

EI-760

ORESTO DI GIACINTO

BIRTHDATE: MAY 21, 1896

INTERVIEW DATE: JUNE 24, 1996

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 100

RUNNING TIME: 1:01:30

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE

RECORDING ENGINEER:

INTERVIEW LOCATION: SPRING LAKE, NEW JERSEY

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

ITALY, 1913

17

SHIP:

PORT:

RESIDENCES:

[NOTE: Extremely difficult interview to transcribe verbatim due to interviewee's age and accent. Stopped transcribing after ten pages because of the number of [unclears].

LEVINE: Today is June 24th, 1996.

DI GIACINTO: Yes.

LEVINE: And I'm here on the front porch in Spring Lake, New Jersey with Mr. Oresto Di Giacinto.

DI GIACINTO: Yes, that's me. Yeah.

LEVINE: Mr. Di Giacinto is one hundred years of age.

DI GIACINTO: [unclear] [unclear]

LEVINE: Half of that.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And—and he came from Italy to the United States in 1913, when he was seventeen years of age. Well, I'm delighted to talk with you and I'm looking forward to whatever you can remember.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay? If you would say for the tape your birth date again? What is your birth date?

DI GIACINTO: My birth date—my—May the 21st, 1896.

LEVINE: And where in Italy where you born?

DI GIACINTO: Roma.

LEVINE: And where did you grow up?

DI GIACINTO: [unclear] Baguko. [PH]

LEVINE: Baguko?

DI GIACINTO: Baguko. That's the name of the—the—the small town.

LEVINE: How big was Baguko?

DI GIACINTO: Oh, this really small. I can't—I can't say how many people, you know, [unclear] pronounce.

LEVINE: Okay.

DI GIACINTO: A small town.

LEVINE: A small town.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what do people do in Baguko?

DI GIACINTO: What did people do? Like anybody else, like in a town. Like I live—I no live in a town. I live far away from the town and—and Sunday—Sunday they go down in the Mass in Baguko. Me and my father and my mother.

LEVINE: You'd go to Mass?

DI GIACINTO: Mass in Baguko. That's the church was in there, but we—we have to walk from my house to go Baguko about—about an hour. About an hour, and you got to pass—you got to pass the water. You call it a fuma, like a big river. Yeah, you got to—you got to walk down in the river and that. Sometime—sometime you can—you can't make it. Even the horses, the horses go through and pull away, but after that to go to Baguko. Yeah.

LEVINE: Didn't you—what happened if you were going to Baguko and you have to go into the river? Would you get wet?

DI GIACINTO: Well, I didn't get too—I didn't get too wet. But [unclear] wet, but I didn't get too wet. [unclear] still, no mean—no mean much wet. No mean a much wet. No mean much. Still, you got to walk or go home.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: I see.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Um, what was your mother's name?

DI GIACINTO: Francesco.

LEVINE: Francesco. Do you remember her maiden name?

DI GIACINTO: Francesco Pitinaro. [PH]

LEVINE: Pitinaro.

DI GIACINTO: Pitinaro.

LEVINE: Pitinaro.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, and—

DI GIACINTO: Pitinaro.

EI-7160/DI GIACINTO

LEVINE: How about your father's name?

DI GIACINTO: My—Giuseppe.

LEVINE: Okay.

DI GIACINTO: Di Giacinto. That's the name.

LEVINE: Say it again.

DI GIACINTO: Giuseppe Di Giacinto. That's me now.

LEVINE: That's your name?

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, and what was your mother like? When you were a little boy growing up, what—how—what kind of a person was she?

DI GIACINTO: Oh, she was—she was a nice woman. My dad—she was a nice woman but short, you know. Short.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DI GIACINTO: [unclear]

LEVINE: Yeah, that's good.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah. And [unclear] like anybody else. Nice woman. Nice.

LEVINE: Was she a good cook?

DI GIACINTO: Was a very good cook.

LEVINE: What can you remember that she cooked?

DI GIACINTO: Cook macaroni. Macaroni especially. Especially [unclear] macaroni but you do all the things you do except make a bread. You make a bread to put them in—you put in the oven. Not like the oven like this here. Like in the farm, you know, ain't got everything. You know what I mean? You fix it up down in the oven, the way you make heat. The way you make heat, lot of difference. Lot of difference way. Really, really I can't explain just what it is, but it make a bread, fix it up nice and you put them—put them over there and you cover them up.

EI-7160/DI GIACINTO

LEVINE: Oh, wow. [Coughs]

DI GIACINTO: After you cook, take it out and—take it out and we eat. We eat. Eat the potatoes, corn. Corn.

LEVINE: Excuse me a second. [tape off/on] Okay we're resuming now. You were saying that you put the bread in the oven.

DI GIACINTO: Put the bread—you fix it up, fix it up. Already they fix it up around the oven, but you have to fix it up, put it in there and put—put—put around in the top [unclear] cook.

LEVINE: What would you put on the top of the bread?

DI GIACINTO: What [unclear] some [unclear]. [unclear] Cover them up.

LEVINE: I see.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and what about potatoes, you were starting to say?

DI GIACINTO: Oh, the potatoes, same thing. You cook the potatoes. Boil the potatoes, take the skin out. Take the skin out, eat them. Any way you want to do. You eat them like that, or cut them up make [unclear]. Make [unclear] any way you want to. Yeah.

LEVINE: So there was bread, macaroni, potatoes.

DI GIACINTO: Potato, yes.

LEVINE: Anything else you can remember?

DI GIACINTO: [unclear] [unclear]

LEVINE: What is that?

DI GIACINTO: The [unclear] are a member of [unclear]. The [unclear]. So I don't know no more about those.

LEVINE: Okay.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: How about your father, what did he do for work?

EI-7160/DI GIACINTO

DI GIACINTO: My father, he work on the farm. He work on the farm. Somebody else [unclear]. You know we [unclear] nothing. We don't [unclear], but when we get the corn or get the potatoes, string beans, all the things like that, we have to walk it up to the owner and give the ground.

LEVINE: I see. The owner had the ground. Your father farmed it and then he—would the owner then give your father some of the—of the string beans and the corn?

DI GIACINTO: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. You get that. That's what he is, because we don't have no ground. We come poor family.

LEVINE: Right.

DI GIACINTO: Come poor family, we come.

LEVINE: Now, do you know how your mother and father met?

DI GIACINTO: That one—that one—that one—he was one those thing you have even today. My mother—my mother didn't have nobody come out and—come out—I don't know. My father same thing. He used to work somebody else and that's the way he meeted. My mother and my father meeted together, but I don't know this family. I don't know.

LEVINE: Your mother and father were working for the same family?

DI GIACINTO: No, no. Different family.

LEVINE: I see.

DI GIACINTO: But anyhow, anyhow he get a close together. They got married. Got married.

LEVINE: What do you remember about your father when you were a little boy?

DI GIACINTO: My father—my father was a nice man. Nice. Nice, tall fellow. He have six—he have six foot in the leg. Six toe in the foot, my father. Six. Six here and six here. Yeah. And—and I have the family, the family like that. But my father, provide everything enough the house. For the house.

LEVINE: Did he earn money as well as farm products?

DI GIACINTO: No. No, no. The money, I don't think he had anything. I don't think he have any come the money because he work for somebody else's property. He work somebody else property, got to work, got to [several years unclear].

LEVINE: How about grandparents? Did you have a grandma and grandfather?

DI GIACINTO: No. No. That one, no, I don't have that.

LEVINE: Did you have brothers and sisters?

DI GIACINTO: [unclear] brother. Oh, yeah, I have a brother. Oh, yeah. Yeah, I have two sisters and three brother.

LEVINE: Oh, and where did you fall? In other words, were you the oldest or—

DI GIACINTO: No, I'm the—I'm the last baby in the house.

LEVINE: The last baby.

DI GIACINTO: The last one. Finish up. Finish up, you know, the—my name like.

LEVINE: Were you closest to any particular brother or sister?

DI GIACINTO: No, but it's all—it was all the same. Treat them all the same. Yeah.

LEVINE: So can you—can you name your brothers and sisters, from the oldest one on down? Do you remember like who was the oldest and who came next and—

DI GIACINTO: No, no. Mariucc. [PH]No. Fran—no. Francesca. The first one, daughter. The second, Mariucc is her name. Now, the brother, [unclear] John, the first brother. After come Angelo and after come me. Three brother. Three brother and two sister. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, you know, I interviewed your nephew.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, [unclear].

DI GIACINTO: [unclear] Yeah, I know. [unclear]

LEVINE: Now, who was his—which one of your sisters or brothers—

DI GIACINTO: No.

LEVINE: Was his parent?

DI GIACINTO: Not that [several words unclear] name John.

LEVINE: John was his father?

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

DI GIACINTO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay.

DI GIACINTO: John was his father [unclear]. Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Okay, so what did you do for fun, when you were growing up, when you were in Baguko?

DI GIACINTO: I'm—I'm glad you asked that question.

LEVINE: Oh, good.

DI GIACINTO: Glad. When I was working, daddy get up, he get up in the morning. He got to work like [unclear] going to go [unclear], go some place and—and go to work in the farm, and later on, I go to. I go the same the way my father do the work. Yeah.

LEVINE: He taught you? He taught you what to do?

DI GIACINTO: Well, [unclear] job. [unclear] job. Said “Do this [unclear].” Only thing I want to put on the tape is that this [unclear]. When—when you put—when you put the corn in the ground, this [unclear]—when you put the corn, you supposed to put one, one or two. Make a little hole with a pin. With a pin. You make a hole and put the—put the—put two, yeah, two [unclear]. Now, my problem—my problem, I want to finish this[unclear]. I want to finish—I want to finish the stuff he give to me, and I put five, six in the hole. [unclear] when—when—when the corn come up, they come up like a flower. Come up like a flower. This--this really comical. Put that one, young boy, we don't know that much. When—when he come up, come up like a flower that come up. See, the one my daddy make it, put one,

two, all right, but the one that come up [unclear]. Yeah. That's the one—that's—that's what [unclear] finish up. Finish up that kind of corn you know.

LEVINE: What did your father say to you when—when you—

DI GIACINTO: Well, my father say, "See what—see what"—he say, "See what you did?" See, but I told him, said "I want to—I want to finish up what I give me." What he give me. I want to finish up, yeah. Finish up, yeah. [unclear]

LEVINE: Yeah. So—so you planted corn, and what else did you do on the farm?

DI GIACINTO: Well, work on the farm. Put the potatoes, corn, vegetable, anything. Anything for provide the eat. Anything provide the eat. Now, this—this—this really want to put on the tape. [unclear] Italy, this is going all over. [unclear] Italy. All over. No, you work all the year round on the farm. In the farm, you work all year round and some—some bad rain come up, bad rain for, you know what I mean? And it kill—and it kill everything. The poor man—the poor that work all year round, provide—provide this year for make a—make enough of for the wintertime, to eat. So it's really bad situation.

LEVINE: Did that ever happen when the bad rain came?

DI GIACINTO: Oh, yeah, sure. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: And what did the family do when—

DI GIACINTO: Well, that was [unclear]. Grab how much you can. Grab how much you can, you know what I mean? That's a bad situation. [unclear] probably all the country like that. That's a bad situation to live. This the best country, United State. [unclear] the best.

LEVINE: Well, was there anything else that you did when you were there that was for enjoyment? That was a good time—

DI GIACINTO: Well, no-no, we don't have our own place enjoyment.

LEVINE: No?

DI GIACINTO: No place. We don't have nothing [unclear]. We don't have nothing in [unclear] to go any place, you know, enjoy your life. Yeah.

LEVINE: Did you ever have music or dancing, anything like that?

DI GIACINTO: No way. Not no, no, no. No.

LEVINE: Now, before you mentioned something about figs. Who—did you grow figs?

DI GIACINTO: Well, the figs, yeah. [unclear] not that much figs. Not much. No this—this what I want—want put on tape. My father—the people next door where I—to where I—where I used to live, have a property. [unclear] They have about two time fifty. Fifty by a hundred. [Clears throat] There was a long—long way. Long. Somebody else he have like—like I have this part here, and I want to buy it. This property, we have to buy for two people [unclear]. For two people [unclear]. Now, these people here, you want to get the [unclear] closer. This—this property, you know. My property, it was all the way out. It was all the way out, separate. So it was a long—long—long [unclear], but I don't have it on—no, nothing provide. So my father used to put the grapes in that. They dig a hole. I think [unclear] five feet down, the roots, and he put—and he [unclear] years [unclear] to get the grapes. Seventy years, you know, you get—they get the grapes. See all of them—all the—all the time, all the time you got to—you got to take care of.

LEVINE: Now wait. He'd dig five feet down and then what? He picked the grapes?

DI GIACINTO: No, no, you got to [unclear] before they—

LEVINE: Oh, before it makes the grapes.

DI GIACINTO: Before it make the grape. Yeah, [unclear]. Yeah. Five year in order to start you to get the grapes.

LEVINE: Do you remember your father making wine?

DI GIACINTO: No, my mother don't make the wine.

LEVINE: No?

DI GIACINTO: No.

LEVINE: What did he do with the grapes after he—

DI GIACINTO: [unclear] Oh, but—yeah, but after I left. After I left there, I don't know what they have. After that I don't know.