

EI-1447

TULIO BERTONASCHI

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PHD

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LEVINE: OK, today is June the 19th, the year 2007. I'm here in Pittsburgh. And, my first interview here is with Mr. Bertonaschi. Why don't we start, please -- why don't you say what you told me earlier -- your name as it's said in Italy and then as it's pronounced here.

BERTONASCHI: My name is Tulio Bertonaschi [Bertonaski] [ph] and that's the way we pronounce our last name in Italy. But around here, when we immigrated it Tulio Bertonaschi [Bertonashi] [ph].

LEVINE: Bertonaschi. OK. And Tulio -- is that -- was that the name you were born with?

BERTONASCHI: Yes. It was spelled a little different but then I -- a, um -- had it spelled T-U-L-I-O instead of how -- what's on my birth certificate.

LEVINE: Do you -- can you spell the way it is on your birth certificate?

BERTONASCHI: Let me see here. Tulli -- T-U-L-L-I-G-I-O.

LEVINE: T-U-L-L-I-G-I-O. Oh, I see. OK. Um -- and your birth date please?

BERTONASCHI: Ma -- May the 4, 1921.

LEVINE: (pause) OK. And, where in Italy were you born?

BERTONASCHI: In Solignano. Ess yeoounn [ph] --

LEVINE: [interposed] You might as well spell it 'cause somebody will type this out.

BERTONASCHI: S-O-L-I-G-I-A-N-O.

LEVINE: It's S-O? Or S-A? Ah, here, is this it?

BERTONASCHI: Myeh [ph] [microphone noise]

BERTONASCHI: S-O-L-I-G-I-A-N-O.

LEVINE: OK. And that was the larger town near the smaller village, I guess?

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Yes.

LEVINE: [superposed] Where you -- And the name of that village?

BERTONASCHI: It's Prelerna, P-R-E-L-E-R-N-A.

LEVINE: And the province?

BERTONASCHI: Parma Province

LEVINE: OK, great. Now, um, when you were born, did you have brothers and sisters?

BERTONASCHI: I wa -- had, uh, three brothers and I had two sisters, but they deceased at birth.

LEVINE: I see. And your mother's name?

BERTONASCHI: Menta -- M-E-N-T-A -- Bertonaschi, but her maiden name was Rinaldi, R-I-N-A-L-D-I.

LEVINE: OK, and your father's name?

BERTONASCHI: Giuseppe Bertonaschi.

LEVINE: OK. And, let's see. What year did you arrive in the U.S.?

BERTONASCHI: It was in --

LEVINE: [interposed] 1927, right?

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: So --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] J -- January.

LEVINE: January. So, you were five. You had not yet turned six.

BERTONASCHI: No. It's right.

LEVINE: OK. And (pause) now, what was it that -- what was the reason that you and your family immigrated when you did?

BERTONASCHI: Originally, my dad and mother came -- the first time they came to -- to America -- they immigrated to America -- was er, fi r -- early 1900s. And, they settled in western Pennsylvania and they had two sons. Pro -- the first, the oldest son was born around 1909 and the other one was born in 1911. My father and mother didn't care too much for living in United States, so they went back and my --

LEVINE: [interposed] Did they ever tell you what they didn't like about it?

BERTONASCHI: No. I think it was mostly my mother. She probably missed being home and, and then when they went back, my father was drafted in the army. He was in the First World War and he contacted a lotta gas and, later on that -- meh ing mm [ph] -- he shortened his life. But after the war, my father realized that Mussolini was coming in par [ph] and his experience in the service -- he didn't want his two sons to go through it again. So then they decided to come back to -- and immigrate to America again. And my father -- who uh [ph] -- left my mother and -- and the three -- four boys in Italy while he established a place for them to -- to migrate to. And he was back again in Blairsville, Pennsylvania. That's in western part of Pennsylvania.

LEVINE: Do you know why he went there?

BERTONASCHI: Well, he had two brothers and a sister in that area, so they pro'bly -- the reason why he went there is to be close to his own family. And in -- in 19 -- of course my third brother was born in 1919 and I was born in 1921. So then we de -- we uh -- decided -- when after my father got settled here, he sent money for passages and we left in 1927.

LEVINE: Do you remember getting ready to leave?

BERTONASCHI: I do not remember. The only thing I remember -- we delayed our first trip two months because I fell down and broke a leg and we had to wait for it to heal. That's why we were a couple of da -- couple of months later arriving. And, that's the only thing I remember. The only thing I remember on the ship -- my mother said I was the only one that didn't get seasick and I was always eating their portions because they couldn't hold down the food that they were given.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Do you have any memories, your own memories, of life in Parma? In It --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] No, I do not.

LEVINE: Yeah, OK, OK. So, you really

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] All I remember is in years later when I went back, I was shown the place where we lived in. We lived upstairs and we had the chickens on the f -- ground floor, so that's the only I can actually remember.

LEVINE: Uh huh. OK. So, you do have a memory on the ship.

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: And then, do you remember Ellis Island at all?

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] No, I do not.

LEVINE: Do you remember the Statue of Liberty or --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] No.

LEVINE: -- anything about landing?

BERTONASCHI: No, I do not.

LEVINE: Now, and then you went to western -- .

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Penns -- .

LEVINE: [superposed] Pennsylvania.

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: And was the name of that town again?

BERTONASCHI: Blairsville, B-L-A-I-R-S-V-I-L-L-E.

LEVINE: OK. (pause) OK, and did you go to school right away after you got here?

BERTONASCHI: We went to school right away, but my brother and I were held back t -- two years because we didn't -- we didn't know the language.

LEVINE: So how was learning English for you?

BERTONASCHI: Well, I've -- I must have done pretty good because I don't have an accent. (laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. Did you -- do you know what helped you to learn it?

BERTONASCHI: Well, I -- I do not know. I don't remember. I -- I remember being in not too much even in -- being in, in grade school. And -- but, uh -- I -- and I remember once I got in -- in the, like, say, in sixth, seventh grade but before that I don't remember much of anything.

LEVINE: I see. Now where you were living, in Blairsville?

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: Yeah, Blairsville. Was it -- was -- were there a lot of Italian immigrants?

BERTONASCHI: Yes. The, the southern part of the town, it was mostly Polish and -- and Italians.

LEVINE: Uh huh. So there were other children who were coming to this country around the time you did?

BERTONASCHI: Well, a lot of 'em were already had been here. But not too many of 'em were born in Italy. They were mostly (microphone noise) -- were born in the -- in United States.

LEVINE: I see. And, how about your father? What did he do for work in Italy, and what did he do when he got here?

BERTONASCHI: I don't know what he did in Italy, but when he was here the first trip was a coal miner. And in the second trip, there was a glass factory in Blairsville and he worked there until he died.

LEVINE: Mm hmm. Hmm.

BERTONASCHI: Now he -- the re -- the reason that he, he lived shortly because when he was gassed in the First World War, that affected his lungs and he -- he got pneumonia and he couldn't -- he couldn't live. I mean, he died before too I -- I wasn't here more than a year, but I still don't remember what he looked like except the pictures we have.

LEVINE: Aw. Mmm hmm.

BERTONASCHI: And he, he left Italy realizing that he didn't want his sons to go to the service, but then later on, my oldest brother and my yuh -- my, I'm being the youngest of the four was drafted in the U.S. Army. (slight laugh)

LEVINE: Well now, your father worked in the coal mines before he went in the First World War.

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: So he probably didn't have great lungs just from working in the mines.

BERTONASCHI: Well, evidently not.

LEVINE: [superposed] Then he was gassed.

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Did he ever say anything about either the First World War, his experience, or what he saw building, ah --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] No.

LEVINE: -- towards --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Like I say, I don't remember even having a conversation with him.

LEVINE: Oh.

BERTONASCHI: Being that I -- I don't even -- meh [ph] I don't even know if, if he was still in Italy when I was born or not.

LEVINE: I see.

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] But --

LEVINE: I see.

BERTONASCHI: He was evidently a stranger to me, because I -- my older brothers would know him bec -- but they're deceased now and there's a lotta things I would have liked to have asked them but it didn't come to

fruition [sic], uh realizing that maybe I would, should know all that stuff.

LEVINE: [interposed] Yeah.

BERTONASCHI: And they never talked about it either.

LEVINE: Right. What was it like, do you think, for your mother with her four sons and then she was alone after one year, when --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Well,

LEVINE: -- when you came here?

BERTONASCHI: She, she done the best she could. The ol -- two older brothers -- eventually the -- the mill closed in Blairsville (clears throat). So they eventually went to New York and start working in the rest -- restaurant food business (clears throat). But other young -- my oldest brother was two years older than me -- we stayed back with our mother, then I went to finish high school but my, my brother that s-s-stayed here -- with -- but he didn't like to go to school, so when he was sixteen, my mother said, "Well, go to New York with your brothers and get yourself a job," because he didn't care to go to school.

LEVINE: So then you were the one that was then here with your mother.

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Yes.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Uh huh. And, what did you do? You went through high school?

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: And then what?

BERTONASCHI: Well, I got drafted and it was -- served about four years in the service.

LEVINE: Were -- you must have had second thoughts about going in the service after your father's experience.

BERTONASCHI: Well, I -- it was a matter of thinking about that. I mean, I didn't want to go, but when you're drafted, you have to go.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

BERTONASCHI: And my older brother, he, the reason he went is, uh, he wasn't married and uh -- and he had noth -- no support. But my second oldest brother -- he, uh, he was already married and had two kids. And he was a little past, towards the age there, but he didn't -- he wasn't drafted. And my oth -- other brother didn't go in because had -- he had heart problems.

LEVINE: And what kind of service did you see? Were you in the army?

BERTONASCHI: Yes, I was in the ar -- army, and I was in the quartermaster department and I served it'd be about a year and a half in New Guinea and about six months in the Philippines. But I didn't see no action. We were in behind where we took care of their, uh -- I was in a refrigeration company that we handled the perishable food for the soldiers.

LEVINE: Oh. So did you have to get that food to them?

BERTONASCHI: Yes. Well, we -- we would -- it would br -- uh, in -- brought in on ships and then we would have have these big refrigerated trailers that we would distribute the f -- the frozen food to the fighting men over there. Well, there was no fighting anymore where we were at because, uh, we always went in after the, the fighting was over.

LEVINE: Oh, uh huh, uh huh. So how long did you serve in the military?

BERTONASCHI: Ah, roughly four -- four years.

LEVINE: Uh huh. And then what did you do when you got out?

BERTONASCHI: Well, I, uh, went back to refrigeration school and got a job with an appliance dealer in Blairsville, ended up getting married and then I had a chance to start a business in Trafford, Pennsylvania, and we moved out of Blairsville in 1954.

LEVINE: And was that a refrigeration business?

BERTONASCHI: [not understood] appliances, and not just refr -- washers and dryers. I was the lonely -- loneliest man in town. I was the Maytag dealer

LEVINE: Oh. [laughs]

BERTONASCHI: Do you remember the Maytag dealer?

LEVINE: Is that, is that a -- a commercial?

BERTONASCHI: What it is, yeah. Because Maytag for years -- they advertised the loneliest man in town because their -- all their products supposed to be real good. [clears throat]

LEVINE: Oh, I see, so nobody has to call them.

BERTONASCHI: Yeah, 'ats it.

LEVINE: Uh huh, uh huh. Well, um, OK, so maybe you can compare [pause]. Well, you started out in Blairsville. I'm wondering what changes you've seen in the towns that you've lived in.

BERTONASCHI: Well, I -- th, the town of Blairsville, uh, I go back there once in a while because it's only about a half hour's drive from where I live now. And, uh -- people there I don't know anymore, but most of 'em are deceased and it's changed a lot. The main street of the town that I -- that Blairsville was, uh -- really change uh. S -- most of the businesses that I grew up with weren't there anymore. There was a little -- there was a theater there. It's not there and all there is is gas station on the main street, you know. You never had to have gas station on the main street like they do now.

LEVINE: Uh huh, uh huh, yeah. Um, well, did you -- so -- uh, when you came back out of the service, were you married? No, you were --

BERTONASCHI: [interposed] No, I wasn't married.

LEVINE: Uh huh. So you went back to your mother?

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: [superposed] Your mother's home?

BERTONASCHI: Mmm hmm.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm.

BERTONASCHI: Yeah. Sh -- but she had health problems 'n, and uh I got married in 1949 and, and that's about the extent of it.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Now, do you think your m -- do you think your mother ever thought seriously about going back?

BERTONASCHI: Weh [ph] my older brothers wanted to take her back many times but she just didn't want to go back. For one reason, all o' her s -- brothers and sisters -- most of 'em were already deceased. But she, she [microphone noise] remembers that the place and she just didn't wanna go back, but -- I went back and, and then, of course she had already passed away when I went back. But I can, I can't see anything bad about it because everything is changed there to the good, you know. There's -- everything's, uh [clears throat] modern there and she probably didn't realize that they did make changes there.

LEVINE: I see. Uh huh. Well, how do you think of yourself? Do you think -- in terms of Italian and American?

BERTONASCHI: Well, I used to speak it fluently as long as my mother was living, but after she died then there was no one around to speak Italian. And when I -- I went back twice and when I go back, I can manage, you know, Italian with, with the relatives I still have there. But I'm not as good as I used to be.

LEVINE: [superposed] Oh.

BERTONASCHI: As, as far as speaking Italian.

LEVINE: Uh huh. You know, for some reason this -- I'm gonna check this recording, if you could just hold on a minute. [pause] Ok, ah, so -- [clears throat] ah, you married -- did you marry someone from Italy as well?

BERTONASCHI: No. I married a local girl. And, it uh --

LEVINE: [superposed] American-born?

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm.

BERTONASCHI: She was of Croatian ancestors and, uh, we went to the same school but we didn't know each other whenever we met.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

BERTONASCHI: But there was a -- I graduated in 1940 and she graduated in 1945 but we still have -- when we clav [ph] class reunions, we go to each other's reunion because, eh, we seemed to know all the s -- the s-the s-s-school friends that we both had. That's about -- and then we ended up -- and we had four children -- two boys and two girls.

LEVINE: Now, did your mother keep the ways of her Italian, uh --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Yes, sh --

LEVINE: -- upbringing?

BERTONASCHI: Yes, she did.

LEVINE: In what ways did she do this?

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Well es -- especially in the food section, you know, I mean there were -- sh -- she r--she done all the cooking the old fashioned way. Of course, she couldn't read and write. It was a dis-- disadvantage she had. She never had, had any schooling. But she seemed to get along pretty good. And while I was in the service, she w -- she was living at home by herself and then she worked in a defense factory for maybe a year or so. So she, she lived to be eighty-nine years old.

LEVINE: Wow. Now, did she have any um -- any um -- [pause] did she feel you should marry someone who was Italian? Or she --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] No, no--

LEVINE: -- or she didn't have that kind of --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] No, she, she had no--

LEVINE: [not understood]

BERTONASCHI: No.

LEVINE: No. Uh huh.

BERTONASCHI: No.

LEVINE: OK. So you were the son that stayed closest to her.

BERTONASCHI: Yes.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm.

BERTONASCHI: Mmm hmm. Well the two [child screaming in background] br -- brother -- well even the third brother do -- went to New York. They always sent money just for us to, to get along, you know, 'cause in those days there wasn't no wr -- welfare and, we did go on welfare once for a few -- for a while, but then when I sold the house that we lived in, they had already taken their share of the money out that, that the -- she was given, you know, while she was on welfare.

LEVINE: Um, I'm not sure I -- I'm clear on that.

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Well, whenever th -- whenever's -- whenever w-we were on welfare for a sh-short period of time --

LEVINE: [interposed] Mmm hmmm.

BERTONASCHI: -- they, uh, they put that, uh, uh, part in a lien against the house. We -- she owned a house that we lived in. And, and then when she passed away and we sold the house, they all -- they, they deducted the price that we got from the house and she -- they deducted the part of the welfare that the government gave her.

LEVINE: I see. Oh, I didn't realize that that was done.

BERTONASCHI: Oh yeah, mmm hmm.

LEVINE: Uh, huh. I see. OK. Did you -- were you ever -- do you ever remember being teased because you were a greenhorn? You had, you were --

BERTONASCHI: [interposed] Well, I r -- f -- the only thing I have a slight recollection is when we -- where we lived, there was a little fence around our house and the peop -- the other kids would come around there just to see these new Italian immigrants. That's and, and I was told that, that we would be inside of the fence and, and they would come out 'n, you know, get in a -- get a look at --. But a lot -- we had relati -- we still had relatives there because two of her -- my dad's brothers lived there, and they had kids, but I don't remember even growing up with them, uh, close.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm. Mmm hmm. Um, OK. Ah, and, do you think coming here made a difference in the way -- in your personality? In the way you approach things, or the way that you, you see the world or think about life? Do you think the fact that you started out someplace and came here -- immigrated here made a difference to you personally?

BERTONASCHI: Well, from what the, the conversation we'd have with people that immigrated, I, I thought that being -- coming to America was something good because they didn't present any of good -- nice pictures or what it was like to live in, in the old country. So whenever you hear about it, and then what you had here, I guess it was a good move.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm. Mmm hmm. Yeah. Yeah. What would you say has brought you a lot of satisfaction in your life? Over the course of your life?

BERTONASCHI: Well, I, I gr -- uh -- I had four children and they were -- there've -- I only have wo [ph] -- two that are married. The one boy has two boys and the daughter, one of our daughters is married but they have no k -- children. And I'm g -- I'm glad [microphone noise] we, we raised -- they we h -- we had no problems with 'em and that's about the best thing I, I know to happen that, uh, we tried to raise 'em the right way and they didn't get into any trouble. Of course, two of 'em -- one son and t -- no, one -- one daughter lives in Atlanta and one daughter in Houston, so we get to see them more often now that they are getting older than when they first moved -- moved away. They, they s -- they take, uh, time to c-come and visit us. We get together most of the holidays now. Mum [ph] -- I was back to Italy twice and I enjoyed it every time that -- in fact I ended up, last time I was there, I ended up in the hospital. I wasn't feeling good, so I went to my cousin's a doctor over there, and he sent me to Parma hospital. I was there for about a week and I was surprised whenever I was discharged. It didn't cost me a penny because I was born in Solignano. As soon as I -- they wanted to know where I was born. I said "Solignano," and when I, I left I wanted t -- to find out how much it was gonna cost me and they, uh, said just, "Have a good trip back to United States." And it didn't cost me any and I found out later is because I was bo -- I'm a sil [ph], a citizens of Italy.

LEVINE: I see. So had you been born somewhere else in Italy it still would have been --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] W-w-well, anywhere in Italy, yeah.

LEVINE: Anywhere in Italy.

BERTONASCHI: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Isn't that wonderful.

BERTONASCHI: Yeah. Because they have different -- they have a just about the -- pretty good the, the way they take care of, uh, their sick people over there. They pay a little something, but not -- and they, they're guaranteed half or less there than what we are here.

LEVINE: And what was the treat -- was the treat -- Did you consider the treatment to be a high quality?

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Oh yes, yes, they was. They -- they put me through tests -- all kinda tests and thank goodness is was nothing serious. It was just excitement, I guess, that being over there and around relatives again.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm.

BERTONASCHI: Yeah, I was really surprised that I was -- I w -- [slight cough]. It's hard to say it, but, ah, I'm glad I found that it's a good -- still a good Italy.

LEVINE: Uh huh. So you still feel a, a kind of an attachment --

BERTONASCHI: Oh, yes, yes, mmm hmm.

LEVINE: -- to the, to the place and you still have relatives there.

BERTONASCHI: Yes, I have cousins that still live on the farm there.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

BERTONASCHI: And they're -- he's retired now. He was a cousin. He's retired. But he was raisin' cows and sold 'em -- the milk to these -- one of these, uh, dairies that -- that make the Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. The real good Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and -- but he's -- he's sold his cows and now he's res -- course, sorta retired.

LEVINE: Could you imagine what kind of a life you would have had if you --

BERTONASCHI: [interposed] Well, I could see how they're livin'. There is poverty. It would -- would e--I would eventually probably enjoyed it because everything is modern now over there. It's not -- it's not as bad as people used to say it was. They have good, clean ha -- and their, their rail system is wonderful. Lotta -- most of the people drive -- travel by rail over there. And, and then, their highways are nice. And people are still good to ya -- to ya, even though if, if you, if you're -- I know my son was there four times already and he enjoys it. And, and he learned to speak Italian, and he gets along pretty good.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm. So, how about your life now? What -- what -- what brings you joy in a given day?

BERTONASCHI: Well, I s -- I s -- have a, have a little spinal stenosis problem and I take it easy and I, I work in the garden most of the time when garden time comes around. And I, I miss it and this winter is pretty hard because I can't be active out in the garden. But I keep busy [microphone noise] and, uh, help the family out, you know, on some

maintenance work around the house. I still do that for the, the two sons that live close by.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm. And, ah, just to go back a bit, when you were growing up, and especially like in your teen years and in high school, were there records? Do you remember any records that people played that had to do with the old country and coming to this country. In other words, they had to do with --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] No.

LEVINE: -- immigration.

BERTONASCHI: No. In those -- in it's -- that's why I say -- it -- even myself. It was too -- It was too -- I was too old and I should have started [bang heard in background] thinking about the family tree or in -- you know, more or less. But it -- now that most of the people you'd want to talk to, you [microphone noise] can't. They're, they're al -- already passed. But, uh, I'm sorry I didn't get into it sooner.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm.

BERTONASCHI: And, and, my one daughter -- she's, uh, trying to get into finding th -- the -- this -- this -- looking back to see whose family this [sporadic microphone noise] person or that person, where they're at and where they came from. And, and, uh, I even went back -- I was gonna go in -- the place where we visit was for where my mother came from, but where my dad came from, he's, uh, he's, uh, about forty, fifty miles from where my mother came from. But we didn't have a chance to go back there to look his family up and see if we still have relatives on my dad's side.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm. Well you'll, um, you -- you can always do that. These --

BERTONASCHI: [interposed] Well, I, I wanted to do tha --

LEVINE: [superposed] Or, someone can do it.

BERTONASCHI: I wanted to do that. The last time went to Italy was, was seven or eight years ago, but that's when I ended up in the hospital for three or four days and they -- we were going to go into this little town where he came from, but we -- we didn't -- we didn't make it.

LEVINE: Well, um, [clears throat] and how about you -- your -- um, your wife? Her family? Did her family immigrate?

BERTONASCHI: Her -- no, her family, e -- even though they're Croatian, her dad and mother were both born here, but her d -- her dad went back and he spent a lotta time in Croatia before he came back. But I don't know any reason why he -- he, you know, he -- he done the same th -- well, he was born here, actually. But, ah, he went back there and, and he s -- spent a lotta time there. And when he migrated back to United States.

LEVINE: I see. Well, is there anything you've -- else that maybe I didn't know enough to ask about -- about, um, coming to this country, being American. I mean you fought in the American --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Yes.

LEVINE: -- army, um, and living out your life here?

BERTONASCHI: Well, I -- I don't know what else you might wanna know, but
[microphone noise] I s -- I know once I leave here, 'ere'll be a lot of
things I should have said, but the --

LEVINE: [interposed, laughs] Yeah, well that's the way always is, too.

BERTONASCHI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. Um, let's see. Ah -- [pause] and I guess you don't have
contact with your father's family.

BERTONASCHI: No. No, we don't .

LEVINE: No.

BERTONASCHI: The -- while his -- the two brothers that -- and the one sister that lived
in -- around near Pennsylvania -- they're -- when they -- when I came
over, they've been ceceased [sic] for years now. But they -- th --
their s -- ki -- children -- we get along, we still g -- meet, you know,
once in a while. But most of them are up in age and they're -- some
of 'em are already passed.

LEVINE: Mmm hmm. Do you -- do you don't happen to know why his brothers
chose western Pennsylvania?

BERTONASCHI: Well, I, I don't know. I really don't know because -- eh, it's funny that
-- well there was a lot of brothers from different families that came
over together, you know, [microphone noise] I mean they settled in
one town more or less like that.

LEVINE: Uu huh. You mean from the same place in Italy.

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Well I -- n -- not ne -- necessarily in the same province, but they, they, they was close by there. Their accent was a little different than -- than ours, but now when you go to Italy it's the same, ah, accent they have to art [ph]] 'cause all their kids w -- w -- went to school and they learned how -- how to speak the same accent.

LEVINE: And how about Pittsburgh or, or, um, the changes that you maybe have noticed --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Well, I -- ah, I lived close to where there's, ah, a lot of steel mills and that but they're gone now, so, but then there's always something that's taken their place. People are still livin' around here and they s -- seem to do pretty good. [microphone noise]

LEVINE: OK, well, um, I ca -- I think maybe we've covered everything. I wanna thank you very much --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Yes.

LEVINE: -- for coming in and for doing this interview. I think maybe we should just say that -- that you left from Genoa on the Conte --

BERTONASCHI: Conte Biancamano.

LEVINE: Broncamano [sic]. Uh huh. And, um [clears throat, pause] and, it was 1927, February 5th when you --

BERTONASCHI: [interposed] Yes.

LEVINE: -- when you arrived here.

BERTONASCHI: In Ellis Island, because y -- you ins -- you, know, you go through your health thing there on Ellis Island. Bef -- you know, that's -- that's when they either dec -- send you back or say you're OK, so evidently we were healthy.

LEVINE: Yeah, well, I'm glad you were.

BERTONASCHI: [laughs]

LEVINE: [laughs] Well, thank you so much for --

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] You're welcome.

LEVINE: --doing this interview.

BERTONASCHI: [superposed] Yes.

LEVINE: And, I'm speaking with Tulio Bonta -- Bertonasssss[ph] --

BERTONASCHI: -- ky.

LEVINE: -- ky. [laughs]

BERTONASCHI: Yeah.

LEVINE: [superposed] Ber -- Bertonaschi. And this is Janet Levine, and, ah, it's, ah -- [recording ends]