because he was born in '24. And my mother was supposed to have come with I think Cecilia [Bratton] I believe Cecilia [Bratton] came ahead of my mother. Mother came alone. Now where my mother thought she was going, I don't know. She must have thought she was going just over the mountains. And a few hills, but she was the only one in her family that came to Canada. And uh, she uh, fortunately she met some Italians on the ship, because I believe the ship left on Genoa and they landed in Halifax. And then she came across on the train. Uh, now, I think she— there was a man named Martinello. Uh, I think I met his wife the other day, Flora Martinello. I forget his first name. It might have been [Gilles De Martinello.] Fortunately she had somebody. And then she came and she went directly to Mia Farrow's— 659 East Georgia, so that's where my father then met my mother. Uh, came back. But how did I meet John? His aunt Anrichetta Binetti, a pioneer who arrived I believe in the 19, 11, 12 years she was about— 1911 or 1912 when she was about 19 or 20 years old I believe and uh, he uh, his aunt sponsored Rosina Sala. Maybe in 1934, and then later on, Rosina and the aunt sponsored John, in 1949 February 1949. So he arrived in Canada. He arrived; actually he arrived in New York. They weren't allowed to land but they were taken to ah Niagara Falls and then ah, put on the train. And then he came to Canada. Now I didn't meet John for two or three years after. Because I was always away teaching. He did go to my mother's and father's and he delivered a hand, hand delivered a letter from my grandfather.

RC: Oh, wow. [Says softly]

[41:17.1]

GB: Now John knew my grandfather and my grandparents. He knew my uh relatives and he used to do business with my grandfather because my family had a combine, uh, combine machines for [threshing] and he, he said, anytime he went to my grandfather's you know, my grandfather was very astute. That [Tesa Bestiano Berlinghetti.] He would make sure that the, the sacks of grain were really full. Really full. [Laughs and motions lifting a sack] And I think once or twice I think John, John teased him you know, and anyway, he said he would get a big bowl of wine and now, the wine in Italy is not the same as the wine that we originally made that uh, from grapes that came from California. The wine there is much lighter. So they can drink a bowl of wine. And still stand on their feet. [Laughs] Whereas if they were to do it today here, they would be flat on their backs. So, anyways, I met John, well I would see him in church, 'cause I was in the choir in the back, upstairs. But uh, I didn't formally meet him until Anita Zana was married in 1951. And I was a bridesmaid and I believe he asked me to dance. He asked me to dance and so I danced with him. That was the first time I really met him. You know. And then, his aunt had bought a car for the family. And he says, "Would you like to come out for a drive?" "Oh, yes I would." [Laughs] Now, my mother was, my mother said this she said, "you know, he has a lot of girlfriends." I says, "I know." And she says, "Don't get so, don't fall in love with him and then get disappointed." [Laughs] Oh, well she was just playing it safe with her daughter. Anyway, uh, we, we got married two years later. Yes. And ah never looked back.

RC: And did you move to this house soon after?

GB: No, no, when we first got married we bought a house for 7 thousand 300 and 50 dollars. Now, we bought it in, I in my maiden name and John in his name and he said to me, "well what if we don't get along." Oh "this is a business proposition. 50 percent for you, 50 percent for me." I was into it already, I knew what I wanted. Because I had already saved 2 thousand dollars

from working. Poor John had maybe 500 dollars to buy a stove. Because don't forget he came from Italy and I had had some time to make some money. So, you see I had more. [Laughs] But anyways, in the end uh we bought that house; we lived there for seven years. And then we sold it. And we went to live in Dunbar for a year. Now, a lot of English-speaking people there. I used to—John Junior was a year old, I used to walk down the street in the [pram] with him, and nobody would say hello. You know what I said? "Take me back to the east side, I want to go where you walk down the lane and everyone says hello." And we bought a new house, built by uh, Italians, now I forget their last name. Their first name was Emelio. Oh, I forget their last name, I'm sorry again; got to drag it up now, but uh, built a brand new house. We lived in it for 17 years. Lovely house, 33 foot lot, never required any maintenance. But it was on Broadway, a busy street. And one day there was a strike. It was in March '78 and I walked home from the college, uh the Vancouver community college, actually called King Edward, Special Programs division. Uh, King Edward on 12th and Oak. There was a strike, so I walked all along Broadway to our house past Nanaimo, and I said to myself, we need to have our heads examined, living on a street where there's so much pollution. Well we sold the house. We were sad to sell the house and then we uh, you know what we said? Well we were going to go to Burnaby because uh we had seen uh, a couple of new houses and John liked them very much. But our son, who had started uh first year University at UBC said "why are you going to Burnaby when both of you work on the west side?" So, we thought, here's a 19 year old, speaking wisely. We said, "You're right John." So one day, we drove across Broadway, made a left turn up Cambie, and we hadn't seen anything you know. We were just house hunting. And we came to 25th or King Edward and we said "no, not a busy street." So we drove one block past, we turn right, at the end of the block here was this house, 581 West 26th. It was for sale. By the owner. Okay, John says, oh it looks as if it needs a new roof. And I bet any money it needs new pipes. I says, "yes John, but it faces south and it gets the sun." And ah, so we approached the lady here she says she wanted so much, so she said, "don't bother to bargain." So we went home. And it was a beautiful day in March and all the trees along the boulevard the uh, cherry trees were

blossoming, and the plum trees. It was a beautiful area. Because—and all the grass was green, the cherry blossoms were, well the trees were in blossom. And I don't know, I fell in love with it and I said, John yes. And I persuaded him. We did, we did come back and we did buy it. She only lowered the price by 5 thousand dollars. But we bought it. So what we did you see we stepped up, we had uh lived in 1, 2, 3, this is the 4th house. That we've uh, lived in. And John uh lived with me here until he died in ah 2008. And he lived here 30 years. And it's 33 years now that I'm here.

[47:23.4]

RC: And during that time, although you were on the west side of the city, you maintained your interest and uh, pursued activities within the Italian—

GB: Oh yes, all the time.

RC: And did you not become the president of the ladies uh—

GB: Uh, yes, two different times. Uh, in the uh late 90s and also for five years at the beginning. Uh, 2000, uh 2005 to 2010. Yes I was. And I'm still active in the *Lega Femminile*. Uh, absolutely, I believe that people should keep their roots. I think they should uh maintain what they can. It's it's, a treasure and it makes them better. It makes them better citizens. It does, it really does. Uh, John too, he uh, he um, was president of the *Italo Canadese*, Mutual Aid Society. He was the president there for 2 or 3 years. So he was very active. Laterally he was on the uh, visiting. Sick visiting committee. And he enjoyed it there too. So he maintained his relationship there too. Also, uh, I still go to Sacred Heart. At least once a month. I still try to support it. Because I know it needs our support because many of our uh, uh, Strathcona area residents, Italian residents have their funerals there and the funerals are held there and we have wonderful

priests. At the moment uh, uh, Order of Immaculate, uh Order of Mary Immaculate. It cannot abandon anybody. There's no doubt about it. Uh, and I want to tell you. My mother and father never did return to Italy. They never had the opportunity. First because of the depression. Then because of the war, then because of a big family. Never did I hear them saying they wanted to go back. They felt sorry, yes, but they, they kept in touch uh, as best they could. But they never had the opportunity. Canada was their country.

RC: That's wonderful. That infact is the immigrant's dream.

GB: It is an immigrant's dream. And if the The Second World War came along and there was ah, you know, and inconvenience to the family, they never mentioned it. Uh they considered it a bump in the road.

RC: And you personally, do you have a feeling of animosity towards the Canadian government? For classifying people such as your dad as an enemy alien?

GB: Well, let me see, um, I think – I'd rather say that I have no uh animosity against the country. I think there were some stupid people. But they couldn't help themselves. But they couldn't help themselves. I think it was the times. They didn't know any better. I feel sorry for them. But I think, I think we should always love a country, I think people make mistakes and we have to forgive them. There's no use carrying that baggage around. [Shakes head] I really believe that. There's no use. Uh, [shrugs] it's long gone, water under the bridge. [Says while waving hand]

[50:34.4]

RC: Well, that's a wonderful and mature attitude because there's no uh, advantage in harbouring resentment.

GB: No, not at all. [Shakes head no] No. This is where the immigrants have made their money. Their children, have given their children opportunity to go to school. Their children have become very successful and there is no need for a single complaint. And, I had the advantage of talking to my adult students. Because I was from an immigrant family. I always told them, "The first generation has great difficulty no matter what your education is. They have to sacrifice their life, but the second generation is very fortunate indeed. And I hope your children will thank you for having come to Canada, and giving you the opportunity of going to school and making your living here." That's the always would look at me and they would say, "you can't fool Mrs. Benetti. You can't fool her. She knows that." I says no, "you can't fool me. Don't complain." Because I know today I would be put up, I would be brought up on the carpet. I would say, "If you don't like it, you know, we're not holding you back." I think it was a little sharper than that. But anyways, that's the way I feel. I feel that ah, this country is wonderful. It opens its doors. It's too good. [Smiles]

RC: Well, what a wonderful uh expression of uh, loyalty to Canada.

GB: Oh, yeah.

RC: And uh in a way, it exemplifies many of the um, uh, Italians view of the time when the war broke out. They loved Canada, but they got perhaps mixed in with international, political affairs.

GB: Oh, yes. [Shakes head] They didn't, well the politicians didn't know any better, they, they thought they were doing the right thing. And you feel sorry for them. I'm sure if they were alive today, they would apologize. They, they would feel very sheepish about the actions. Because they, I suppose some of these things are still going on today, people you know, but ah those of us who have lived here all our lives, we feel differently. And so are the immigrants who came. In

the teens, and the pre-teens and the twenties. And the 30s and in the 40s. They're long, long established.

RC: Yeah.

GB: And the 50s too. Oh, I think, I think we live in a wonderful country. And Italy of course as I said, Italy was sad to see her best people leave. Oh, some of the best, I can't say all of the best. Some of the best, of course, it's like a mother. As I said before. She was sad, but she had to let some go. And I think the fact that people immigrated allowed Italy to, to you know progress.

RC: Yes. Especially after the war.

GB: After the war. Yes, absolutely, absolutely. And I think now Italy is experiencing what Canada and the States have experienced for years. They're experiencing what we experienced.

RC: Yes indeed.

GB: They know how wise we were.

RC: Yes.

GB: And I think they have a lot to learn from us.

RC: Well, thank you very much for that sentiment. And—

GB: Yeah, I really think so.

RC: When you were thinking about this interview, did you have a, a particular uh thought that you would like to express a certain feeling about ah, the program, the project uh, before we terminate?

GB: Yes, well I'm delighted that something is being done. Uh, because uh I think uh, these things should be remembered and we should know how people feel. Uh, and because I think we've answered some questions. I think that's the important part. We've answered some questions and uh I think there's always room to learn and we have to be open to learning and if we've made mistakes we have to apologize. This is what, this is what I feel. I think it's an excellent project.

RC: Thank you.

GB: And I hope they will make good use of it.

RC: Thank you very much.

GB: You're most welcome.

[Video fades out at 54:53.1]

GB: Yes.

RC: Gina, uh after war was declared on June the 10th, 1940 the RCMP required many of the Italians to register with them. Do you have any uh knowledge of that?

GB: Yes, I have. Uh, my mother uh, well my father nor my mother were citizens first my father was uh out of town and he didn't take classes and of course my mother was busy with us five children. So uh, she, she, she couldn't do anything else. So she they were both considered enemy aliens, so my mother was required to go the the RCMP in Heather. And uh, 33rd to register every month. Now, that was, my mother would take five of us children, one in the uh, one in the stroller, it wasn't well it was a type of stroller and two of us, two and two, [laughs] four walking, child in a stroller and my mother. We would take two street cars. Hastings Street car to Cambie Street. Transfer to the Oak Street street car and which we had a long one, over the bridge and then uh, then uh up ah Oak Street. Get off at 33rd, climb the hill [looks up and laughs] well, there was, well actually six of us climbing up the hill. To go into the RCMP office to register. Now, I don't know how many moths my mother had to go, but I think the RCMP soon realized, why are we putting this poor, dear little woman with five children coming to sign, and I went every time, of course. But we all went.

[56:42.0]

RC: And what was your, you're a child, but what was your impression. Did you feel a sense of anxiety or guilt?

GB: No, no, we children just took everything in our stride. I can't say we did. I can't remember. It's just that I guess we were a little bit nervous, we wanted to know what we wanted our mother to sign the paper. That's about it, and then we would go back. But it was a really a struggle for her. But she did. She did as she was told, and she uh, I really can't remember how many months she—. But she had to go. But to this day, I go to Holy name of Jesus Parish. Which is located at 33rd and Cambie and uh, I drive by the RCMP at least three times a week. [Laughs] Three times a week, and I say yes, that's where mother and we all came. But we came. But, it was an outing. Maybe we considered it an outing. Who knows. [Laughs]

RC: Now, do you have any recollection of uh, the uh, the venue that when you walked in to the RCMP office, was everything taking place in the hallway in the, or did you go into a room and someone interrogated your mother?

GB: I can't remember. I can't remember. I'm sure it looked like a hallway to me.

RC: Yeah.

GB: Uh, a friend of mine Tina Gardine-Brickman said that she used to accompany her mother and father who were both Canadian citizens. They were, they had arrived in uh, 1911 and she remembers the horses, the stables at the RCMP. So, I don't know whether my mother took us around to the horses, maybe not because she was afraid that we'd go too close to the horses. She was very, very protective of us. But there were horses there.

RC: And you speak of your mother and, and uh your siblings and yourself. Uh your dad is out of town at this point?

GB: Yes, he is. He's out of town.

RC: So he didn't actually have to—

GB: No, he didn't.

RC: [unclear]

GB: No. No, he didn't. Oh, and another thing I want to tell you during the uh, it must have been the 30s. In the 30s. My brother, Armenial came down with uh, Rheumatic fever. Now, my

mother had an Italian doctor. I will not mention the name. But he rather insulted my mother. I felt uh, my mother, my mother felt that she was looked down upon because possibly she had a lesser education. And uh, she uh, she did not like the doctor. But she had a uh, a friend. Who had married. Uh, she had an Italian man who had married an English woman. And this English woman was very kind and she said to my mother, "I will find you another children's doctor." And she did. And, ever since that episode of my brother being ill, she has always had English-speaking doctors. She did not go to any Italian doctor because of that one experience. She felt that she was treated as an equal when she went. In spite of her English. You see this is another thing that people maybe, maybe people are treated differently by their co-nationals shall I say. Because think, this is true and even when John went to work, he worked for a co-national. You know. And he was paid I think 50 cents an hour. Until somebody informed him there was a better job at a saw mill. At which he got a dollar 75 an hour. See, uh, uh and I think this is an experience that happens. I don't know why, possibly is that these nationals they come from a country where the pay is low or something at that time, and they aren't expecting that much more or something, so they take advantage. Now I don't know whether I'm out of line saying this, but this is something that I have observed. It is possibly how uh, uh occurring in the Asian community. I believe it is. I believe it is in all communities. I'm not saying only the Italians.

RC: No—

[1:01:17.7]

GB: In all the communities, the nationals seem to think that they can pay their fellow nationals, immigrants, less.

RC: Well, my understanding is it's similar to yours. It's true it happened. It may—

GB: It happened.

RC: It may even be happening to other ethnic groups—

GB: Yes, it's going to happen. Uh, uh as I said to my students too, "the same thing is going to happen all the way down, don't feel sorry for yourselves." And here's another thing I said, "Only the brave will leave their country if they don't know the language. Only the brave. Those who are afraid will stay home, so I consider all of you very brave to have come to this country."

RC: That's wonderful.

GB: [Smiles and shrugs shoulders quickly]

RC: When you talked about your mom and dad education, or made a reference to that. I couldn't help but think of my own family. They had limited education in Italy before coming here and I wonder if that was your parent's experience?

GB: Absolutely, they had limited uh, my father was a very good writer though. Very good writer. My mother, my mother wrote uh Italian, but my father was his script was very beautiful. Very beautiful script he had. So he did possibly learn a lot in the army.

RC: Yes.

GB: Uh, I'm sure that that experience was very good for him. But the education was very limited, uh, I'm sorry to keep— I think they were kept, the, the education was purposely kept low. And I can't imagine you know and of course, of course the uh, the people had to work on their farms, etcetera. They needed the workers, so they needed children and they needed them

to work at home, so I think that's what made my mother think that I should have quit school at 16 but boy, she made uh, she as I said she said she would have made a terrible mistake. Yeah.

RC: Thank you for adding that.

GB: Oh, yes, I had to add that because yes we missed that. [Laughs]

RC: I'm glad we got it, thank you.

GB: [camera fades out at 1:03:23.3]

GB: [With photo of school children on the table in front and points with finger] This is Kasako.

RC: Yes. In grade six.

GB: And in grade seven, uh, I have I have some Templeton pictures, but I only have the grade nine ones here. And Kasako of course is not here. [Picks up school yearbook in black and white print] I am here, very small picture there. [Camera zooms in] But anyways, here I am at Britannia. Here I am in grade ten. [Points to black and white photo.]

RC: This, this, is [unclear] I had her, yeah.

GB: Okay, uh there's uh, gee, now where am I, where am I? Oh, here, oh the sad face I had.
[Points to teenage girl with blond hair in row]

RC: There you are.

GB: There, and I'm over here in ah grade 10 [camera scans to a new photo] and eleven. [Points to blond girl in second row in white blouse]

RC: And this is uh, Annette, my cousin.

GB: Annette. There you are. There's your cousin there. [Points to girl with reflection blocking her face]

RC: She just arrived from Italy about that time.

GB: Yeah, I know that, I know that she did. Of course, this is, this is the 40s now, and where am I here, I can't even see where I am.

RC: Uh, right here. [Points to girl in third row, third from the left.]

GB: Oh, over there yeah. I don't know why I've got such a sourpuss face there.

RC: No, not at all.

GB: It was just thrilling to meet this Kasako. [Camera on somewhat recent photo of two couples] Now you see how international? This is doctor Leatherman. [Points to young boy in photo] He's the, he was the Jewish fella in our class. [Points to the boy next to him] Steve, he was in an accident and he got killed. They were all, okay, look at them; they were all [waves hand over photo back and forth] their age, their age again. That's grade two or three. [Scans to new photo.] That's grade six. Uh, and then grade nine over there. Grade nine.

RC: And you mention Anna again if you don't mind, what these represent here.

GB: Well, these are uh, I think this is when the uh consulate [shows newspaper clipping] oh, all the recognized First World War Veterans. I think maybe my father was the only one around. Just ah, he got a gold medal. I don't know where it is now, excuse me [unclear]. But anyways, you can move the chair because you can't really take good pictures. And this is, this is my father when he was in the army. [Shows photo of man in uniform with hands in his pockets] And then the one to the right is when he was in Anyox [photo with man with hands on his hips.]

RC: And when is your birth date? Actually.

GB: My birthday is March the 21st, 1928.

[Shows photos of small children and a flyer for Anyox, BC "Forgotten Town."]

RC: First day of spring?

GB: First day of spring.

RC: In Anyox?

GB: In Anyox.

RC: Oh, how old are you there?

GB: This is the, this is all of us kids. [Points to photos of children] And I'm there. [Picture of herself holding a baby sibling]

RC: When I was at the newspaper—

GB: Yeah.

RC: I would talk to Denny Boyd and he was born there.

GB: I know. Yeah, that's Denny Boyd [unclear] yeah.

RC: Yeah and my uncle Louis uh Petovello, like your father had to uh leave Vancouver during the war.

GB: Yeah, yeah.

RC: And uh, he was in Anyox before the war started so he may have even known your dad there.

GB: Oh, I'm sure. Listen, you can move these so that you can get a better picture. [Camera moves to a membership card/receipt]

RC: And that's the performance of Cinderella.

GB: I'm over here.

RC: Yeah. And that's in 1937 [photo of pre-teens in costumes with wigs]

GB: My, well I don't know was it '37?

RC: I believe it was yeah, because La Locanda...

GB: Uh huh.

RC: Il condiere—

GB: Uh huh. Yeah.

RC: [unclear] around the same time.

GB: That's right, yeah.

RC: Uh, and that uh, is her membership card for the [moves back over card] Italian Language School.

GB: Well that's the same one as the uh, medals. The uh, well similar.

RC: Oh the medals.

GB: Yeah. Yeah, it's it's interesting. I thought this was the best way to display them.

RC: Oh, indeed, yeah.

[1:06:57.6]

RC: Excellent.

GB: But uh let's see, I have, I have more, let's see. I have more from Anyox. [Camera follows as she sorts through a pile of materials on a chair.] Union here. This is a whole book on the town that got lost. But there was a reunion. In 1978 I believe.

RC: Yeah.

GB: And there are a bunch of names here, you might know some of them. [Both RC and GB on camera]

RC: Um, that were um...

GB: That, that Fred uh Calderone you know that name?

RC: Oh, Fred Calderone, absolutely. Yeah, uh.

GB: They were possibly uh, no they went to the reunion. Campanella. Uh, and Campillia. Campillia.

RC: I don't remember that family. But...

GB: No, uh yeah. And ah, let's see, Atillio, uh Pauline. You know who thats [unclear]

RC: Pauline. Pastor Cator's sister, that's right.

GB: That was my godmother. She was my baptismal godmother.

RC: Oh my, yeah. I remember yeah. Um, her like she had a brother too.

GB: Yeah, she did yeah. Atillio, yes that's right.

RC: Yeah.

GB: There are different names here [filps over page in document] see, I uh I'm only looking for the Italians.

RC: Sure.

GB: Here's Vic Gazola.

RC: Gazola, yeah.

GB: His mother took him back to Italy and the father never joined them.

RC: Oh, so they...

GB: So they were separated. You see, and that was the time when my father said to my mother "would you like to go back to Italy?" She said "nnoooooo." [Laughs]

RC: Well, you know what we had a Gazola in the Legga Femenille. You know, like in the—

GB: Oh yes I know like in the Femenille.

RC: Going way back—

GB: Yes. That's right.

RC: And ah, when I was a young man, Uh, Bruno Gazola and his mother lived on the— just by Strathcona School.

GB: Yes, yes, yes.

RC: And Bruno uh, was uh, in the Navy during the war.

GB: Oh, he was older.

RC: And I think he was, that was the only Gazola family in Vancouver. Now, of course...

GB: Absolutely. So, lets see, other Italians I couldn't see any more. Gazola, okay. And then he died the other day.

RC: Yeah, that's right, I saw his obit.

GB: No, no I just thought you might know some of them.

RC: Yeah, well thank you. So, are they that's all they all have such merit, you know to have uh, this information.

GB: Yes, see there's the reunion that was held. Uh...

RC: Oh, there it is, yeah.

GB: Yeah, born in Anyox.

RC: Oh, gosh, that's quite a fraternity. Well, thank you again.

GB: Well, you're most welcome. [Camera pans over articles and photos again] You asked me about Nino's pictures. I don't have any of his uh, pictures otherwise I would have brought them.

RC: Sure, of course, yes. Well, thank you. I do have ah couple of photos with with uh Nino among others.

GB: That's right. Yeah.

RC: Uh, and of course, we have ah, other photos of banquets and so on. I just thought if there had been an individual of [unclear]

GB: No, I can't uh, I, I haven't come across any.

RC: Well that's fine. I know—

GB: They may have been given to Gina. That's John's sister.

RC: Perhaps. You see this is [unclear]

RC: Not to worry. So, you don't have to look at this now necessarily, but what it says in effect is you just had an interview with, and then you put my name in here, and then you just send it off.

GB: Okay, that's good.

RC: Yeah, so that can go direct to them in this envelope. It makes it pretty simple. And the other one I'll retrieve now.

GB: Yes, I'll give it to you. I better, I better sign it here.

RC: Yes, please.

[Camera fades out at 1:10:30.7]

[End of Interview]