

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

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NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Vincenza Travale

NAME OF INTERVIEWER: Vikki Cecchetto

NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER: Nadia Mior

TRANSCRIBED BY: Melinda Richter

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ABSTRACT

This is a follow-up interview with Vincenza Travale talking more about her family's experiences during the Second World War and afterwards. Her father, Giovanni Travale, was interned at Petawawa in 1940 to 1941. Giovanni left Racalmuto, Italy in 1923 on the advice of his father and moved to Hamilton, Ontario in search of a better life. There, he lived with an uncle who had immigrated to Canada much earlier. Giovanni lived next door to his future wife, Carmela, whose parents, Gioacchino and Isabella Rallo, also from Racalmuto, arrived in Canada near the beginning of the twentieth century. Gioacchino immigrated first and then brought over his wife and five children to join him in 1917. Vincenza also speaks about her father's generosity and how the internment experience made him appreciate the importance of family. Although Giovanni never explicitly complained about his internment, Vincenza feels that the experience

inspired her father's attitude that being Canadian and integrating into Canadian society was important. This also perhaps influenced his decision to live and work outside of the Italian neighbourhoods in Hamilton.

INTERVIEW

VT: Vincenza Travale, interviewee

VC: Vikki Cecchetto, interviewer

NM: Nadia Mior, videographer

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 0:00:11]

VC: Alright, we're back again with Vincenza Travale to continue our conversation about, uh, the, um...the times in Hamilton, uh, during the Second World War and, uh, just after. Now I think you, you told us before that you weren't very old [Vincenza shakes head] when all of this was happening.

VT: No. [Says very quietly] Yeah, I was, I was just a small child because this, uh, I was born in 1938 and this happened in, uh, 1941.

VC: Yeah, '40, '41.

VT: Yeah. And, um, so I, I was just a tiny child. So [inhales], and, uh, um, my, uh, younger brother was born while my father was away at Petawawa. My older brother, um, wa—is nine years older than I am, but, um, he doesn't remember too much either of the time that my

father was away. And I think that was because, um, my mother and the rest of the family tried to ensure that for us as children life went on pretty much, uh, as usual.

VC: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

VT: Except for the fact that our, our father wasn't around.

VC: [Says faintly] Hmm.

VT: So he doesn't have, um, uh, too many [frowns and shakes head] recollections other than that and other than, as I mentioned earlier, these censored letters coming from my dad. And he as a young...child wondering, uh, What could my father be saying [both Vincenza and Vikki chuckle] that needed to be blackened out and censored?

VC: [Says faintly] Mm hmm.

VT: So other than that, um—and again we were fortunate to have, um, you know, my, uh, maternal grandparents and aunts and uncles around who were, um, very supportive and very helpful, um, in all of that. My dad, uh, again as I mentioned, had his own business and someone was hired to run the business. So, uh, we did have, I guess, a source of income.

VC: [Says faintly] Mm hmm.

VT: Uh, and so we didn't feel any of that. So, you know, actual, personal memories of anything being unusual or different at that time, I was too young, my older brother doesn't really remember anything significant.

VC: And what was your older brother, uh—because is it just the three of you—

VT: Yes. [Nods]

VC: What's your older brother and your younger brothers' names?

VT: Yeah, my older brother is Charles.

VC: Uh huh.

VT: And my oth—younger brother is Jack—[shakes head] John-Jack. And, um, yeah, there just the, uh, the three of us. [Nods]

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: Um.

VC: And, uh, you mentioned your maternal grandparents and, uh, who are, who are they? Uh, what were their names?

VT: Yeah, my maternal grandparents were Gioacchino and Isabella Rallo [Smiles]

VC: Oh!

VT: They, uh, came to this country in the early part of the century. Um, my grandfather came first, as was the, uh, tradition at the time. And then the oldest son, my uncle Diego—Dick—

came, uh, with him. And I guess the tradition was that one at a time the children would come and they would earn money and send it back to Racalmuto in Sicily.

VC: [Laughs]

VT: That's where they originated from. But my grandmother, a, a truly courageous and valiant woman, um, decided this family was not going to be separated any longer. So she had children ranging in age from 16 to three. My mother was seven at the time. And—

VC: And your mother's name?

VT: Carmela.

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: And, uh, the, uh, th—she decided in, in 1916 in—that they would all come to Canada together. So my grandmother, with five children ranging in age from [shakes head] 15 or 16 down to three, left from Sicily with these five children. Now, my grandmother obviously spoke no English. My grandmother was also not literate—

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: —in Italian. So she could not read or write. And the courage of deciding that family was the most important and that she was going to bring that whole family together. So they left in December of 1916 and arrived here in January—

VC: [Chuckles]

VT: —of 19—or arrived Ellis Island—they were—they came through Ellis Island. [Nods]

VC: Oh, I see!

[00:05:16]

VT: And, uh, arrived here in January '17. Nineteen seventeen. They used to joke about the fact that it took them a year to get here—

VC: [Laughs]

VT: —because they left in 1916 and got here in 1917. [Smiles] Now, uh, imagine arriving here—

VC: Yes.

VT: —in the dead of winter—

VC: Yes.

VT: —during the war.

VC: Right.

VT: They were—uh, so as I say, I always say that, um, never in my lifetime, or will any of her descendents, do anything as courageous as she did.

VC: [Unclear]

VT: A woman, probably at that time probably in her late 30s—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —with these children, making that voyage all for the sake of family.

VC: Right.

VT: And, uh, to this day I, uh, respect and honour and cherish...

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: ...what that, that woman and, and what she did.

VC: Yeah.

VT: Because my generation and the generations after me have been the beneficiaries.

VC: Yeah.

VT: And, uh, the way I like to phrase it is, we are the realization of their dream—

VC: Absolutely.

VT: —which was to come to this country for a better life, not for themselves [shakes head], because their lives were full of hard work and sacrifice, but for the family. [Nods] And now several generations later, um, as I say, we are the beneficiaries. We're the realization—

VC: Absolutely.

VT: —of their dream.

VC: Mm hmm. And what about your father's family? Uh, when did they first come to, uh, to Hamilton?

VT: Well my father's father—

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: —who was Calogero—

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: —Travale. He came, um, I think actually before the turn of the century. [Nods]

VC: Oh!

VT: He came and went back. He was one of those—and I think there were a number of them—

VC: Yes.

VT: —that?

VC: Absolutely.

VT: And I'm not exactly sure, but I think he came and went back, uh—

VC: More than once.

VT: —a couple of times. [Nods]

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: But he did not come here permanently. [Shakes head]

VC: Okay.

VT: So my father, uh, grew up, actually, in Racalmuto.

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: In, um—and when he was, um, of age, uh, he, um—I don't know whether he was conscripted or enlisted in what was then—what he called the *Regia Guardia [la Pubblica Sicurezza]*—

VC: Yeah, okay.

VT: —which was I guess a, a military police group.

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: And, uh, he spent three years, therefore, in Rome.

VC: Okay.

VT: Posted in Rome. An—

VC: Do you know, more or less, what period this would have been?

VT: Well, I guess it would have been—he was born in 1901.

VC: Okay.

VT: So I'm going to su-suspect it was 1919...

VC: Teen, 1920.

VT: Twenty.

VC: Yeah.

VT: Whatever age...

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: Because in 1923, on the advice of his father, who said to him—

VC: Ah!

VT: "There's no future for you here in Racalmuto." I mean if you're aware of that area in Sicily—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —the work for the men was in the sulphur and the salt mines, a terrible, d-difficult life.

VC: Yeah.

VT: He said to my dad, “Go to Canada.”

VC: Right.

VT: And so in 1923 my dad, alone, came to Canada. His father and mother were, um—oh, his mother, um...was already—had already died. I think she died in one of the, uh, cholera—

VC: Oh, I see.

VT: —or plagues of the early part because he always talked about the fact that his mother died when he was a child.

VC: Okay.

VT: I'm not exactly sure when. So, in—and he had a sister living, um, in, um, Racalmuto at the time. She stayed.

VC: And what was her name?

VT: Uh, Her name was Calogera.

VC: Okay!

VT: So, at the—on the advice of his dad, he came to Hamilton. He had an uncle here and my dad always said he came with a suitcase, uh, which I still have actually [smiles]—

VC: [Laughs, unclear]

VT: —and a debt of 400 dollar.

VC: Wow.

VT: I guess that was his passage and expenses—

VC: Did—

VT: —coming to Canada.

VC: And would the uncle from here—uh, what was his name? Would he have been the one to have, uh, given him the money?

VT: Yes, yes and sponsored him I guess.

VC: Yeah.

VT: And so, but my father quite proudly told us that he repaid that debt and later in his life he always said, “You know, I came with a suitcase and 400 dollar debt. Now if I were to return, between family and possessions and property, it would take a whole ship.”

VC: [Laughs]

VT: So that was his way of indicating—

VC: [Laughs] Yeah.

VT: —you know, that life had been good to him and for him here.

[00:10:13]

VC: Right.

VT: And, um, so he came in 1923 and my, um—his uncle lived next door to where my maternal grandparents—

VC: Ah!

VT: —and family were then living, at the corner of Barton and Bay in Hamilton.

VC: Wow. And what was your, uh, your, um, uh, father's uncle's name?

VT: Francesco Travale.

VC: Okay.

VT: Yeah. And—

VC: And how long had he been here in Hamilton?

VT: [Shakes head] Uh, that I real—I don't know.

VC: Okay.

VT: But, um, I suspect for a number of years before that. Maybe at the turn of the century.

VC: Okay.

VT: Yeah, um, because he'd been here for a few years, 'cause he was established and—

VC: Oh okay, I see. Okay.

VT: —had a house and, and family.

VC: Okay.

VT: So my unc—my father arrived there. So they used to joke about the, the fact that [Vikki laughs in background], uh, he married the girl next door.

VC: Next door. [Laughs]

VT: And he did say that, uh, when he arrived, the first—after the first night he slept at my uncle's—at his uncle's...

VC: Uh huh.

VT: ...that he looked out in the, the yard, the house overlooked the, uh—my mother's family's yard, and he said he saw her that first day.

VC: Oh!

VT: Now whether that was a romanticized version of what happened, I don't know, but they used to joke about that.

VC: And did he say it was love at first sight?

VT: Well, he didn't know that expression, but I think that's what he was implying. [Smiles] And, uh, they were married in 1928.

VC: Okay.

VT: Uh, and, um, yeah, so that's, that's kind of my family history.

VC: Alright.

VT: And, uh...and, oh then later—to just follow up—my, uh, grandfather, my father's father, died during the war.

VC: Okay.

VT: And I do remember, I guess communication wasn't great, that he didn't find out until after the war that his father had died.

VC: Oh dear.

VT: So I remember that. And then my father—uh, I mentioned that he had a sister—

VC: Yes.

VT: —who was there. In the meanwhile she had married and had a family of, um, I think five or six children. And in the 1950s, you know, with the war over and things settling down, uh, my father, God bless him, brought the entire family here.

VC: Wow.

VT: Mother, father, children, set them up—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —in a house on, uh, MacNab Street and, um, you know, gave that family, uh, a future here in Canada. And, um, to this day, those—that family, my cousins and now their children and grandchildren, always speak with, with, with great, great love and affection and gratitude to my father who did that. I mean he, he did not have them come over one at a time and earn their way.

VC: Right.

VT: Again, the idea of the whole family—

VC: Right.

VT: —uh, together. So that was a, a very, uh, generous and, and thoughtful act on my father and mother's part, because my mother obviously—

VC: Obviously.

VT: —went along with it. And again shows the commitment—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —to family and the, the family being together and the, um, realization that the opportunities for good life were here in Canada.

VC: Yeah.

VT: And my father always felt that way.

VC: Mm hmm, mm hmm.

VT: He never, um, he longed to go back—

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: —to Italy or Sicily. And he had seen Rome, so it wasn't just, you know, the small town—

VC: Right, right, right.

VT: —in Sicily. And he always, always said, “You know, it was—it's Canada that gave me and gave my family opportunities and a, a good life, despite the internment.”

VC: Yeah. Do you think that maybe the internment also made him, uh, want to, to, uh, to congregate his family much closer to him?

VT: Probably because I mean my—I don't, I don't recollect words from him on this, but certainly the message that I got over the years, uh, was family was important. I mean not just his family, but my mother's family.

VC: Right.

VT: He became, you know, very much a part of their family and my aunts and uncles, um, loved my father and he was very helpful and, and generous—

VC: Right.

VT: —uh, to them. I know, um, you know, later learned about loans of money—

VC: Yes.

VT: —and, and help, he was quite a handy man, helping them with their homes and, and all. And later, in the 1950s, uh, built a cottage on Lake Erie and made that the gathering spot for—

VC: For—

VT: —all in the family. And to this day we all, we all remember that. So I think it did maybe, uh, make him even more aware of the importance of family, close fa—close-knit family.

[00:15:44]

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: I think also it, um...made him realize that for this internment, that kind of situation never to recur, needed for the next generations—myself [gestures to herself] and future generations—to be Canadian.

VC: Yes.

VT: And to participate. I, I've, uh, participated in the mainstream of—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —Canadian life and although I don't remember him telling me to do that—

VC: Right, right.

VT: —I think that was the message, was, uh, we were not to be—to isolate ourselves. We were not to be bitter.

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: He was never bitter against the Canadian government. Uh, there was a level at which he understood that it was war and that in times of war, uh, governments have to, uh, take action. And I think I, I mentioned, uh, earlier the, the comment that the, um, RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]—

VC: Yes.

VT: —officer made to my mother about in times of war we act first and ask questions later. I, I think he understood that and, um—although he, he always said the Canadian government owed him eight months of his life...

VC: Absolutely! [Laughs]

VT: ...uh, he, he—there was, there was not, uh, bitterness. His bitterness was directed, as I talked about earlier, to the belief that there were, uh, people within the, uh, Hamilton Italian community who informed—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —or indicated who should be taken and who should not be taken. Um, that's where his focus was [Vikki laughing in background] in terms of any negative—and, and so, you know, maybe that was a good thing—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —because it, it certainly didn't colour us as a family—

VC: Right.

VT: —or him in bitterness or hostility. And even his, um, disdain for the quote, “informers,” later in life it, it became [shrugs], um—it, it was there, but it, it, it wasn't something that he harboured deep within him—

VC: Right. Yeah.

VT: —with really strong, negative, uh, feelings.

VC: Feelings. And it didn't, it didn't influence the rest of his life.

VT: [Shakes head] No, not at all, not at all. But I think what did influence him is I think when he came back he really focused on family and work.

VC: Right.

VT: You know, and this idea of maybe being more, um, active in the community, uh, I think he, he pulled back a bit on that. [Nods]

VC: Okay.

VT: Um, and, uh—

VC: Had he been, had he been fairly active—

VT: Yeah, in—

VC: —in the community before?

VT: He was. Um, I, I think he was, um...an officer with R[?] club.

VC: Okay, mm hmm.

VT: Um, and he used to go—

VC: Right.

VT: —to quote “The Club.”

VC: Right.

VT: It was a social club. Um, but, um, after that I don’t recollect that he ever got—I think, uh—
yes, ‘cause I remember the little book he had. He had paid his dues—

VC: Okay. [Laughs]

VT: —as a member because—but I, I, I’m—my recollection is that he didn't actively participate
anymore. [Shakes head]

VC: Right.

VT: Maybe he went to the odd meeting, but, uh, my sense is that prior to the internment he
was—and he was a younger man too.

VC: Sure.

VT: And, and, you know, um, didn't have the family responsibilities. And for them it was a social—

VC: Absolutely.

VT: —gathering together in the neighbourhood. So he stayed a paid member [Vikki laughs in background], but e-especially in the later years I don't remember him ever, um, being active or participating.

VC: Did he become active in, um, in, uh, Canadian organizations after that?

[00:20:00]

VT: No, not really. [Shakes head] Uh, but, uh, what he did do is he established his business way away from the, um, north end of Hamilton—

VC: Okay.

VT: —where we lived. And I think that was, uh—we lived at—on Barton Street West, across from All Souls Church.

VC: Okay.

VT: And, uh, lived there—I mean, they lived—we lived there until 1951. They moved there in 1938, 10 years after they were married, bought that home. [Camera zooms out] And we lived there until 1951.

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: But in the 40s my father established his business—

VC: Which was?

VT: A shoe repair business.

VC: Okay.

VT: Actually at Barton and Grovenor. [Nods]

VC: Oh, alright. So it was—

VT: Which is almost at Ottawa Street. So that's a long way, away from—

VC: From the—

VT: —the north end—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —Italian community and the Sherman and Barton Italian community. So I think, um, I don't ever remember talking about it—

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: —but you know, it has occurred to me that that was his way of saying, I'm gonna be part of that broader community.

VC: Yes. Mm hmm.

VT: The next, uh, example of that is in 1951, which was still fairly early, we moved as a family to Ottawa Street South.

VC: Okay.

VT: Again, away from the Italian—both Italian communities. Although ours was always the—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —the north end Italian community. Away from the Italian church. [Shakes head]

VC: Okay.

VT: You know we became members of the, the local parish, which at that time was St., uh, John's.

VC: Okay.

VT: So 1951, that was fairly early—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —for people moving out of the, the comfort and the, um, you know, support of that tight Italian community. Which it was. I remember growing up, uh, and to this day I probably could name every family [Vikkik laughing in background] on Barton Street, both sides of the street between James and Bay. I mean it was that tight a, a community. So, those those two, um, behaviours, if you like, actions, I think do speak of—although he wasn't active in quote “organizations”—starting his business there—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —moving us as a family—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —uh, to, uh, the east end, you know, of Hamilton where—I remember when we moved to Ottawa Street. There wasn't [shrugs] an Italian family on the street.

VC: Yeah.

VT: And, um, you know, that was, that was quite different. So they may have been his, uh—

VC: His way out.

VT: —acting out—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —of this idea that we needed to be part of the, the community rather than, you know, staying, uh—

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: —close tight in the, uh, the Italian neighbourhoods.

VC: Right. Now you said, uh, he indicated that the Canadian government owed him eight months of his life.

VT: [Smiles and nods]

VC: Did he ever actively try to, um, apply for redress?

VT: [Nods] Yeah. They, they did. I remember seeing—and, um, prior to your visit I, I looked to see if maybe I still had it, but it obviously [shrugs] got lost somewhere—I do remember seeing an itemized list of the costs involved [begins to laugh]...

VC: Really!

VT: ...in, uh, you know, what he lost in business—

VC: Sure.

VT: —and, and all of that. But, um, I, uh, I, I couldn't find it [shakes head] in what I have left of, you know, records and, and, uh, documents of his. But I do remember, eh, somewhere along the line seeing that because, as I say, he used to say—uh, and I, I think he meant that more than the money owed—

VC: Absolutely.

VT: —I always understood it as, you know, eight months—

VC: His life.

VT: —deprived of his family—

VC: Yeah.

VT: —and his, his life. But, uh, it obviously impressed me as a child that here was a documentation of the money that they owed him. [Laughs]

VC: Wow.

VT: But, uh—and I don't know how that got submitted or pro-processed. [Shakes head] I do know that nothing came of it.

VC: Nothing came of it.

VT: Yeah.

VC: Yeah.

VT: Yeah.

VC: Wow, that's too bad.

VT: Yeah.

VC: And how else do you think, uh, your father's, um, time, the internment, etcetera, may have influenced you as children?

VT: [Looks up in thought]

VC: I know that you said that you, you felt that, that he, uh, that he wanted all of you to, to really, uh, become part of the establishment, become educated and I know all three of you have, have become educated and all of that. [Vincenza nods] Was there anything else that, um, that, that you think might have, um, might have influenced the way, uh, you children grew up or, um, or in some ways, in other ways interacted, uh, with others? Did, did that—uh, do you think your father's internment had anything to do with that?

[00:25:23]

VT: [Sighs and shakes head] Truthfully, I don't know.

VC: Okay.

VT: Because if the influences were there, they were subtle.

VC: Okay.

VT: And I'm sure that an experience like that had an impact—

VC: Absolutely, absolutely.

VT: —on him and probably on my mother as well.

VC: Absolutely.

VT: But it was not, um...voiced...

VC: Okay.

VT: ...in any way. So would our childhood have been different had he not been interned?

[Shakes head] I have no way of knowing that.

VC: Knowing. Yeah, exactly.

VT: Um, I, um, I don't know, because again, in my family, um, as children we were, uh, spared the harsh realities of life.

VC: Right. Okay.

VT: And that is kind of typical through the family.

VC: Right.

VT: So as children, um, we would not have been—you know, these kinds of things would not have been discussed in front of us.

VC: Right.

VT: Um, so, I wouldn't know, um, how—and, and as I say, my brother was nine years older than me—

VC: Sure.

VT: —and he doesn't remember [shakes head] any discussions of this nature. And I know that it would be part of my father's nature and certainly my mother's that this was not, uh, for children's ears.

VC: Okay.

VT: And any negative of the, um, experience, uh, would not—we would not have been, um—that would never have been told to us.

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: So how it changed them or what impact it had, I don't know. All I can say, is for us as children it wasn't negative.

VC: Right.

VT: So they did whatever they needed to do to keep our growing up...

VC: The same.

VT: ...normal, the same, good.

VC: Yeah, yeah.

VT: We felt protected, we felt safe, we didn't feel threatened. I don't know if my father ever wondered whether this could happen again or not—

VC: Right.

VT: —but that was never part of—and there was never fear of going out into the community and being part of it. We were never, um, kept from that. We were never—uh, we, we never, uh, were made paranoid—

VC: Right.

VT: —about this experience. Now, whether my father initially—later I, I—he didn't, he put it all behind him and, and, and life, uh, went on for him. And actually most of what we know or have heard came later.

VC: Right.

VT: As an adult...

VC: Right.

VT: ...I heard the, the stories. As a child, um... [Shakes head]

VC: Yeah.

VT: And you know—and, and interestingly since our last conversation I, uh, had a way—a weekend away with some cousins of mine— [Smiles]

VC: Oh! [Laughs]

VT: My age. And, um, somehow—

VC: Also from, also from the Hamilton area?

VT: Yeah, yeah.

VC: Okay.

VT: And we, uh, uh, somehow—I don't know how we got onto it—maybe it was shortly after our previous conversation. So I was telling this story. One of my cousins, who is almost my age—she's a couple of years younger—she had no idea.

VC: Oh!

VT: No idea that my father had been interned.

VC: Interned.

VT: So there you go! In terms of it didn't—

VC: Wow!

VT: Her older sister, who is a year older than I am, uh, knew about it. But she who, I, I, I guess...yeah [nods], she's just a couple of years younger than me, she said, "I had no idea!" So even in—now this would have be-been my mother's sister's family.

VC: Okay.

VT: Um, she said, "I had no idea!" So I told her the whole story. "Oh my!" she said, you know, "how surprising."

VC: Yeah.

VT: Now her older sister knew and that probably was because she and I went to high school together. So, you know, maybe over there years there were—but this other cousin to whom I've been very close, we've travelled together, the whole business, she only knew this in June of 2011...

VC: Wow!

VT: ...that this had happened. So you see it's a family that, uh, that doesn't, um, dwell on the, the—again, the harsh realities.

VC: Right.

VT: You know, they're there, you deal with them, and you move on.

VC: Right. Yeah.

VT: But children are not—

VC: Were not exposed to it.

VT: Yeah, yeah.

VC: Were any of your other relatives, like your, your mother's family, were any them, uh, either interned or, um, indicated as enemy aliens?

VT: [Shakes head] No, not that I'm aware of. None of them were interned.

VC: Okay.

VT: My father was the only one.

VC: Okay.

VT: Um, and, uh, my, um—no, no, none of them. None of them were.

VC: Not even the uncle or, or...

VT: No. [Shakes head]

VC: Okay.

[00:30:52]

VT: My—the uncle, the, the 93 year old uncle [Vikki laughing in background], who, who was the youngest in that family was actually, uh, in the Canadian services.

VC: Oh, alright.

VT: At the same time—

VC: Uh, what was his name?

VT: —that all of this—

VC: What was his name?

VT: Uh, John Rallo.

VC: Okay. At the same time as all this was happening?

VT: [Nods] As all this was happening. Yeah, 'cause, 'cause I ask him about, uh, "What do you remember?" He said, "I wasn't here."

VC: Here. Oh!

VT: Yeah, yeah.

VC: Was he serving, by any chance, in Italy or—

VT: No. [Shakes head]

VC: No.

VT: No, no.

VC: Okay.

VT: Yeah.

VC: So that was—that's it. So you're, you're now spreading the information about all of this to your relatives! [Laughs]

VT: [Smiles] Yeah. Well, as I say, the older generation all knew.

VC: Yes.

VT: I, I was really quite surprised that this cousin of mine, uh, didn't know and, uh, I don't—you know, you don't know how that, that happened. Now there, there were, there were four of us that day. The oth—the, the two, the other two did know.

VC: Okay.

VT: Yeah.

VC: So that's good. Anything else that you want to add about this whole, um, experience, um, uh, and the effects, the, the effects that it had, uh, on you or, or the family afterwards or, uh, the legacy that you might, um, that you might—

VT: Well, I mean, I've, I've said it before, I think the legacy, unspoken or the...counsel, advice unspoken, was for it never to happen again, uh, we needed to be Canadians. And that was always, um, strong. It still is strong with me. You know, uh, people ask me, "What are you?" Wanting to know your heritage. And I always say, "Canadian." "Oh!" But, you know, with a name like mine—

VC: Yeah. [Laughs]

VT: —they say... Yeah, my heritage is Italian, but I was born here and I'm first and foremost a Canadian.

VC: Yeah.

VT: And I think that may have been the unspoken legacy—

VC: Right.

VT: —from my father's, um, my father's ex-experience. Certainly—and again I've discussed this with my brothers—um, no, we're not aware of any negative feeling. [Shakes head] Um, um, my father was a, a good, generous, hard-working, committed to family man. And, uh, was he more intensely that because of the internment? I don't know.

VC: Yeah.

VT: Maybe, maybe. I suspect that not.

VC: Yeah. [Laughs]

VT: I suspect he would have been like that, uh, no matter what.

VC: What.

VT: It was in his nature. We, we—my brothers and I often joke about the worth—work ethic [Vikki laughs in background] that he gave us because, you know, we—as older people now we sometimes question the younger work ethic. And we—I just had this discussion recently with one of my brothers about, “Well I can thank my father for the work ethic that he left me.” [Vikki laughs in background] So was that more intense? Who knows.

VC: Yeah.

VT: Hard to know. Um, I guess it had some impact on him—

VC: Sure.

VT: —but whatever it was, it, it, uh, it wasn't told to us.

VC: Yeah. It's hard to gage, because again what we're finding is that not, not many people actually talked about—

VT: [Nods] Yeah.

VC: —their experiences and I guess your father was, was also of the same mind.

VT: Yeah. Yeah, much later in life, you know—

VC: Right.

VT: —he told the stories. And I, and I think I mentioned earlier he, he didn't, um, he feel mistreated.

VC: Right.

VT: Um, I don't know what others felt, but he always felt he was away at camp or college. That's, that's how they used to, uh, later refer to it.

VC: Yeah.

VT: You know, “When, when I was at college,” or “When I was at camp.”

VC: Right.

VT: Um, because, um, he didn't—as I say, other than being deprived of his freedom and his family and his work, because work was so important to my father. He's probably the only person I have ever known who truly loved work—

VC: Loved work.

VT: —truly loved work. And when there wasn't work to be done, he'd make work to be done.

[Laughs]

VC: Did he ever mention, um, working as a shoemaker in—during the internment?

VT: No. No. [Shakes head]

VC: Oh! That's interesting.

VT: No. My understanding was they were all kind of leisure activities.

VC: Okay.

VT: And chopping wood—

VC: Okay.

VT: —was something they did. Um, I remember him talking about that.

VC: Okay.

VT: And, you know, the other, um—he came home, evidently, hail and hearty. You know. [Puffs out chest]

VC: [Laughs]

VT: Um, I, I do remember that being said because, you know, they were out in the fresh air, they were, I guess, getting exercise every day.

VC: Right, right.

VT: And, um, and he never, um—I never heard any complaints about food.

VC: Mm hmm.

VT: Well, I, I—he probably did complain about the food because as far as he was concerned the only good food in this world was my mother's cooking. [Laughs]

VC: [Laughs]

VT: I mean that, until almost the day he died was, uh... So I suspect there were complaints about food, but none that we heard.

VC: Right. Okay. Alright. Well thank you very much!

VT: Thank you.

[Fades out at 00:36:29]

[End of interview]