

**EI-1178**

**FEDERICO FILIPINI**

**BIRTHDATE: June 19, 1922**

**INTERVIEW DATE: FEBRUARY 13, 2001**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 78**

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**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.**

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**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**ITALY, 1947**

**AGE: 25**

**SHIP: MARINE PERCH**

**PORT: NAPLES**

**RESIDENCES:**

LEVINE: Today is February 3<sup>rd</sup>—13<sup>th</sup>. Sorry. And I'm here in Deerfield Beach, Florida. I'm here with Federico Filipini, who came from Italy from the port of Naples on the Marine Perch, the ship, in October—October, 30<sup>th</sup>, 1947. And Mr. Filipini's birth date is June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1922 so, let's see. That makes you how old? That makes you—

FILIPINI: Today?

LEVINE: Yeah, 78?

FILIPINI: Seventy-nine.

LEVINE: Well, you—you didn't have your birthday yet this year, right?

FILIPINI: No.

LEVINE: You're going to have it.

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FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, okay. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. Okay, let's start by your saying—what was your name? Was your name exactly the same on the ship's manifest when you came—

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —to Ellis Island?

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: And where in Italy were you born?

FILIPINI: Okay. [clears throat] The—can you hear my voice?

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Okay. I was born in Perugia [PH] [unclear], Provincia [PH] Perugia. It's northern Italy close to Florence. And—but I don't stay too long in Perugia because my family, they want to come back over here in this country.

LEVINE: Well—

FILIPINI: When—

LEVINE: Maybe you could say something about—had your father been in the United States?

FILIPINI: That's—that's why we over here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Okay, tell about that.

FILIPINI: My—my mother and father—my—my father—he was—he went in United State—he come over United State and he met my mother. He was working [unclear] in Sugar Nuts, [PH] Pennsylvania. And he met my mother. So—which in Scranton. And he got—

LEVINE: Was your mother born in the United States?

FILIPINI: No, but she went to United State when she was about six years old.

LEVINE: Ah, uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: So then my—my mother and father, they got marry. They got marry in Sugar Nuts—Scranton. I mean, in Pennsylvania. And they—and they are—you know, my—my sister—I had a sister. She passed away. And my sister born and my father, he want to take a trip in Italy to show to my grandmother and my grandfather the new wife, the wife and my mother and his self and the baby, and Francisca [PH], the bambina [PH]. And so he went to—he went—he went to Italy. When they—that time, it was a problem with the First World War, all this stuff. And a lot of people—a lot of people, they got stuck in Italy.

LEVINE: So he went before 1914? He went back? Do you know what year he went back?

FILIPINI: I think so. He went back—I think so. He went back in 1919.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Yeah. But what happened—what happened, because it was a lot of [unclear]—[chuckles] he had to go in the army.

LEVINE: In the Italian Army?

FILIPINI: Yeah, my father, he had to go in the army because they confuse it with the war and everything else, you know. They was going—well, he had to go in Italy. He had to go in—he had to come back in Italy to—to go in the army, and then be free from the Italian government and to come over here. When they were already there he went to France. And in France, you know, with the idea to get the paper, the passport and to come back in It—in United States. But you see, my mother and my father, they had a [unclear]. They used to call LaCart—[unclear] LaCart [PH] [unclear]. So the [unclear]—they was involved with the [unclear]—the regular paper to be American. But I had a paper to—with the possibility to go—to come over in Amer—to be American, to take the American citizenship. They—let me see—they—so my father—my father, he went to—he went to France with the family to try to get—to try to come over the United States. But he couldn't do it because there was a lot of problem. So he went back to Italy. And—and there he—he figured, you know, maybe someday he was going to come over in this country. And this—someday it went—it was a lot of day because they went through almost—almost 30 year.

LEVINE: He—30 years, he stayed?

FILIPINI: He had to stay in Italy. He tried to come over here in this country but he couldn't make it, because there was a lot of things involved between

American government and Italian government. So the immigration wasn't easy after the First World War.

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: So we stay—he stay in Italy and he find a job in Rome. Excuse me. He find a job in Rome and we—we all move from Perugia to Rome and this is where we start a life.

LEVINE: Oh. And you were born in Perugia but you soon after—

FILIPINI: I was born in Per—but I was two years old when they took me back to Rome.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. [telephone rings]

FILIPINI: Oh-oh.

LEVINE: Okay, we're going to pause here. [tape off/on] What do you remember about growing up in Rome?

FILIPINI: Okay. I was in Rome—I was in Roma for—I mean, I grew up in Rome, you know, because my mother and father, when they went to Rome I was two years old. So—and I went to school in Rome and I went to—I—I work in Rome and I done anything what the person had to be done. Then—

LEVINE: Do you remember things that your mother and father told you when you were growing up about America, about the United States?

FILIPINI: Yes. My mother, she was very anchy [PH]—very anchy to come back in Italy—to come back United States.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Because she love the United States. She—she—she went to the United States when she was six years old.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: So she love to come back to the United States. And she all the way explain it to me and my sister, our goal was to come back to the United States, to come over in the United States. And we done—and she do—she did everything, you know, to—my mother and my father—and so to go back in the United—to come over back in the United States.

LEVINE: Can you think of any particular things that she told you about the United States, maybe things she liked or why she wanted to go back or—

FILIPINI: Yeah, yeah. She was to—she was to—she wanted to go back because she liked the system and everything else in the United States. All right? And she had 11 brother and sister. And that was a big family, larger family. They call Fanuci [PH].

LEVINE: That was her maiden name?

FILIPINI: Yeah, he maid—her name was Ilcilia Fanuci. And so she was very—she was very—very anchy and very happy to go back—to come back in America in United States. Because first thing, she left all the family, all the brother and sister and her mother and father and everybody, and second, because she liked the United States very much. So—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And she want me and—she want my sister. I wasn't born at the time. She want my sister, you know, to—to see—to know the United States. Because I—I was born in 1922 and I was born in [unclear] in Perugia. Let me think.

LEVINE: You were born on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1922.

FILIPINI: June 19, 1922.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: I was born in Perugia. I mean, I was born in Perugia and—let me refresh my memory because sometime—I got so many thing I want to say.

LEVINE: Yeah, that's okay.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, maybe if we talked about your father, like, what did—where was he when you were growing up in Rome? Was he around or was he—

FILIPINI: Oh, yeah. He had a job with the Instituto Casa Popolare [PH].

LEVINE: What's that?

FILIPINI: It's—it was a company. Instituto Casa Popolare. It was a company that was to carry all the working people to give you home and everything else.

LEVINE: Ah.

FILIPINI: He was in charge of this. So he was all—all the way, you know, busy with the—you know, with the Italian and they come to Rome. And they was—he was, you know, giving the—the—the home, the house and everything else. And it was pay. You know, just like a—over here, what's—

LEVINE: Like a social service? Was it like a government service?

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Yeah, Instituto Casa Popolare and—

LEVINE: Say it—say it slower so—

FILIPINI: Instituto Casa Popolare.

LEVINE: I see.

FILIPINI: Instituto—and Casa mean home. Popolare—

LEVINE: Right, and Popolare—

FILIPINI: —and people.

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: Okay.

LEVINE: Okay.

FILIPINI: And—and they do—they—this particular company, it was do lare [PH]—lare good thing for the people in Rome. You know, for the people, because in the beginning—the beginning, lare people in Italy, know, they was kind of confused because it was the end of the war, First World War and everything else. But they—and they—I—they—everything was okay. And we start—do okay with the—me and my mother and my sister and my father.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And then my father, he had this beautiful job and we had a home, everything. And my mother was include. And so we don't have to worry about nothing, you know. And—but my mother, she still—she was

anxious to go—come back in this country. Don't [several words unclear] but she want to come over the United States because United States was—it was the country where she was born. No she wasn't born but she was—she was in the United States when she was six years old.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So—

LEVINE: So—so you were there when the Second World War started.

FILIPINI: I was 19 years old when the Second World War—in 1940. And they called me in the army. I spent three year in the army, three year in the war. I was the—in front infantry—infantry—

LEVINE: Infantry.

FILIPINI: Infantry.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Eighty-first Infantry. It was a company in Rome. And then I spent three year.

LEVINE: And what was the most—what experiences about being in the infantry for three years—what are the things that you remember most about that?

FILIPINI: Being in the army—[clears throat]—excuse—being in the army this time in Italy, especially in Italy, was very danger, because there was a lot of confusion with the Mussolini government, the king government, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And I was lucky because I was—they—at the—we had two different army in Italy, the fascists and the king. So I join—I don't join. I went into the army. So I stay with the king army because—well, you—I could go to the fascist but I wasn't too crazy to be with the fascists because a lot of thing. I was making more money to be with the fascists. But I wasn't too crazy. And I—and I don't go in the army for making money.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: So I go—I was going to the army because they call me to go to the army.

LEVINE: What was it about the fascists that—that turned you away from—from that army?

FILIPINI: 1940—yeah, 1949—no, 1940, it was already this—the thing with—with Hitler, the Jewish, the fascist and all this stuff. And so when I left—when—when I—when, in 1943—'43, I ran away from the army. So I hire myself because the Germany join with the fascist, and they was looking all for the young people to put in the army to fight. But it was very danger because I lost a lot of friend, a lot of friend. And because some people, they was go—in the mountain. Some people was—some people was going, you know, different places to try to—they—they stay away from the government—from—from the government, because the government was—they was very bad, very, very bad. You know, the fascist, they was very bad. And so I spend—I spend 19 years—19 year with the government, with the fascists and all this stuff. And let me see. I want to try to remember because I spent 19 year—

LEVINE: You spent 19 years or your 19<sup>th</sup> year? You spent—

FILIPINI: No, no, no. I—I don't spent 19 year—

LEVINE: No.

FILIPINI: —in the army.

LEVINE: No.

FILIPINI: I only spend three year in the army.

LEVINE: Ah, right.

FILIPINI: Yeah. But [tape off/on]—

LEVINE: Were you in the king's army—

FILIPINI: I was in the king—

LEVINE: —the whole time?

FILIPINI: Yeah, all the time. Now, the—what happened—what happened—because I couldn't do—I—I was there. I was discharged from the army because I had heart trouble. So they—but—I shouldn't say this because—but I tried avoid the—to going—to be in the—it be in the army and during the war. It was very danger.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So I didn't. And I come out pretty good. So—but they—they don't send me to the war but they send me to watch the prisoner of war.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: Because the German and the fascist that was in the war, they was taken prisoner. And the prisoner used to [unclear] to the Italian Army what—the people there that was Italian—we all were in Italian Army but we—how do you say in English? This—we went—we went to [unclear] for the war. We—we—this second and—in—in a [unclear]—in the back because—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: So we would do other work.

LEVINE: I see. Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: And that's what happened.

LEVINE: So where did you—where did you watch these prisoners of war?

FILIPINI: It was a place they call Fatosabina [PH]. It was 30 miles from Rome. And I was really [chuckles]—I was really happy to go down there because I was very close to my house.

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: You know, I used to—like I—like I say, I used to live in Rome and I was very close to my house. And I used to go home almost every weekend.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: I used to take a train—Fatosabina and go to It—to Rome and stay the weekend and go back on Monday.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Yeah, so—

LEVINE: So what was that experience like for you, watching over these prisoners of war?

FILIPINI: Okay, I was—I was getting very, very familiar with the—we had South Africa prisoner. We had a Canadian prisoner. We had English prisoners. We had all those people. And they—when I was in—in a camp, I got lucky enough to meet the captain in charge to the prisoner—prisoner—prisoner food. The food they was giving to the prisoner of war. What you do is come—it was come from Canada to—through Red Cross. And there—and we—we would—we would give it to—to the prisoners—

LEVINE: Prisoners.

FILIPINI: —in [unclear]. And so I got very familiar with the prisoner. And they used to like me so much because I used to help in—for their food and everything else, so to make sure they had food, it wasn't spoil. You know, and—but they—what happen, they [unclear]. Wait a minute. So in 19—in 19—in—when I—when I—

LEVINE: Let's see. You were there for three years.

FILIPINI: Yeah, I was—

LEVINE: You were watching over them and then—and they—and you—

FILIPINI: The prisoner of war. I was watching—

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: —the prisoner of war, you know.

LEVINE: And you had a good relationship with them.

FILIPINI: I had a very good relationship. A matter of fact, see, the Germany—they took over the camp. And they took—they was taking all the young people, young soldiers like me, younger. And they was taking to Germany.

LEVINE: Ah.

FILIPINI: So I left—I escape. So I stay in the woods for most of the week. I walk all the way to Fatosabina, to Rome, all night. We used to walk and we used to hide in the daytime and walk in the night. So I went back to—to Rome and my mother and father and everybody else. And they was very happy because, naturally, you know—but I had—I, myself, [unclear] because the German—it was looking for—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Not only me but many, many other young—young soldier.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So I—we had to hide. Now, when I took this trip to go in Italy—to go home, when we—when we left and go home, it was—it was a prisoner, South Africa prisoner—war. He joined with us. He would speak Italian really good. So he joined us. “Frederico, it’s okay if I go with you? You know, so I don’t have to be back with Germany and be a prisoner?” I say, “Yeah, come on. Join.” And so he come over with me and few other friend. And I took him home in my house for nine months and there was very danger.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Very danger because the Germany—the German was—they was [unclear], you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So he was—he was—

FILIPINI: Prisoner of war.

LEVINE: A prisoner of war, a German prisoner of war?

FILIPINI: No.

LEVINE: No.

FILIPINI: South Africa.

LEVINE: A South African. But he wanted to go with you to escape the camp.

FILIPINI: Yeah, he want a—he want somebody to—to be protect and guide where he want to go, because what he had to do just hide up there until the—Germany was—come back to Rome and, you know, and—and everybody know the story about it. So they went back to Rome and they pass a law that went all the way to the north. And then if you could hide and get away for the particular time, then you was free. You had that worry for nothing. So—and they stay in my house for nine months. I feed [unclear] and they—I give you some civilian clothes. But the boy—the prisoner, the guy, he would speak Italian very good. He had dark hair. So when you—when I gave him my—my clothes and everything else, there was a [unclear] and he was really happy. And he look like Italian.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And many time I—we used to take a chance because, you know, young— young people—although we take a chance. So we used to, you know, take a walk, go in different place in Rome and everything else. And eventually, we would talk Italian so, you know. But once in awhile, the Germany and the fascist, they was making—ah, how do you say in English—a raid, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: They block so many place with a truck. They block and they start looking for all those prisoner, all the Italian young—younger chil—younger people and everything else. And so it's—we would—we would go outside, walk, but we couldn't take too much chance because, you know, they would—they would catch you. I had a lot of friend of mine that was a little bit too—too [unclear], you know, and they got caught. And they sent them to Casino [PH]—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: —to work in a—what—to dig in—to dig in—what do you call it—trenchare [PH]?

LEVINE: A trench?

FILIPINI: Trench.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: To dig a trench for the—you know, for the fascianare [PH]. And a lot of the—they got kill.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So we—I had to—I had to fight—all the time, I had to fight. I figured I'm sacrificing myself but I—I'm going to come out alive, because this—this—only—only game—only game that we had to try to survive. And they—in my—in my house, see, my father—because my father used to be person in charge of those big building—he used to do the Casa Popolare—so he had a chance to hide those people. So the particular section we were—it was a nice—nine building, a seven-floor building, each building. And they had, you know—in each building they had everything—everything, the place where you go hang the clothes outside for the—for dry the clothes. And downstair there was all the big washing—because, you know, we learn the washing machine when—the women, was do by hands. You know, wash all the clothes, our clothes and everything else. So it was a lot of—a lot of place my father can hide, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: He was very scared but he tried—so and—and he was—he was—he was—keep watching us. And he say, “Please, don’t be crazy. Don’t do the things, you know, because if they catch you, you know, they may kill you.” And so they were—we had—we had—my fath—and the building—and the [unclear] they had nine building. And the [unclear] where we—so I took a charger about this [unclear] because I hide Jewish people. I hide South Africa and I hide Italian soldier. Italian soldier, they can’t go to Sicily to, you know—to join the family because there was a war in between.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So I [unclear]—I make [unclear], you know. Everybody—everybody—they—they was saving.

LEVINE: You mean, they went and stayed in your father’s—in the buildings too?

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: So we fix—we fix bed, all the stuff up the ceiling, you know, where those guy—I used to stay too because, you know—because usually the—the German and the fascist, they used to come over in the nighttime there to check for guy. But my father—you know, they trusted my father. My father, he was a good man. And—

LEVINE: What was your father’s name?

FILIPINI: Marco [PH].

LEVINE: Marco, oh. So—so that the authorities would—the fascists would—

FILIPINI: They was trust—they—because of my father. He was in charge. He had all the key that—he was—he was charging—he was in charge of the—all nine buildings. So he was in—and everybody loved my father and they sensed that because he was good man. They sensed it because he was in—he know what we went through. And beside, he had a son and so he want to make sure we were all [unclear]. So what he did—I’ll tell you how many people we had. We had a guy from South Africa. We had about 13 or 14 young—Jewish people because they was looking for Jewish people. We had about five people from Sicily. And a few more—what—what [unclear].

LEVINE: So you had a lot of people.

FILIPINI: Yeah. And my father, for nine months, [unclear] he had a heart attack because I don't think he slept one hour all the way, because in the night time when—when those fascists and Germany used to come over in the building to check around, they used to call my father. And he had to go down, open the gate for those guy. And those guy, they used to go around in the building to find out they [several words unclear] people. So—but—but my father, he find—he find—me and my father, we find a place they would never find.

LEVINE: Up in the ceiling?

FILIPINI: Up in the ceiling. We took the—what do you call the stuff for the—for the roof? The—

LEVINE: Shingles?

FILIPINI: We took the shingle and between the shingle and the—there was wood, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Like that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: And we put a board in the mattress and everything else, you know—

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

FILIPINI: —[unclear] used to make party, herself in the house, a different house. One time—one time we come over to my house. The next time, we go somebody else's house. And, you know, Italian young people, they all the way—they like music and they know how to play music. And they—we—we put some kind of band together. You know, it's like—and especially on Saturday and Sunday we had a fest—we had a—you know, drink wine and a sandwich, whatever it is. And—but we all had to be careful because if—if somebody was spy—

LEVINE: Yeah.

FILIPINI: —my father was—kill him. But that's okay. I [unclear] so—I [several words unclear].

LEVINE: Did you stay in contact with any of those people who your father was hiding?

FILIPINI: Yeah. I mean, there's people that was there.

LEVINE: But I mean, have you—do you still correspond or do you ever—

FILIPINI: No. I was—I—I—you know, amazing. I was very upset in the sense that because soon the war went through and Rome and all [unclear], everybody forgot you. I mean, the idea—the idea was “You did a good job. Thank God you're still alive.” But that's that because the Jewish people went back to the house. And they—this South Africa guy, he went back to South Africa. And the people in Sicily, they went—you see, [several words unclear]. They went back down there. Those was all young people that was in the army at the time, you know. They was in the army that time and they got stuck because the—it was divide. The Sicily and Rome and it was divide by the army. But, you know, the—Germany was—it was—there was—you know, there was [unclear]. There was—the war was there from Sicily to north. So all those part—all those place there there was—there was a place there. The German used to do the war. They would destroy most all the—part of the [unclear]—[unclear] Italy into the—into the—went [unclear] to Germany and that was the end of the war. But this was very—very hard and very—you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And we had a lot of airplane. We used to—we used to have a—what do you call that when it bomb? A raid from an airplane.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: You know, so I used to leave—I used to live—live close to the river. In Rome, they got river. They call that—they call that [unclear]. And—and I was—I was very close from my house to the river. And what we did, you know, because it was a lot of [unclear] in English, you know, when an airplane used—it was bomb.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Oh, it was a raid?

LEVINE: Yeah, a raid. A bomb raid, yeah.

FILIPINI: Okay, bomb—so what we do—what we do—I—we go to the river and between the river—the river and the house, it was a lot of sand. So what we did, we make a hole in the sand. Every time the siren ran, we used to go inside the sand. So if the bomb—if the bomb fall down—you know, it fall down right—it fall down on top of your head, because if it fall down with the sand, the sand—it was—it was [unclear]. It don't damage [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Because the sand—if a bomb—and if the bomb hit something hard, it break [unclear]. But if it hard, like, sand—

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: —it was okay, you know. [unclear], I mean, a lot of sand up to here, you know, because it make a big hole. But the [unclear], it was okay.

LEVINE: So unless it hit you right on the head, you were all right.

FILIPINI: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Wow.

FILIPINI: So [unclear] this day, you know, the Germany—the—it was a lot—a lot of young airplane, Italian and Germany and English. The—Germany used to use these [unclear]. And—and—and the German, they used to use—I mean, they—they're—English, they used to use—I don't remember the name of this airplane. But anyway, so there was—it was still the war in air. And it was a war in air and the one—and I was a kind of young guy. You know, all the way for adventure, whatever it is. So one morning—one—one morning, you know, I deciding [unclear]. And everybody run. And I run to—to the refuge—refuge, you know, to [unclear] hide from the bomb. And the—and I [unclear]—when I—and it was a lady in front of me. You know, an old lady and I was trying to help. And this bomb hit right close, like, from here where the—where the—where the—

LEVINE: To the veranda?

FILIPINI: Yes, yeah.

LEVINE: So about 20 feet or something.

FILIPINI: About 20 feet.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Yeah. And, you know, and—and we got lucky and it hit the—the part where we used to play soccer. And it was, like, dirt.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And it hit the dirt. And when I look, I see all this rock and everything else, you know. So we stay. We cover up and everything and, no, we—I say we because it was an old lady.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So I went on top of the old lady and I covered the old lady because to save her. But I think she passed away because the bomb—they make a lot of boom and a lot of noise [unclear] a lot of people, yeah.

LEVINE: Hmm.

FILIPINI: And so I—I—I—we—we—we got—only time we got together, [unclear], you know, we went through this hard work and [unclear], whatever it is. But we made it.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: We made it with—but you know something. Like you say, now, a lot of those people, once—you know, you—when you—when you're in trouble—when [unclear] big trouble, and once you say—you go through this trouble, I don't think you—if you—if I bump into those people, you know, that's too many—but if I bump into those people they say, "Ah, Frederico!" But it's not like they do in a war.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: The guy from South Africa—you know how many time—how many time I tried to find out where he live and everything else. And he never—he never [unclear]—

LEVINE: Why do you think that is? Why do you think that people forget or don't want to make contact?

FILIPINI: I think it's the war—the war and was—you know, we [unclear] in my family—in my family, we were people—we were people to [unclear]—

especially my mother, my father, you know, to take care. You know, to—because I remember during the war my father here—I don't know how many people—10, 14 of those young people. And he tried to save because, you know—because it's hard.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: It was the young people. They don't want—he don't want to see those people die.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: He want to [unclear]—so that's why [unclear]. He got lucky. We got lucky.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Me and my mother and my—my sister, we got lucky. I don't know why but we got lucky but we got safe, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So we went through the war and everything else.

LEVINE: Well, what about your father? Then did he come back to the United States after the war—

FILIPINI: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: —got over? And he—he was able to what, get in on the quota or something? How did he come—

FILIPINI: Okay, my father and my mother—now, this—this is the old routine about the—about the—my sister—my sister was born in America. So she was American.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: And then she—she marry—marry a soldier. The name is Fred Burgess. So—and so it was very easy for her to come over in this country, you know. But me—my mother and father, years. But not me because I was already over 18 years old, you know. And if you was before—under 18 it was easy, because my sister was—called me, you know, and make a paper for me. But once I was too old there was nothing else you could do. But I made it. So that's why when I—when I—when I was—when I decide to come over here in this country, I had to go to Santo Domingo.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, tell me now. It was because of her sister and her American husband that your mother and father were able to get over—

FILIPINI: Able to come over here.

LEVINE: —after the war?

FILIPINI: Yes.

LEVINE: And—and was your mother—were your mother and father very happy to get back to America?

FILIPINI: Yeah, especially my mother. My mother really happy because my father—he was happy but—but he was—he had to leave his mother—his mother, his father. And he had to leave his brother. He had—there was 11 brother and sister. So, you know—but slowly, slowly, we—we [unclear]—

LEVINE: Brought them—

FILIPINI: —[unclear] the United States.

LEVINE: So—okay, so then you tried to come on your own.

FILIPINI: Okay, now—

LEVINE: So tell me what happened.

FILIPINI: Okay, now—now, when I come over here in this country, I had to go to some place [sneezes], we had to go—I had to go in some place to—like Canada, South America, some place you can—I can go without—and then come back over here. See, then they—we used to use—we used to lose—use in this place—this place, it was like a temple, you know, [unclear].

LEVINE: Like a stepping stone—

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —to get in.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: But you couldn't get into the United States because of the quota? Is that why? Because—

FILIPINI: No, because I was too old.

LEVINE: Well, you were too old to get in on your—

FILIPINI: For the quota.

LEVINE: Oh, you were too old for the quota?

FILIPINI: Yeah. Oh, it was too much a problem. And it was so many year and everything else because it was no easy.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: I mean, the [several words unclear]. So that's why I had to use—I had to go to some country close to America—to some country. And then from there I was put in my—my paper—you know, my visa and everything else to come over here in this country, because it was more easy.

LEVINE: So you went to anoth—you needed to go to another country. But you had a visa for a short time to go to the United States?

FILIPINI: No.

LEVINE: Or no?

FILIPINI: No.

LEVINE: No.

FILIPINI: No, I no—never have no visa of United States.

LEVINE: Okay.

FILIPINI: I—I—I come over to United States and the judge let me stay 10 day. I—30 day to see my family in the United States but then I had to go back to Santo Domingo. See, my—my—my pla—my things that I had a—was to go in Santo Domingo. That's when I make my passport—passport for Santo Domingo.

LEVINE: And what was your plan? You'd go to Santo Domingo—

FILIPINI: In Santo Domingo—different day now—the plan was if I was going a small town, a small country, it was not too many people that want to come over here in this country. So I had a better pos—

LEVINE: Better chance.

FILIPINI: —possibility to come over early.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And that's what happened. But still, I had to wait three year. I had to wait three year to—before I come over here in this country.

LEVINE: Okay. So you were in Santo Domingo when you came to see your parents on the v—on a 30-day visa?

FILIPINI: No.

LEVINE: No.

FILIPINI: They gave me 30-day visa—visa in island. Then they—in New York.

LEVINE: Oh. Well—

FILIPINI: While we—while we—see, you—you could get 30 day to stay. If you had a—if you had somebody in New York—anyplace in the United States, family, you could, [unclear], you know. In the [unclear] they let you go for 30 day to see the people.

LEVINE: Okay.

FILIPINI: Those people. So I—and that's—that's what I did. I was there—I was there. I know I had people in—in the—in—in this country and I—my cousin, my uncle—not all those people that was over here in this country, because [unclear]—

LEVINE: Were they in Scranton or around Scranton?

FILIPINI: Yeah, Scranton.

LEVINE: And that—is that where your mother and father went when they came back?

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: They went to Scranton.

LEVINE: Okay.

FILIPINI: And this—and this—but they—they were moving to Virginia.

LEVINE: Right. Well, when you left Santo Domingo and you came to visit your family, what happened? How come you went to Ellis Island and what happened?

FILIPINI: I was at Ellis Island before I went to Santo Domingo because—

LEVINE: Oh. Well, how did you get sent there to begin with? Why did you get sent to Ellis Island?

FILIPINI: Okay. In Naples [PH] I got all my paper to come over here in this country. So in Naples I—Naples I had to do all—not in Naples but, you know, the American Consulate was in Naples. So I went to American Consul now to get all the paper to come over here in this country. And so there I asked to the American Consul the best way—what's the best way for me to go—to go back—to go in America? They say, "Well, you had to go through a small town—a small country, like—[unclear] at that time was—not Puerto Rico now—was Cuba, was Santo Domingo, was Caracas, Venezuela. You know, all those places. They—it was a country but it was not—no—no [unclear] in this country. More easy.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: More easy. So what—what I did, I went to Santo Domingo and I stayed three years. And then I apply for to come over here in this country. And that's the way—and that's—and that's—when—when American Consul in Santo Domingo call me that I was—I can go in America, he says, "I got all the paper ready if you want to go in America." But I got very upset.

LEVINE: Why?

FILIPINI: Because, you see, I got married six months before the American Consulate give me the okay. So I got married. So now I say, "Well, I've got to bring my wife too."

LEVINE: Oh, uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So that was a big—that was no problem. It was okay. So I—and see, my mother, she want me to come over here in this country single. You know, I could [unclear]. But what are you going to do? So [unclear] children, all this stuff and [unclear]. So I [unclear] Santo Domingo was okay.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, let me ask you, just to back up a minute. You—did you—when you left Italy and you came to Ellis Island, you—were you—were you on your route to Santo Domingo?

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Why did you—why were you in New York harbor and why did you go at the Ellis Island?

FILIPINI: I—because my paper—the paper I had—

LEVINE: [unclear]

FILIPINI: Because the paper I had, it was in—it was enough—it was not a paper—United States paper. It was a paper for me to go to Santo Domingo. See, when I went to—in Italy, when I went to the American Consulate, I tell her—I tell her, “I want to go to”—he said, “But it’s going to be hard for you because you’re too old.” I was already too old. I was close to be 30 years old. You see, “But you got to”—he says, “The only things you can do, you can go some other country closer to—closer to the United States—and closer to the United States. Different day you apply. You go to the American Consulate and you apply to come over here in this country.” That’s what I did.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. But—you mentioned on this questionnaire that you went—that you went to Ellis Island and they wanted to put you in jail for 30 days.

FILIPINI: Okay. Now, I was very upset because when I went through—when my passport in a ship—there was American—what do you call those people now there, watch all this passport and all this stuff?

LEVINE: Customs?

FILIPINI: Customs. And this particular guy—all my paper was okay. All—only thing, so I don’t have the ticket to go to Santo Domingo. And the—the Consulate in Italy said to me—he said, “Don’t buy the ticket over here. It costs you too much money. Buy it in the United States. When you go to the United States, you buy the ticket to go to Santo Domingo.” And that’s what I did. But the people in the—on—

LEVINE: Ellis Island?

FILIPINI: No, the people that was in charge of the—

LEVINE: Customs.

FILIPINI: —Customs, they took it the wrong way. They thought maybe I want to—I want to—

LEVINE: Stay in the United States.

FILIPINI: —stay in the United States.

LEVINE: Not go, uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Rena [telephone rings] Can you push it? [tape off/on]

LEVINE: Okay, we're resuming here. In other words, you were going to visit your parents briefly and go on to Santo Domingo.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: That was your plan.

FILIPINI: This was my plan. But when—when—when—when I was in the ship to go through New York, the man was in charge, you know, and he told me—he told me I can't go through because I don't have all the paper in good stand.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: I say, "Why?" I say, "Because I don't have the ticket?" I say, "But I can go buy the ticket and I'll be okay."

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: He say, "Well, I'm sorry." You know.

LEVINE: I see.

FILIPINI: He was very—he was a little—little bit rude.

LEVINE: Ah.

FILIPINI: That's the way I thought of it then. So I—I stay—so they put me—it was late—late at night—in the afternoon. So it was me and two more guy. So they put in a truck and it's the police truck. And this was Friday. So Saturday and Sunday American people don't work because in the office and they're not [unclear] in the office. You know, they was off and so they don't work. And so they had to [unclear] Monday.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So I—I—I—so they send me to the island. So they put me in a truck and the send me to the island because they couldn't do nothing for the—for the—it was like a case that was doing—that was—

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, now, do you remember when the Marine Perch came into the New York harbor?

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you see the Statue of Liberty? Did you—

FILIPINI: We stay all night. The ship—see, sometime the ship, it don't—it don't—it—all the ship that come from part of Italy or Europe, they stay—they—they come over in the afternoon. So they had—they had to stay in the—in the harbor. And the next day they was—process whatever it is. So we stay—we stay in New York in the harbor—New York harbor for most of 24 hour, because—so I—to me, I was so anxious. I stay all day—all night—all day, all night watching the Statue of Liberty. [chuckles] But they—they—

LEVINE: So then they took you to—

FILIPINI: Then they took me to the island.

LEVINE: Yeah.

FILIPINI: And I had to stay, because it was Monday—it was Friday—so I had to stay Friday—Friday night, Saturday and Sunday on the island. So they went back to the—to the New York—New York of—New York, they had the court—in New York, the house—the courthouse. And they—then there was process me to see why—if I can go see my family or whatever it is. So I had to stay—eventually, eventually, you know, I—I stay three day. And then they send me back to—to New York. I went to a court. [unclear] I went to court, me and two other guy. So they—they treat us like a criminal. And this was the point I was very upset because they put us in jail, you know. And they—and they call one at a time, you know. When the case was ready, they call you. You [unclear] the case and then you—you go home and you—you free. I was the last guy—

LEVINE: Hmm.

FILIPINI: —they called. I don't know why. And I was very—very upset. So the judge said to me, "Mr. Filipini, you like United States?" And I say, "Mr. Judge, you let me go out and look at it. And then I'm going to come back and I'll let you know if I like the United States. So far, I don't like it

because they put me in jail.” He was [unclear] upset [unclear]. But anyway, so I went through case and everything else. And then they send me to see my family in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So I stayed 30 days.

LEVINE: Great. Can you describe Ellis Island, those three days when you were there?

FILIPINI: Yeah. We used to get up early in the morning, go downstairs and have breakfast, because each one—each—not country but, you know, they were group, you know, had a different—different group. There—people from—from Russia. There was people from Jewish. There was people from Czechoslovakia. There was—there was people from—what’s the name of the country close to Russia?

LEVINE: Poland?

FILIPINI: Oh, Poland. Yeah, there were people from Poland. And is it—it’s another country.

LEVINE: Hungary?

FILIPINI: No, it’s a—it’s a—

LEVINE: Latvia? Lithuania?

FILIPINI: Lit—no, Lithuania. Something like there.

LEVINE: Well—well, why were all those people there? Do you know?

FILIPINI: Because they had the same—every—everyone, they had some kind of a problem, a small problem. So they had to clear up the—they had to—they had to come out with some kind of case and clean it up. Once it’s clean, then they let you go.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: But they couldn’t let you go just like that.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Because, you know, everything was in—under control.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And—

LEVINE: Well, where did—so you went to Scranton. How did you like Scranton, Pennsylvania? How did you like Pennsylvania when you were there that one month?

FILIPINI: I wasn't too crazy about Pennsylvania because Pennsylvania to me is—Scranton, to me, looked dirty. And there's a lot of dust that come—the mine. There was [unclear] work [unclear]. And there were no window—windy. It was a lot of dust and everything. In the nighttime, you know, I used to blow my nose and in was all this [unclear], you know. And so I wasn't too—you know. But I had—I [unclear] no other choice because I had my family [unclear].

LEVINE: Well, now, did—did your family—like your uncles and cousins and—did they work in the mines?

FILIPINI: Some, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: My father worked—used to work in the mine.

LEVINE: Before. Before he went—

FILIPINI: Yes. Yeah, before.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

FILIPINI: He used to work in a mine.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: And—and my [unclear]—they used to give the pension to my mother. The—what do you call the group, they work in a mine and—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: —they call it a—

LEVINE: The union?

FILIPINI: Is a union, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: [unclear].

LEVINE: Well, okay. So you only spent 30 days in the United States. And you really didn't like it all that much. Why did you want to come back?

FILIPINI: What do you mean?

LEVINE: Well, after—after you—then you went to Santo Domingo.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then you—you tried to get back.

FILIPINI: Okay. Let me explain. I went through too much a problem, you know, Immigration and all this stuff [unclear]. I was kind of disgusted. I said, "Let me go back and"—because you see, in this particular time, I want to come over here in this country because I was pushed by my mother—my mother and father. They want to come over here in this country. They want to make sure the two children they have, they was going to be in the United States. My sister, she was already married to an office—to an American office. So the only problem they had was me. And my mother, she was very—well, I don't know—tried to—insisted to try for me to come over here. Because otherwise, you know, I was—I was okay in Italy. I had [chuckles]—I lived most 20 years in Italy and I was more than happy to be in Rome. See?

LEVINE: Ah, uh-huh. Uh-huh. I see. Okay, well, we're just about at the end of this tape. Is there anything you'd like to say about your life in America now that you've been here for some time?

FILIPINI: Okay. My life in America, now, I—I had to change the job. I had to change the place to—job. I used to be a mechanica [PH]—mechanic. So I took a—let me know when you're finished with the tape.

LEVINE: I'll tell you what. I think what we'll do here is we'll pause. I'll change the tape.

FILIPINI: Okay.

LEVINE: And we'll finish it off on another tape so we don't run out here.

FILIPINI: Okay, okay.

LEVINE: Okay, this is the end of tape one and I'm talking with Mr. Filipini and it's the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, 2001.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]

[BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A]

LEVINE: This is the beginning of tape two and I'm speaking with Mr. Frederico Filipini. And we were talking. You said you wanted to say something about the war.

FILIPINI: The Second World War, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

FILIPINI: I—I spent—I spent six year in the war but I—I've been lucky enough to come out alive because—but I had to go through a lot of—a lot of—a lot of problem with the—with the—

LEVINE: Now, wait a minute. You signed up for three years—is that right—for the war?

FILIPINI: Three year.

LEVINE: But then you say you were in it for six years.

FILIPINI: No, I'm sorry. It was not six; it was three year.

LEVINE: Yeah, okay.

FILIPINI: It was three year.

LEVINE: Now, you were saying that it wasn't easy, that you didn't just get on a ship and come to America. You didn't even—it wasn't easy in the war. You had to hide out and all that. So nothing happened very quickly or easily for you.

FILIPINI: No. See, it was too much a problem, the war, you know. Second World War was a lot of problem for everybody. If you was involved in a war or whatever it is, it's two thing. You was dead or you come out alive.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: If you come out alive, maybe you is lucky. And that's why we call it luck.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: We call it lucky.

LEVINE: Yeah.

FILIPINI: A lot of—I have a picture. A lot of friend of mine, they die. They got kill for many reasons, for [unclear]. Maybe my destiny, it wasn't to die in a war.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Can I go to the bathroom a minute?

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay, we're going to pause here. [tape off/on] Okay, we're resuming here. And you were saying that on the Marine Perch there was a priest and missionaries who supposed to go to—

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —China.

FILIPINI: China to, you know—there was a Catholic priest that was supposed to go to China. You know, missionary. And I was wondering, you know, what happened. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Yeah.

FILIPINI: If he is still alive or whatever it is but I don't think so.

LEVINE: You mentioned that when the—when you saw the Statue of Liberty it was about six p.m. in the evening.

FILIPINI: And I—I look—I look at it, you know, because to—to see the Statue of Liberty when you come over here in this country, you hear talking about it. You know, all this stuff. But it is nothing like when you see the Statue of Liberty. And this make it—it's a big, big—you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: And that's what people—they stayed on—by a ship and look at it. You know, it's [unclear]. It's—it's no easy look at this big statue and especially when you're on a ship [unclear]. You can see it, you know, and—and make you very, very—I don't know how you say in English, was not [unclear] but it's a big thing, you know. Like if you see [unclear]. And you—and you come and look at it and—and [unclear] all this particular

thing. I never been inside because I never—I don't—I don't have a chance. But in a—but I saw the whole thing from the outside.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And you mentioned that the missionaries had a mass and they—

FILIPINI: Oh. They—we had a very—we had a very, very bad trip. We—when we passed the Azore—the Azore—Azore Island. So you pass France.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: You pass Azore. Azore is the island close to the—usually, the ship—all the ship, they stop—they come from Europe. They stop [unclear] like a—they pick up something—

LEVINE: Like a way station or something.

FILIPINI: Yeah, [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: So—and what happened? So we stop—we stop [unclear]. So once we got back, you know, [unclear] to come back over here [unclear] it was hurricane—hurricane. And it was so bad they—the water was so high that—the—the—what do you call those—the wave. The wave was so high there was—it was going—the water was going top of the ship plus. And then we—so they stop the ship because—I don't know why. But everybody got sick. Every—the crew, everybody got sick. Know? And then [chuckles] I remember—I remember no—try to throw out and the stomach was empty. There was nothing you can do. But everybody got sick. Now, we went—we went—we stopped in—in New York on the island. Then we stop at the Statue of Liberty. So those three priests, because, you know, there—there was a lot of Catholic people, you know, in the ship from Europe but it was a lot of Catholic people. So—so one of the priests, he say mass because to thank God it was saved.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Yeah. So he said mass and—but we all very—we were all—we were all very—we were very scared because this ship—there was a big hole on—on [unclear] the ship. All those—all those suitcase—all the stuff was downstairs. So when the ship moved, you know, there was—go from one place to the other.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: And they make a hold on the ship and all the stuff like that. But anyway, it was a miracle—miracle. Now, I had a—I had a black eye because a lady no—when the ship move, you know, it go all the way—she [unclear] no place in the hold or nothing. She hit me with—with her pocketbook and everything else. And I still got the [unclear]. You know, I—you know, the lady—they give me—they give me black—

LEVINE: Patch?

FILIPINI: —patch [unclear] together. But anyway—but—but they—so we made it. We made it. And—and we would—so that's why the priests, you know, they said mass [unclear] to thank.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Okay, well, so let's—now, let's jump ahead to when you finally got to this country. When you came to this country, you came with your wife. And did you have children?

FILIPINI: No, no.

LEVINE: No.

FILIPINI: When I come over here in this country, I—I spend—in Scranton—I stay in Scranton some period of time. No, wait a minute. You're right. You're right because, see now, I—I stayed 30 day.

LEVINE: Right, in Scranton.

FILIPINI: But after 30 day, I went to Santo Domingo.

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: And that's when I start my life. In Santo Domingo, I find—after 15 day, friend of mine [telephone rings]—

LEVINE: Okay.

FILIPINI: Oh, damn it.

LEVINE: Okay, we'll [tape off/on]—you were talking about—you started your life in Santo Domingo.

FILIPINI: Okay.

LEVINE: You married.

FILIPINI: I start my life in Santo Domingo but in Santo Domingo I was no marry. I was single. In Santo Domingo I had an address to some lady that—she used to live in [unclear] and for help. So I went there and I see the lady and I tell her when I come over and what I'm supposed to do. And she was very upset an me because she say, "You people live in Italy with nothing." You know, with—you know. And she say, "I know you—you want to come over in order to come over in America." But—but it was very—it was very hard. So what—what—oh, beside—beside—when I went to Santo Domingo, I didn't have too much money. And when I stop, I stop in Puerto Rico and the little money I had I spent. So I don't have too much money. And—and so when I went to Santo Domingo this lady—particular lady, she's—she held me. She gave me the room and board and everything else and food and so forth. And so I'm—for 15 day and after 15 day I find a job there. And the place we used to call [several words unclear]. And the job, it was in a sugar factory. I was—I was—I was involved with the sugar—with the—with the tractor trailer, with the [unclear]. We used to, you know, take all the sugar into—to the company—to the—to the factory. And I spent most—a little bit over a year on this particular sugar factory. The—after there, I took a job—I find a job, a place they used to call a lock [unclear] pipe [PH] for [unclear]. And—and—and there they took me to—I had to go to a place they used to call Monte Cristo [PH], like [unclear] the Monte Cristo.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Anyway—and I—and I—I—and I—Monte Cristo, I spent the rest of the time in—in Santo Domingo. I met my wife and I got marry and also all those kind of thing. But—but six months before I got marry—after I got marry, I got my visa to come over to the United States and I was very upset. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Because you thought maybe you couldn't come.

FILIPINI: I—no, because, you know, there—what—what I had to do, I had to come over in this country first. And they call for my wife. And we did. Everything was okay because when I was—when I come over here in this country the second time, you know, and having all this family over here, so my wife want to come over in this country. The family want to come over in this country. Some relative—mine want to come over in this country. So I had to do paper for everybody. And we—we did everything so everybody come over here in this country. And we got kind of [unclear].

LEVINE: Did you have relatives in Santo Domingo as well?

FILIPINI: No.

LEVINE: No.

FILIPINI: No.

LEVINE: Just you.

FILIPINI: Just me and this lady. It was—it was Italian lady.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Like, she was about 60 years old. Nice lady. And her husband passed away. And she had this place, like room and board.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And—and she was very upset with me because she said to me, “Why you come over here in this country? Why you come over here in Santo Domingo? Nothing for you in Santo Domingo. Go back in Italy,” and all this like that. Well, she was right in a sense about, you know, I want to come over here because eventually I want to stay with my family.

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: And—but there in Santo Domingo I had a—I work—oh, I work for the lock [unclear] pipe. Lock [unclear]—

LEVINE: Is—are you saying lock joint?

FILIPINI: Lock [unclear] pipe. We used to do—drill a hole. And part of the country in Santo Domingo, they don't have no water. The water was dead. This is salty because—so they had to drill for the water. And I make about, what—80—180 drill to find water in Santo Domingo. And—and then from there—let me see. Let me think about it. See, this is all the place in Santo Domingo what I used to do, all the drilling.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Uh-huh. Well, when you came here finally, did you settle in Scranton?

FILIPINI: No, no, no. I don't think Scranton because I wasn't too crazy about Scranton because of the air. It was bad and everything else. So I went to Virginia because my sister, she used to be in Virginia—

LEVINE: Ah.

FILIPINI: —with her husband.

LEVINE: I see.

FILIPINI: So I said, “Francis, let me stay with you little time until I find something to do in Virginia.”

LEVINE: I see. So then you stayed in Virginia.

FILIPINI: I stayed in Virginia and there—and there I had to call my wife because my wife, she was still in Santo Domingo. So I had do paper for my wife. And my wife, she was pregnant already. So she was supposed to have a baby. And so—so this—this was all—all the [unclear]. When I come over here in this country I had to make sure, you know, everybody was—that’s why I was—do paper for my wife and my mother-in-law. Not father-in-law—and all the brother and sister.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. So how long did you stay in Virginia before you left?

FILIPINI: I stay in Virginia—I stay in Virginia quite a few year.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And you worked there?

FILIPINI: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Yeah, I was a—I learn how to be a chef.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: And I was working for Marriott.

LEVINE: Hmm.

FILIPINI: So I would—I do chef job, you know. And they—and it was [unclear] Virginia, close to Washington, DC.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And there over there I took a job with Marriott Company, and then from there I open my restaurant.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: I open my own restaurant from—you know, from there and—and I stay—I stay. When I—when I come over here—oh, when I—

LEVINE: You went to California first, right?

FILIPINI: First, I went California. I was working for the—I was working for—for—in California I was—let me see. What's the name of the—the place we saw—Disneyland—Dis—Disney World.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: Yeah. And the person who hired me, it was Mr. Disney.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: So—and I—this was just—not too long after he die. So I had a fortune of meeting him. And he used to love me because he said I was a good work.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, did you—did you go to California before you opened your own restaurant?

FILIPINI: Yeah. I go to California and then I got a job with Disney. Then when I come back, I come back because I want to go to Las Vegas. But because of the—the—the quality of the job I was doing, I could—done pretty good in Las Vegas. Yeah. And—but destiny. Oh, my—my father passed away at that time. My father passed away. Then my sister passed away and all this stuff. And I come reunited with the family—my family—my own family, which was—my family was only my mother now. But then my sister, after pass away, she left the three children, two girl and a boy. And I kind of raised them myself.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: So, you know, I'm all the way—I had to do things for the heart—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: —to be a good guy.

LEVINE: Well, what do you think has brought you the most satisfaction in your life? What—what would you say has made you happy, has brought you a lot of satisfaction?

FILIPINI: I—I don't know because I'm—maybe, because I was—of the way I was dealing something, do something. You know what I mean?

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And, you know, [several words unclear] so I never had too much happy day.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

FILIPINI: And people I know start to die and then we had a girl, a beautiful girl, you know, in the time we were marry. We had a beautiful girl and she die from leukemia.

LEVINE: Oh.

FILIPINI: And this was very bad. Upset the whole family. But then we come back again, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. How did you meet your wife?

FILIPINI: I met my wife in Santo Domingo. She used to work in a—a—a [unclear] office—some [unclear] office. And through a friend of mine—he used to work for me—he said, “Frederico.” He says, “There is a nice looking lady down there. Why don't you meet her?” And one things to another. One things to another, you know. So I—I got a chance to meet her and—and so six months later I marry.

LEVINE: What—what was your wife's maiden name?

FILIPINI: Garbarino.

LEVINE: G-A—

FILIPINI: Garbarino—G-A-R-B-A—

LEVINE: R-I-N-O.

FILIPINI: Yeah, Garbarino.

LEVINE: And how about children? How many children did you have?

FILIPINI: Me?

LEVINE: Yeah.

FILIPINI: I had four children.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And I got eight—nine grandchildren. And—and all my children—all my—my four children and they're all—they're all over here in Florida.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: And how do you think of yourself? How do you think about—

FILIPINI: Before I'm going to go in the—you know, every time I used to move, me and my wife, we never be able to move alone, because my family, my children, bloo! They—

LEVINE: They come right after you. [laughs]

FILIPINI: [chuckles] It was in California—

LEVINE: They like you. [laughs]

FILIPINI: It was in California. They went to Virginia [unclear]. Then we come over here. I said, "Maybe"—[laughter]—"maybe we go in there," because of my wife all the time want to come over here in—in—

LEVINE: Florida.

FILIPINI: —Florida because she's from Santo Domingo.

LEVINE: Right, right.

FILIPINI: She like the hot weather and everything else. But all the time all of the children.

LEVINE: Yeah, that's funny. Well, when you—how do you think about your Italian side and your American side? How do you—how do you think about yourself in those terms?

FILIPINI: Well, I can't say too much about the Italian side because I stay most in America. See, I was—I was—I was three years old. And when I left Italy

to come over here, you know, so I spent most everything, because in Italy is not much I can say, because is a—was a war at the time. I was in the army, you know, and there was a war. It was all the way—I was all the way in—do—try—try to survive, myself, you know—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. Hmm.

FILIPINI: Save my life.

LEVINE: Yeah.

FILIPINI: This was—the life in Italy.

LEVINE: [unclear]

FILIPINI: And then when I come over here, you know, was more—more relaxing, naturally.

LEVINE: Right.

FILIPINI: And, you know, I met—I [chuckles]—I laugh when I say to the judge, say, “You see me in Italy for—you see me—you see me free over here. Now, I’ll let you know when I come back if I like the United States.” I said, “But so far, I don’t like—I don’t like it here because you put me in jail.” [chuckles]

LEVINE: Well, being that you—I mean, you’ve been through a war. You’ve had to survive. You’ve been in other countries. Is there anything you can say about what you’ve learned about human nature through all these different parts of your life?

FILIPINI: I learn—what I learn in human nature and everything else—I learn to love people. And that’s what I used to do all the time. Up to now. You know, I’m all the way—I was helping people.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: Love—when I say love, no—no love but helping. Helping in—in a good way. [unclear] I was provide for something, especially my family, my—my wife, children. My wife, family. And they—my—my sister, because when she passed away, you know, I had to raise all the children. Me and my mother. And so—and so then my mother passed away and then my father passed away, you know. So I’m the only person left but [unclear] something. [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: So this is the kind of person I was and I still am. I don't know how long but I was all the way tried to helping people.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: And I did it.

LEVINE: Great. Is there anything else you'd like to say before we close about being in this country, about coming here finally and living out most of your life here, really?

FILIPINI: Yeah. Well, [unclear]—I still—I still—I'm [unclear] me because I still speak Italian very good. You know. And then I had to learn how to speak Spanish because my wife don't want to speak Italian. So I had to learn to speak Spanish. So I speak Spanish, Italian and English [unclear]. But anyway—and—and so when I—I—I did—when I was—what were—

LEVINE: We were talking about what you might say about having lived most of your life in this country, anything you want to say before we close.

FILIPINI: Well, like I say, live in this country—live in this country, I know I come over—I come over here. Maybe that's why my mother, she want me to come over here alone because it was no easy. You know, you don't speak English. You don't—you know, it was hard. This country is no easy—very hard. But once you get into it, you okay. You love, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And that's what happened with me. I—I love it so much and then I had a family—not with a problem—a family—they needed help and I—I was there to help.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: But the only [unclear], I—you know, today, you know, I'm over here by myself and I don't have too much talk about.

LEVINE: Well, you have a chance to relax a little.

FILIPINI: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

FILIPINI: That's [unclear] relaxation.

LEVINE: Yeah.

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

FILIPINI: But—but I—I'm try to think—I'm trying to think of something but—

LEVINE: Do you remember—do you remember when it started to get easier?  
When you first came here you said it was hard. You know—

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —because the language and—

FILIPINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: —everything. Do you remember at some point where you finally felt at  
home here, like you didn't have to struggle quite so hard?

FILIPINI: I—yes. Yes, but—but the problem was because my language, you know,  
number one, and the kind of person I was, you know. And my mother—  
me and my mother, we're the same kind of thing. We—we love—use to  
love helping people. I don't know why. I don't know why. Look, during  
the war we had a bunch of people hiding in. We used—my mother, she  
used to make a pasta, fettucini every day, you know, for—for nine months  
to feed all those guy. And we had pasta fagioli, pasta—pasta premadoro  
[PH]—pasta premadoro, pasta fagioli. And that's—but we were here for  
nine months. You know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

FILIPINI: And—and so we were all the way tried to help and—and be good—good  
person.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Well, that's a nice place to end. This has been a lovely  
interview and I thank you.

FILIPINI: I hope the people appreciate it. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Well, I think they will. I certainly do and now your story will be at Ellis  
Island where you didn't have such a good time the first time. Right?  
[chuckles] Now, you can enjoy it.

FILIPINI: Uh-huh.

EI-1178/FILIPINI

LEVINE: Okay. I'm speaking with Frederico Fil—Filipini.

FILIPINI: Filipini.

LEVINE: And he came here on the Marine Perch in—on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1947. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm signing off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]