

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

**DATE OF INTERVIEW:** June 13, 2011

**LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** Hamilton, ON

**NAME OF INTERVIEWEE:** Ann Dolson

**NAME OF INTERVIEWER:** Melina De Guglielmo

**NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER:** Stefanie Petrilli

**TRANSCRIBED BY:** Lucy Di Pietro

**DATE TRANSCRIBED:** December 28, 29, 30, 2011

**ACCESSION No.:** ICEA2011.0035.0001

## **ABSTRACT**

Ann Dolson (née Martinello) is the daughter of internee, Felice Martiniello, and the sister of interviewee, Frank Martinello. The Martiniello family emigrated from Italy to Canada in the early to mid 1920s. Upon their arrival to Canada, the family last name was changed to “Martinello” from “Martiniello” due to an error on the landed immigrant card. Felice continued to use the original spelling of his family name, while the rest of his family adopted the new spelling. The Martinellos lived in Sydney, Nova Scotia but after the internment period moved to Hamilton, Ontario. She recalls an incident when her father went to Montreal for a meeting, which she says her mother believed as the reason for his internment. Ann does describe her father as being active in the community as an organizer. Ann also recounts the day her father was arrested by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the impact it had on her during a later incident when she feared her mother had also been taken. Ann says that her family was poor in Nova Scotia, but the situation improved with their move to Ontario. Ann speaks mostly about her childhood memories; the everyday activities she, her six other siblings, and their parents engaged in. She also talks about her marriage and family.

## **INTERVIEW**

**AD: Ann Dolson, interviewee**

**MDG: Melina De Guglielmo, interviewer**

**FM: Frank Martinello, AD's brother, offscreen**

**EM: Elle Martinello, FM's wife, offscreen**

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:10]

MDG: This is Melina De Guglielmo in Hamilton, Ontario on June 13, 2011. [Background noise – dishes and cutlery] And my first question for you is what is your first, your full birth name as well as your birth date?

AD: [Smiling] Okay. March 31, 1933. And I was registered Annie Martinello, and I was baptized Anna, but everybody calls me Ann. Okay.

MDG: And where were you born?

AD: Sydney, Nova Scotia.

MDG: Sydney, Nova Scotia.

AD: At home.

MDG: Oh really [noise of dishes and cutlery continues]?

AD: At home. Yeah.

MDG: Okay. And um, so let's start off with your uh early childhood.

AD: Okay.

MDG: Uh so how many brothers and sisters did you have?

AD: I have four brothers. Actually six, cause two died. Six brothers, four living, and two sisters.

MDG: Okay—

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And where um do you come in the, in the uh line—

AD: I'm the seventh child. Yeah.

MDG: So you're the—not the—the youngest?

AD: No. I'm the third youngest.

MDG: Third youngest. Okay.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Um. So growing up in Sydney, Nova Scotia what is, what is your earliest childhood memory?

AD: Oh golly. I will tell you one that really sticks out in my mind and Frank seems to have forgot about it - is we were on Tupper Street and this horse went wild with a policeman on it and my father yelled to my mother "*Rosi, peilla la manda*" to get her red blanket and my father's standing in the middle of Tupper Street holding the blanket up [hand gesture – as if holding blanket] and the horse stopped.

MDG: Wow.

AD: And I was very, very young but I remember it vividly.

MDG: Wow and where did he learn to do that?

AD: I don't know [shaking her head]. Maybe in the old country cause he was good with horses. Yeah.

MDG: And, and did your family um, you—did you grow up on a farm?

AD: [Shaking her head] No. No. We grew up uh, by the time my mother was having--I forget how many years they spent in Antigonish but all the rest of our like my siblings were born in Sydney on Tupper Street.

MDG: On Tupper Street.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And, and what was the house like?

AD: It was a duplex, [looks to someone off-screen on her left] if I remember correctly.

FM: [Voice off-screen and stays so throughout interview] Well actually we lived on William Street first.

AD: [Looks to her left] Oh did we?

FM: Yeah at Uncle Mike's uh house. Cause I remember the—in the winter time there would be a lot of sparrows would get on the clothesline and my father who was [unclear] with a pole gun he would pull the clothesline in nice and easy—

AD: [Laughing] Yeah to get the birds.

FM: You know there was the house, the porch, and then there was a slot for you know hanging the clothes up. He would pull it in. As soon as he got it in to the porch, he would swat the birds.

MDG: Oh. No.

FM: So you had sparrows flying all around—

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah, and my mother would kill the birds and then she would cook them. But, uh, my memory of the house is on Tupper Street and uh we had chickens in the backyard and we lived with the League of Nations. They were townhouses like on the one side. But our house, if I remember, was a single detached house with an upstairs. Yeah.

MDG: Okay.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And do you remember um having any friends around you uh living on the street any friends that-

AD: Oh yeah. There was the negro girls: Ines, and um, I forget the older sister's name, Yvonne. But we played like with Ukrainian, Italian friends, yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah.

MDG: And uh did your family belong to any social groups or organizations—

AD: Just the church group, yeah that I remember. I remember the church picnics, the church uh Christmas parties that we had. Yeah mostly with the church.

MDG: And was the church um predominately Italian or was—

AD: Yeah.

MDG: It for everybody.

AD: It was predominately Italian, St. Nicholas's Church on William Street – Frank? [Looks to her left] Where was St. Nicholas's Church – on William Street?

FM: I can't remember exactly—

AD: Yeah. Yeah. It was near--

FM: But it was near [Unclear]

AD: Yeah. It was near Uncle Mike's house. Yeah. It was close to Uncle Mike's house and the church and it also had a hall beside it yeah that I can recall right [looks to her left]?

FM: Yeah and the hall was in the back—

AD: Yeah.

FM: --in the back and Pa was instrumental in getting the hall built.

AD: Yeah. My father was very instrumental. He was an organizer.

MDG: Oh really.

AD: Even when in Hamilton, when we came here, he was the one who organized all the gatherings. Yeah.

MDG: Wow. And so when you were in uh Sydney, your dad he helped build the church, or built the church.

AD: No not build the church [FM in background – unclear] organizing.

MDG: Organizing.

AD: They built the hall yeah.

MDG: Okay.

AD: Organized the – all the gatherings.

MDG: Right.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And what other um, what other organizations may—was he a part of?

AD: I don't know. I-I don't remember.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah. I knew that he went to that meeting in Montreal but uh, and I remember about the *facist'* and uh yeah that sort of stuff.

[TIME: 5:05]

MDG: Um, how about oh so let's, let's talk more maybe about the meeting in Montreal and the *facist'*.

AD: Well see I remember him going to Montreal and uh I remember the picture vividly but as a child, like being uh five years younger than Frank, I don't remember what the meeting was for, but I knew that him going to the meeting, cause I used to hear my mother, was the reason my father was arrested.



MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah. It was after the meeting that he was interned. Yeah.

MDG: Did any um--this is jumping forward a little bit, but did any of your other friends did their parents uh get uh--were they interned as well?

AD: No. Just the relatives I remember because uh a few of my friends like Gloria Madoro[?], her father was never arrested. And Gloria Di Caesar[?] which is pronounced properly in Italian, De Cesare[?], and Gloria's mother and father anglicized it to Di Caesar[?] and her mother stopped buying Italian bread, like Gloria told me the story, and uh she said her mother was afraid to buy Italian bread so the people would know that they were Italian. Yeah.

MDG: And, and were there uh a lot of Italian bakers or shops—

AD: Yeah. There was a baker, a bakery, in behind Della Vecchio's store on Tupper Street right [Looks to her left]?

FM: No. It was Della Vecchio's bakery.

AD: Yeah. Della Vecchio's bakery. And Bernie, I th-, yeah, he was the baker. Yeah. He used to let us go in there and sit and watch in that hot place baking bread but we loved the smell [laughing].

FM: Bernie wasn't Italian.

AD: He wasn't—well he let us come in there. Yeah.

FM: He was the chief baker.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Oh. I see.

AD: Yeah. Yeah.

MDG: And um so what was your, let's say job, with uh around the household?

AD: Washing dishes—

MDG: Growing up yeah—

AD: --and uh learning to scrub the floor at seven years of age [laughing] and uh helping my mother. And uh outside of the house I helped my brother deliver the *Sydney Post Record*. Also Marguerite and I, you got to remember this, I was eight, she was two years younger—no, I was nine. She was two years younger and we babysat across the rode from my mother's, these twins for 25 cents and then I give it to my mother. And down the street on Lingan Road there was two sisters Annie and Fannie. They lived together in the house with their husbands and they had babies. So we took care of their babies, Marguerite and I took them for walks. Got a nickle each for a week and then gave the nickles to my mother.

MDG: Wow.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And so your mom relied on you—

AD: My, m-my mother, my mother relied on Frank a lot, more than the other two boys cause Frank was that much older. He went fishing. He snared rabbits. And we were lucky to get the meat and the fish.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah. Cause um things were tight and there was many a time, my husband will tell you, I can't still look at porridge because uh we didn't have enough milk to put on the porridge. When she didn't have anything else to cook, porridge and water. And uh I remember one time she had some stale bread and she watered down the spaghetti sauce and put the bread in it and that's what we ate for supper. Yeah. But other times we ate very well. Um, we used to get our eggs from the eggman Santine[?]. Remember he used to come every week. And uh we'd have eggs and a lot-- when ever—she always made sure she had flour to bake bread and she did a lot of baking and traditional pasta, making so many different types of pizza with macaroni stuffing [hand gesture of something being stuffed inside something else] inside. My mother did a lot.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah. She stretched out everything. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: [Raises her left index finger] But we never went hungry. And took us uh—there was a field that Frank was talking about where they played baseball—

MDG: Yeah.

AD: She used to take uh, me and Marguerite to this here field—[indicates size with hands] potato sacks, and we'd come home with potato sacks full of *chicoria*. And she would clean them and we learned to eat boiled *ch-chicoria*, sauteed and that with bread. That was the many a meal too.

MDG: How would you know which ones to pick?

AD: Oh, we knew. [FM in background – unclear] Yeah. Dandelions, *chicoria*.

FM:--as long as they didn't have flowers on them--

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

FM: We pick them.

AD: Yeah. We had—

FM: --the flowers just started to come out I used to take them off.

AD: Yeah. We'd take them off and we'd have them in *salade* or in sometimes she'd make *frittata*. And then when t-the dandelions with the blue flowers—she'd pick them too. Yeah.

MDG: I notice that you use a lot of Italian words as well. So did-did your mom—was that...

AD: Well that's how—like I best express myself in-in Italian when it comes to things I grew up with. Yeah. And I still think in Italian sometimes.

MDG: Really?

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Yeah. That's amazing.

AD: But I um, I speak mostly English. My husband's Canadian and yeah.

[TIME: 10:05]

MDG: And so uh growing up you um mention other siblings and that each sibling sort of had their own uh weight to pull or—

AD: Yeah. We did. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: And uh I was in charge of Marguerite and my younger brother. Wherever I went, Marguerite went with me.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah cause we were—oh this is funny—we were a year and 10 months apart and I'd say, as growing up as teens, I says “I'm a year and ten months older than you.” And she'd say “No.

You're--". Oh I used to say to her "We're two years difference." She'd say "No. You're a year and ten months. Now it's two years and I'm the baby sister", she says [laughing]. So we'd laugh about that. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And, and um so more about the uh the um community base there. Did you ever feel any sort of discrimination growing up for being Italian?

AD: The—not with my school friends [shaking her head]. None whatsoever. The only time I felt bad is when I had to go buy some pasta. I don't think I should mention the name in the store [looking to her left] we bought the macaroni. And one of the sons was very good friends with my father. But the other son, no. And he says to the guys that were sitting around [makes circular gesture with finger] the pot-belly stove "Oh. Here comes the girl that--whose father's *incarcerata*." [Waves her hand dismissively].

MDG: Wow.

AD: Yeah. Like in jail. And I thought—I never forgot it to this day. Yeah. But he's the only one that made me feel so bad in Sydney. But our neighbours and our close friends, they were...good to us. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah. And so um which school did you, did you attend?

AD: I attended Villa Nova until Grade 2. And then we had moved to Henry Street so then we attended Eastmount School because it was a Protestant school for one thing and it was right across the road. And us being younger, the boys went to Holy Redeemer. I went to Eastmount.

MDG: Oh. Okay.

AD: Yeah. And uh was there for a couple of years and then we came to Hamilton.

MDG: Oh. I see.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And, and so um coming now to uh the tenth of June 1940—

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Um. And we haven't really talked about—we've talked with Frank more about your dad—

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And then—also about your mom, but what, what do you remember about that day yourself?

AD: You mean the day that he was arrested?

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Um. Well I remember Marguerite and I, Marguerite and I coming home from school and there was this black car [hand gesture] in front of our house and the RCMP [clanging noise in background] and my father with his hands behind [puts her arms behind her back] his back. Frank says he wasn't handcuffed but I remember the hands behind his back. He looked at us. He never said a word. He just looked like he was going to cry. And they put him in the car, and we couldn't say anything to him. I remember that very vividly.

MDG: Wow. And, and do you remember how the RCMP were dressed? Or were they in plainclothes?

AD: I, I think--I can't really truly remember. I knew they were the, the, they were the RCMP. Whether they were in their brown and khaki [khaki?]. Uh, you know the khaki[?] shirt with the brown pants and the hat [hand gesture across her head] like uh—I can't remember but I remember. Yeah.

MDG: The instant.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Um, and do you remember anything else about that, that day after he was taken?

AD: Not really. The car speed away and then I realized that my father was gone – *con la polizi'*.  
And uh—

MDG: Yeah.



AD: Then like later...Another day, I came home from school, and uh we had such a huge garden. And uh we had bean poles as tall as Stefanie there [points to the camera]. And uh I came home. I couldn't find mother. And I'm screaming "Ma. Ma. Where are you? Where are you?" And I was horrified to think that my mother was taken away. And then she come out from the garden. She says "*Anni, che success'?*" And I says "Oh Ma. I thought you were taken away". You know. That was kind of hard to live with for awhile. Yeah.

MDG: And so what did you have to do then to help your mum during this time?

AD: Well just help her in the house, whatever, and do the errands for her and take care of my uh younger brother cause he's six years younger than me so. He was only nine months old I think [looks to her left] when Pa was taken away. He was still a baby.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah. So we helped my mother that way.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: And being that much younger, like how much could I do? But the boys, they work hard. Yeah.

MDG: So, so tell me more about um about your mom, about the type of character she was or—

AD: She was a very, very strong woman and if it wasn't for my mother like I told them Ma was very *robusto* [hand gesture outward from her chest]. Don't compare me to my mother. She's-- was a very big woman. She was an inch taller than my father – five foot eight but very broad

shoulders [hand gesture showing width of shoulders]. A very strong woman even until she was 87. Marguerite couldn't pick up one end of the couch. My mother picked it up [hand gestures – lifting action] `and I was on the other end [laughing].

[TIME: 15:03]

AD: She was very strong and uh she kept us together. And like Frank already told you the story about them wanting her to sell the house but she says “No. Where am I going to go with seven kids?”

MDG: Yeah. Yeah.

AD: Yeah. So she kept us together. She was a hard worker. God bless her.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Did she have sort of a philosophy or a common saying that she would always say to you?

AD: No. Not really. No. No. *Mannaggia L'America*. [Laughing]

MDG: [Laughing] Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And what--did she ever um express uh regret in coming to Canada or feeling--

AD: No. No. She, she didn't—she never expressed regret coming to Canada. Cause she knew how hard she had it in uh Italy. Yeah she'd work like—my mother told us, well me especially more stories as she was getting into her nineties. She work—her father would farm her out and all she would get the payment was *na coppina di* soup. That was it.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah but she, she worked hard. And she worked hard here in Canada. Yeah. But she kept the family together.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And, and did any of her family ever come to Canada?

AD: Uh. Yes. Her uh niece my cousin Virginia, my first cousin Virginia, she sponsored her to come and stay here until she married my father's cousin. Yeah [laughing – dishes and cutlery in background].

MDG: Oh my goodness.

AD: Yeah. So uh yeah.

MDG: Yeah. And then um so when your dad then got out of camp—

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Uh years—three years later.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Right? Uh what was, what was it, what are your memories of the change from Sydney over to Hamilton [talking in the background - unclear]?

AD: Well for one thing, we got to eat better [laughing – talking continues in the background]. And uh like Frank told you about the train station. I remember that he told us the uh the conductor told him or the porter told him yeah he says [mimics Italian accent] “I'm with my wife. She come. She gotta seven kids”. So he says “You go.” [Hand gesture] And we all ran to my father. So we were glad. But no we came and uh of course we had to wait for the beds to come up from Sydney. We like, by express, by train. And we slept on the floor and you could still feel that train motion [hands move forward and back] sleeping on the floor the first couple of nights.

MDG: Oh my gosh.

AD: Yeah. But we were glad that we came and we were fascinated with the house because it was a triplex [points up]. And um we couldn't get over the small yard cause we were used to all this land around our house in Sydney. That I don't know what Mrs. um like thought, thought of us next door. Here's these three kids running around [right arms gesturing in a circle] the house. It was a fascination to run around [hand gesture] all the sidewalk [laughing].

MDG: Wow.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: So your first impressions of Hamilton were, were, were that it was very different from—

AD: Oh yeah. It was totally different and the house was different. The houses were closer [hand gesture showing proximity]. And uh yeah, it was, it was different. Yeah.

MDG: Did you miss your friends that you grew up with?

AD: Yes. I did. Yeah, I used to correspond for awhile. But I still keep in touch with my one friend Gloria De Cesare. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And have, and have you ever gone back to Sydney?

AD: Yeah. I went there twice. Yeah. One year, Frank and I, my father and Marty and Junior we went to visit uh that was what 1948 Frank [looking to her left]? We went back to Sydney the first time—well you got the car [gestures to her left].

FM: 49.

AD: 49. We went back and we got to see all our friends. Yeah.

MDG: Wow.

AD: Yeah. That was nice. Yeah. But I want to give thanks to my godmother uh Caro-Carolina and Antonio Matergio[?], our godparents. They kept us in potatoes and she made Marguerite and my dresses. They were godmother to um Marguerite, myself and Junior. And uh she'd make our dresses. And our petticoats were always made out of *compari's* shirts, you know, the front and the back [gesturing towards her collar, upper chest area]. We had stripped petticoats.

MDG: Oh wow.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And this was back in Sydney?

AD: Back in Sydney, yeah.

MDG: Yeah. And, and did your parents meet them in Sydney?

AD: Yeah. My father I don't know where he met *compari* Matergio[?]. But they were our godparents uh then. Yeah. Yeah and uh she—when I got married young, she told my mother not to harp about me getting married at 17 because she was only 13 [laughing- points to MDG].

MDG: Oh my goodness.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Wow.

AD: Yeah. She came from Boston and I think he was already here in Sydney and uh she married him. Yeah.

MDG: Wow.

AD: Cause when I got married at 17. Yeah.

MDG: And um did, did this family keep your family or help your family throughout the war—

AD: Well they helped us as much as they could. Yeah. She used to make our aprons and our dresses so we could go to school. Yeah.

MDG: Really.

AD: And they, they had a farm and they supplied us with potatoes. And she would always come over so often and make sure that we were okay. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah. Yeah.

MDG: And um so when your dad got out of the camp um what do you remember him telling you about that time, if he did?

[TIME: 20:11]

AD: He didn't talk about the camp too much. He—we mostly uh when the camp was discussed it's meeting his friends. Yeah and also cooking. We, he, cause there was a Frenchman that cooked in the camp too and uh the one day we came downstairs and there's this big platter [shows size with hands]. He said "I made pancakes". But if you really seen them today [hand makes a circle] the texture, they were crepes. But they were a size of a dinner plate [shows size with hands]. And what he did is he took the um crepe the whole size of the frying pan [shows circumference with hand], put the syrup on and he rolled them [rolls on her lap – mostly off screen]. So when he told us we had to eat them like a hot dog like this [hands up towards mouth as if holding a hot dog bun]. We're going around the kitchen eating these big crepes. We never tasted anything so sweet and good in all our lives.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah [laughing].

MDG: Wow. And so he learned how to make them in the camp?

AD: Oh yeah. He did a lot of cooking in the camp and at Easter time he would make this specialty dish with spareribs and mushroom and everything. We—I forget what we called it, but that was his specialty.

MDG: Wow.

AD: Yeah. But it was a good—it was a better eating and everything when he came out. Yeah. And the family was together.

MDG: Yeah.



AD: Yeah.

MDG: Um. What else can I ask you about...So your dad came back um from what you've told me off-camera um your dad came back with a crate full of things.

AD: Yeah. He had the boats like Frank said [points to her left], and he came back with spoons. But I wasn't there to see the crate, okay, because when we came to Hamilton, Frank and I, my father and my sister Florence and uh Ralphie they were already established in the house. So I didn't see how everything was crated or anything, just that it was uncrated. The boats were on the mantle and the boat in the bottle that was displayed also [hand gestures regarding boats].  
Yeah.

MDG: Okay. And so, your, your some of your siblings went ahead of time?

AD: Yeah. Well uh Filomena – Florence—

MDG: Yeah.

AD: She came after my father got the house. And her and Ralph came to set up housekeeping for my father.

MDG: Oh I see.

AD: Yeah. And then Florence got a job at Cornell[?] Tailors and Ralph was at school. Yeah.

MDG: And how did um we also talked a little bit about how um the war affected your older siblings—

AD: Yeah.

MDG: How did it, how, well how did it affect them?

AD: It affect—it affected Florence mentally. Like cause she was like our second mother. She did all the interpreting. And uh, she had to go work as a maid for a rich relative. And that really bothered her. Because uh, we were so poor and uh. She was like a second mother. Yeah. But she would sign our report cards. If we needed any forms to be filled out, she did it. And the same with for my parents. And uh, if we needed a note for school, even in Hamilton, she did it. Yeah. So she was like a second mother. Yeah. Cause my mother was so busy doing everything else.

MDG: And was she able to ah pursue any of her dreams or, or go to school if she wanted to?

AD: Well Florence was only--got to Grade 8. She didn't even finish Grade 8. And uh, she--cause she had to help my mother with all these kids. That's how you did it in the old days cause there was no conveniences like today and uh. So really Florence did not really pursue any dream, no. She came to Hamilton. She worked in a factory. And then she got married and she had two children. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: But she died at 52. Yeah.

MDG: And, and back to uh your, your, your own perspective, how—now looking back on this time in your life, did it change the way that you thought of yourself as a Canadian or um the way you thought about life in general?

AD: No. It didn't affect me, like I was glad I was a Canadian. And uh I was happy that we were in Canada and I—first when we came from Nova Scotia, I didn't like Hamilton. Any kid doesn't like to be uprooted, right? But I've adjusted and uh, you kind of put everything that's happened to you in the back-burner so to speak [hands waving gesture over her left shoulder] because you get married. You meet your husband. You get married. You have children. You don't—you try not to dwell on the past because you're so busy but when the book that Sam Migliore - *Italian Lives and Cape Breton Memories* – that kind of [hands gesture as if rewinding], I mean it was always there. You'd think about it the odd time, but you never brought it to the forefront until just these last so many years. Yeah. So any-anything I can read about it. I read the books. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

[TIME 25:04]

MDG: And, and what did um—so after the war now, what did you decide to do career-wise?

AD: I um met my husband when I was 15 [points offscreen slightly to her right]. I was taking a bookkeeping course in high school. So that changed all things. I met him at 15 and uh I went to work at Westing [?] House as a TV-tube straightener and uh met my husband and that was it. We got married at 17 and uh—

MDG: Where, where did you meet?

AD: I was working at a coffee shop um on Main Street just around the corner from our house like you made hamburgers, hotdogs. Just like your McDonald's or Wendy's sort of thing. And um he walks in and I heard him say to his friend “That's for me”. And I thought he was ordering a piece of pie or some darn thing [hands gesturing]. And then I made him this milkshake that he wanted. And then he asked me out and I said to the girl, “Ah, he won't show up” [hand waves

dismissively]. Next thing you know, she says “Ann, you better go home and get changed. Here's Dave” [laughing].

MDG: [Laughing] Wow.

AD: So then we went together uh for it's going to be 61 years in October.

MDG: Wow.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And, and did your parents mind at all that your [unclear] wasn't Italian—

AD: Oh my god! [claps her hands - MDG laughing] Thank-you to my brother Frank [pointing to the left]. He gave me away.

MDG: Wow.

AD: Cause they didn't want me to marry *ingles'* and also that he was Protestant.

MDG: Really.

AD: Yeah. But my brother Frank gave me away.

MDG: And who was harder on you, your mom or your dad in terms of—

AD: Well my father didn't like it but he didn't say too much and his [laughing], his looks spoke more than words.

MDG: Really.

AD: Yeah. And my mother was upset. Yeah.

MDG: Wow.

AD: But she had *comar'* Bartolini[?] to console her, who said "*Rosi, io sposato a 15 anni*". And then when my godmother told her 13[?], my mother never said another word [hand gestures – laughing].

MDG: [Laughing] Wow.

AD: So...

MDG: But then over, I guess over time—

AD: Over time, yes [Right hand gestures to right off screen]. Yeah. I had my father say to me one day...he was sitting in the backyard, he said to me "The one I worried about," which was me [points to herself], "I didn't have to worry about". And he said "The one I didn't have to think I have to worry about, I'm worried about" [points up]. So that was a compliment from my father.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Was your father a, a man of many words or, or...

AD: Oh, he was a man of many words when he wanted to speak his peace. Oh yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah. But actions—

FM: Right.

AD: Pardon?

FM: When the time was right.

AD: When the time was right and uh, like well we all had our share of corporal punishment.  
Let's put it that way [laughing].

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Um, as, and, and fig—tell me a bit more about his character – your dad's character?

AD: Oh, he was a happy character. He made friends, like you wouldn't believe all the friends.  
And my son takes after him. My husband will tell you [gestures to her front right]. I--my son's

got so many friends, I says “You know what? He takes after Pa”. He likes to—my father used to like to go hunting [hands gesturing throughout]. My husband has no inclination to go hunting or that. My son, yeah, fishes and hunts. I says, “Oh my god. Between you and Uncle Frankie fishing and Pa hunting”... I said “Oh my god, yeah”.

MDG: Wow.

AD: But uh he reminds me a lot of my father as far as friendships is concerned.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: My father liked a lot of people around. Yeah. That's why he was an organizer. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah. And in Hamilton did he then join up any social groups?

AD: Not that I know of, other than what Frank has told you [Looks to and gestures towards her left]. Yeah. Uh, I forget the name of the clubs.

FM: Which one?

AD: Uh what Pa did he belong to uh?

FM: In Nova Scotia?

AD: No, no. Here in Hamilton.

FM: Oh. Um. [Name-unclear].

MDG: Okay.

AD: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And we--he organized all the summer picnics. Yeah. And like Frank said, they take turns meeting one another's houses [hand gestures]. And he loved to play cards. Yeah. Loved to play cards—

FM: [Unclear] cards.

AD: Oh god. You could hear them when they played cards. We'd be upstairs in bed [points up] and wow.

MDG: [Laughing] Wow.

AD: It's a wonder that that dining room table stood up [laughing].

FM: I don't know if you know the card game that stay—they used to play boss.

MDG: I...

FM: They would play a game and he would win. And uh, you could stop—you could have a drink. You could have ... No—nothing for you. I drink.

MDG: [Laughing] Wow.

AD: Oh yeah. And if we—

FM: What was that game called Elle?



EM: What *briscola*?

FM: *Briscola*.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Oh yes, *briscola*.

AD: And uh—

FM: We used to play for boss.

MDG: Oh, I see.

AD: If we had a family gathering, he'd pour a caesar[?] shot of whiskey [hand gesture showing quantity] and he'd say to my younger brother who, who didn't drink. He says "Drink it in. Don't make-a the face" [laughing].

MDG: [Laughing] Wow. And, and so uh we also talked about family gatherings being so important to your family.

AD: Oh yeah. Yeah.

[TIME: 30:01]

MDG: Yeah. So tell me about that.

AD: Well um we had the picnics as you say, but like cause I used to have the barbeques and he'd say "You do this for me. You make me happy". But then after he passed on and my husband made a rec room in our house on Millen Road, I continued by having Christmas Eve at my house every year for quite a few years. And then it got so there was too many. The one year—between friends and family, the one year I counted 70 people. And I did all the food [hands gesturing throughout]. Lily[?] will tell you. I did all the cooking, all the food, the baking everything. Took me awhile to do all this stuff like doing finger food, that I said I'm getting too old for this because there was too many teenagers in the family bringing girlfriends and boyfriends and I said I can't do this anymore. Yeah. So everybody look after their own family. Cause when it gets so big, you can only do so much. Yeah.

MDG: That's true.

AD: But I did it for many years. And the nicest compliment is coming from my nieces and nephews saying "We remember Christmas Eve at your place Auntie Ann". But now what we do, is we have a family picnic every July at Christie's Conservation Area and we're all over a hundred people now.

MDG: Wow.

AD: And when my mother was still alive when we started the picnics, we'd say "Ma. Look at what you started" [hand gestures showing scope]. Yeah. Her and my father. Yeah.

MDG: And were they the happiest would you say when they were amongst their family?

AD: Oh yeah. Yeah. My father always loved it when the children were around. And his biggest thing with the kids—when oh, I'd say goodbye to Grandpa, "I want to pinch a kiss". And they

had to pink his cheeks [pinching her own] so hard. “Come on. Come on. More. More”. And he would be happy when they gave him a real hard pinch kiss. Yeah. Yeah.

MDG: And when did your father pass away?

AD: 1964. He was only 67. Yeah.

MDG: And, and had he been ill or—

AD: He had had a-a heart attack a few years—

FM: A few years before.

AD: [Looking to her left] Yeah. But no his first heart attack was a few years before and uh but the—three days be-um—his birthday was January the 28<sup>th</sup> and three days later he died. And that was the first time in my life that I ever heard my father tell my mother to sit down [pointing her finger]. We ran out of potato chips and my mother was going to get up to fill the bowl [hand gesture showing filling up a bowl]. He says “*Rosi, sette*”. And she, he got up and got the bag of potato chips and filled them [hands gesturing].

MDG: Wow.

AD: Filled the bowl. And that's the first time he told my mother to sit [pointing her finger].

MDG: Wow.

AD: Cause my mother; well she scared the heck out of my husband [points to her right]. The first year my husband came to dinner, homemade bread, okay. My mother always cut it like this [pretending to hold loaf and cutting towards the upper left chest]. He swore that he thought she was going to cut herself here [points to upper left chest – laughing]. Cause she didn't use a bread board. It was always like this [pretending to hold loaf and cutting towards the upper left chest]. Eh, Frank [points to left].

[unclear – may be AD's husband or FM]: That was a knife. You should have seen [unclear].

AD: But she was used to cutting it, yeah, that way [pretends to cut bread again].

MDG: Wow.

AD: But that's—then, then he died at 67. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Actually now that you brought up the bread, I remember you telling me—

AD: My mother—

MDG: the ways of making bread in Sydney.

AD: Yeah. My—Florence and my mother, that was their job. They'd make this big tub [makes big circumference with her hands] and it was yah so deep [hand gesture] and I remember

Florence's hands going down in this [arms/hands plunging into pretend depths]. "Come on Annie". I tried. I said, "I can't move it". [Laughing] I was too young. But her and my mother made uh dough. But my mother baked cause then Florence had to go to Minnie's[?]. [Makes hand gestures throughout] Yeah, and some—when she went to do this here maid service, like for my cousin, she slept there and didn't come home sometimes on the weekend. And if she didn't give my mother all the money, sometimes she used to hold a quarter back, or 35 cents and hand it to me to run to the store to get that much peanut butter. And that's how—remember I used to bring it home in the brown paper [gestures to her left].

MDG: Yeah.

AD: So that was a treat, for us to have peanut butter.

MDG: How was it growing up feeling that you had to um had to work and give what you had earned to your mom?

AD: We didn't know any different. It was just natural. Just, just totally natural. Right Frank?  
[Looking to her left]

FM: Yup.

AD: You never gave it a second thought. Yeah. And the same when we came to Hamilton, it was just automatic. The lady across the road [points to her right] seeing my mother with all these kids in this house, Anglo-Saxon lady, she come over to my mother. Wanted somebody to clean her house. I was ten years old. I went and cleaned a two-storey house for 35 cents. Gave it to mother. And I did this for about a year. And then the lady down the street Stella Crawcheck[?] and uh she was an optometrist. She found out I was cleaning Mrs Renny's[?] house and she

found out I only got 35 cents. She ad—called my mother and I went to Stella's and I got two dollars. So that went to my mother. And I stayed with Stella up until my teen years. Yeah. Until I finished high school. Yeah. But uh then it went to five dollars a week, [laughing] so it went to my mother. Yeah, we never thought anything different. As soon as the money came in – one hand, it just went right out to the other.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

[TIME: 35:20]

MDG: So um did you have a sense of, of uh like communal helping and, and pitching in and pulling your weight um so that I don't know that you would feel like you were contributing to the household, was that--

AD: Oh yeah. That's like my brothers. They all handed there money in to, to pay the house off. That was the big thing. We had to pay the house off. I remember that. But we didn't uh—I don't know, it was just automatic. Frank will tell you. It was just--[looks to her left] you never gave two thoughts about it really.

FM: No. Two dollars a week. Full pay.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah. You just, you just gave it. Yeah. Because we knew that it was going to help the family. It was that helping feeling, we were engrained in, from the time we were kids, like in Sydney, yeah.

MDG: And having grown up with so many brothers and sisters and in such a close knit family when you then got married at 17, how, how different or, or did you feel that it, that your life had completely changed?

AD: You mean after I got—

MDG: Getting married.

AD: After getting married, it was, it was different of course. In fact uh, even when I worked at Westing[?] House I was handing my pay over to my parents until I got married but it was different. Like uh then you have your husband and your, get your children, yeah. So I had a boy and a girl. Yeah [background noise of dishes].

MDG: And what are their names?

AD: My son's name is Arthur and my daughter's name is Kathleen. She goes by Kathy and my son's friends all call him Art. Yeah. And uh my son now is 60 and retired. And my daughter is 58, she'll be 59 in September. We have four grandchildren: Lisa, Theresa, Amy and Adam, who are all married and we have one great-granddaughter Taylor[?] Giordano. She's nine years old and we're going to be great-grandparents again in September. Yeah.

MDG: That's great.

AD: So we have a wonderful family.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: And what uh, just to sort of bring it full circle what traditions or um morals or values do you pa—do you feel you passed down that you learned from your parents to your own children.

AD: Work hard. Learn to put some money away for a rainy day, which I've done. And my son, he was only married five years and he seen what happened to his friends and he came and he thanked my husband and I. He says “Mum and Dad, thank-you for raising me the way you did” because uh he didn't have to go on welfare and he didn't have to have somebody handle his finances for him. Yeah. So actually, hard work from my parents. Oh yeah. And uh, my mother used to say when I used to go out on a date “Put five dollars in your stocking”. So you knew how to get home in a taxi if he got fresh [slaps her leg - laughing].

MDG: That's great.

AD: Yeah. She always made sure I had five dollars in my stocking or in my shoe.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah [background noise of dishes]. And put a coat—a hat pin under your coat collar [points to her collar] my sister said, like my sis—older sister said “Anybody get fresh, you just take that out and stab them” [makes stabbing motion - laughing]. So I don't know what more you want to know.



MDG: Well is there anything else, any other stories that you remember that you would like to share?

AD: Um. I'm just trying to think. Oh actually, two. We had a lot of funny times as kids. [Looking to her left] When we get together socially you know, and we talk about what we did as kids and...I'm gonna tell [the fellows] a funny story on you Frankie [looking to her left]. Okay when you got some money from my sister Florence bought some jello. And no refrigeration okay, no icebox or anything. So Florence put the bowl of red jello out on the snow to get cold [hands gesturing]. Guess who drank it all? My brother Frank [laughing].

FM: Do you know how I drank it?

MDG: How?

FM: We used to have a great big tree in our yard and the fence, I used to walk—

AD: What about the mounties?

FM: Around the fence, climb the tree – it always had a rope in it –

AD: And where?

FM: And I would shoo me down the rope –

AD: [AD's husband is talking in the background but unclear something about “horses”– she is talking to him, not responding to FM's story] Oh that, yeah. [She turns to look to her left]

FM: Hang upside down and take the container and drink the jello juice out so there wouldn't be any footprints in the snow.

MDG: [Laughing] Footprints. Wow. That's smart. Wow.

AD: Yeah. Yeah.

FM: Until one time I got tangled in the rope and I couldn't get down [AD laughing].

AD: And Frank, god bless him, when uh we'd get snow and I mean we got snow in Sydney where he carried me [makes corresponding hand gesture] all the way to Eastmount School which was across the road and then he'd carry Marguerite because they couldn't get to Holy Redeemer but...I remember being carried, yeah.

[TIME: 40:03]

MDG: Wow.

AD: Yeah. And my husband wanted me to tell you the story about the Mounties, okay. When we were in Sydney, I would spend like I said a few days with my *comar'* Matergio[?]. Now behind her house [making hand gestures throughout] in on Charlotte Street, the office where the Mounties was there, but in behind *comar'* Matergio's place was the stable for the Mounties with their horses. And they would do their precision riding. And of course, I'm at the back of the fence along with a few other friends that I had made in Sydney that lived on Dorchester Street. So when they were finished, they would lift us up on the horse, and we oh we thought we were the cat's meow and that [laughing].

MDG: [Laughing] Wow.

AD: Yeah, so we had some like, like we get together and we laugh about when we came to Montreal, he [pointing to her left] told you about the eggs. Oh my god, I'll never forget that as long as I live.

MDG: Wow.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: How about them getting all over the, all over the—

AD: Oh the owl, like uh I'm beside—Marguerite's got the eggs and I forget what I was in charge of—I think I was in charge of Junior. And uh, I go like this to Ma [makes elbowing motion with right arm and then stretches out both hands as though holding something], like this. The eggs are dripping. Ah, she grabbed the bag, put it in the garbage. Oh, we, we laugh at that [Looks to her left].

MDG: [Laughing] Was she, was she more upset about the eggs being gone, or about the lady's—

AD: Well the lady's coat--

FM: The lady's coat, fur coat [FM & AD laughing].

AD: Yeah, we, we—

FM: We got out of there fast.

MDG: [Laughing] Oh my god. Wow.

AD: But I can still remember us running in Montreal to get the other train. We're running and the boys are carrying all these bags, oh [waves hands]. Yeah we've had, we've had some fun times. [Makes hand gestures] And we used to get together with our cousins uh you would try to steal a raw potato and you'd, they, one of the boys had a bonfire, and you roasted the potato over the fire. We thought that was great. That was some of our entertainment. Yeah.

MDG: So—

AD: [Looks and points to her left] And uh Frankie and his friends, uh Frankie Cerventi [?], they'd put on these here magic shows. Like it wasn't all work. It, it was a lot of fun times too. They lived uh on uh Lingan Road and uh, uh all us young kids were the audience, you know. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah. No that, we had some good times. Yeah.

MDG: And did the girls usually stick together, and the boys stuck together, or was it very mixed?

AD: Well the girls stuck together cause we were all younger. [Gesturing to her left] They, they didn't want to be bothering with us. We got stuck with Junior, but the boys would go and do what they could do.

FM: When we had the plays, it was the boys.

AD: Oh yeah. We were all together there but uh. Yeah no like, [FM talking at same time – unclear] I think it made us stronger people. To tell you the truth, I think the way we grew up, it not only made us stronger - we started off with nothing and we all appreciate everything that we do have today. Yeah. Yeah.

MDG: That's great.

AD: We do. I think we all appreciate and we're all so grateful that we could give our children a good education and a better way of living. Yeah.

MDG: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

MDG: Well thank you so much.

AD: You're very welcome.

MDG: For having us here and feeding us and everything. It was wonderful—

FM: There's a plaque they gave me when I uh retired from work from my employees.

MDG: Oh that's great.

[Camera fades to black – interview concludes at 43:10]

**[End of interview]**