

EI-806

ANTONIO LEONARDO D'ORAZIO
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INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.
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TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., /2000

ITALY, 1916 AND 1927
AGE 16 (SECOND TRIP)
PASSAGE ON "THE DUCA DEGLI ABRUZZI" (1916)
PASSAGE ON A CUNARD LINE SHIP (1927)

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SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Tuesday, September 24, 1996. I'm in West Springfield, Massachusetts, and I'm here with Antonio d'Orazio. Mr. d'Orazio came from Italy, and he came twice. He came the first time in 1916 when he was five. He stayed in this country until about 1919.

D'ORAZIO: 1919.

SIGRIST: 1919.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:Returned to Italy, and then came back to the United States in 1927 when he was sixteen years old, and in 1927 he was held for ten days at Ellis Island. Present also is his daughter, Jean Robinson. And it seems like a pretty quiet neighborhood, so the microphone will probably not pick up too much extraneous noise. Mr. d'Orazio, can we begin by you giving me your birth date, please?

D'ORAZIO:6/8/11. June, June 8th, 1911.

SIGRIST:Thank you. And where in Italy were you born?

D'ORAZIO:Castel Mauro.

SIGRIST:Can you spell that, please?

D'ORAZIO:C-A-L, Cas, no, C-A-S, you got it?

SIGRIST:And Mrs. Robinson is saying it's C-A-S-T-E-L capital M-A-U-R-O.

D'ORAZIO:Castel Mauro, uro, uro.

SIGRIST:Where is that?

D'ORAZIO:That's in the middle, in the middle part of, towards the Adriatic. It's about 35 miles from the Adriatic Sea, in Abruzzi. That's the province.

SIGRIST:What's the next biggest city, town?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, Aguila[ph]. Tamoli[ph]. Oh, (he laughs) there's a lot of them. There was a lot of towns. It's a good size.

SIGRIST:Is your full name Antonio d'Orazio?

D'ORAZIO:Antonio L., Leonardo.

SIGRIST:Leonardo.

D'ORAZIO:Antonio Leonardo d'Orazio, di Orazio.

SIGRIST:And, um, were you named after anybody?

D'ORAZIO:My grandparents. My grandfather, my mother's father, was named Leonard, Leonardo, and then Antonio, that's another one of the family. We always take on the family names. We don't, we don't pick them out of a hat. (he laughs)

SIGRIST:Do you know anything about your birth? Were you ever told anything about the day you were born, or what

your mother went through when you were born, or anything like that?

D'ORAZIO:Actually I was born in a farm, the farm that we owned.

And, uh, and they took me home and . . . (he laughs) There was no hospital in them days, you know. It was just you and the mid-lady. And I was a, and we'd just go home and grew from there.

SIGRIST:Did your mother ever tell you what kind of a baby you were?

D'ORAZIO:Of course, my mother always thought I was a saint.

(he laughs) Mothers do that, you know? I never was in trouble in my life. Always, I started to work when I was ten years old.

SIGRIST:Okay, well, we're not to ten yet. (he laughs)

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:Did your mother ever tell any stories about you as a baby?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, not many. My grandmother used to.

SIGRIST:What did she say?

D'ORAZIO:Well, a lot of time, you know, when you, in Europe you don't have any, uh, movies or anything, in them days, and so you sit around the fire and you tell stories. And my grandmother was a very religious person, and she used to talk about, most about religious. And death, and saints, and all that stuff. And then, uh, she used to tell me a story, each one, each human being in the world, there's a place up there somewhere, they have a candle lit for each one. And she says, she says, "Because," she says, "when we die, the light goes out." (he laughs) Yeah. She was a great woman, a great lady. She died at ninety-seven years of age.

SIGRIST:This was your mother's mother?

D'ORAZIO:My father's mother.

SIGRIST:Oh, your father's mother.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:Did she live with you?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, we lived in the same house.

SIGRIST:You lived in the same house. Can you describe what she

looked like in words for me?

D'ORAZIO:My grandmother, she was, oh, about five feet, five feet one, something like that. Uh, she was, you know, kind of stocky. Actually, she, if I saw her face right today, I would say she almost looked like a, like an Indian woman, you know, with a big, round face, all burned out with sun, sunburned and all that. Yeah.

SIGRIST:Do you have any other stories about your grandmother, things you remember her doing around the house, or doing with you as a child?

D'ORAZIO:Well, I'll tell you, what my grandmother used to do, her name was Maria Nicola. We used to have farms, and then when we had the, like the harvest of the wheat and the corns, we used to, she used to take me with her in this farm there, oh, probably five or six, seven miles away from the town, up in the hill there somewhere, and we used to corn husk for a week, and we slept just where we were, you know, we ate, you know, and at nighttime when it got dark, we just lay under the corn husk and lay there for two or three days, we would stay there. And when we got

done we'd go back home and maybe take another, take a bath. (he laughs) Yeah, she was a great lady.

SIGRIST:Um, can you describe the house that you lived in?

D'ORAZIO:Well, you know, the house in Europe, they were all, they were all one after the one. It has no, uh, what do you call it, spaces. See, they build one wall after the other.

SIGRIST:Like a row house.

D'ORAZIO:A row house, yeah. Uh, and my house was, we had a basement where half of the basement we used to keep our, our horse and our pig and our chickens, and the other half had a wall, and there used to be a room to sleep with. And then we had a second floor where we had our kitchen and another bed, and then on the third floor where we used to store, you know, hay and husk and all that, we used to sleep up there, too, because you would have big families, so you make a little nook somewhere, you lay down. And that's how we . . .

SIGRIST:Do you remember what kind of a roof the house had?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, all tile.

SIGRIST:So a tile roof.

D'ORAZIO:A regular tile roof.

SIGRIST:And do you remember what kind of floors you had in the house?

D'ORAZIO:Floors. (he laughs) Slate, slate. You know, just slate, no tile of any kind.

SIGRIST:How did you light the inside of the house?

D'ORAZIO:When I was a little kid we used to have oil lamps until the electricity came in.

SIGRIST:Do you have a story associated with the oil lamps, or tending to the oil lamps?

D'ORAZIO:It used to small like crazy. (he laughs) No, that was, you know, it was our living. We light two or three lamps, just to keep the light, and then you sit around the fire, and that's it.

SIGRIST:What about water? Was there water in the house?

D'ORAZIO:Water, you had to go down, uh, from my house, from where I lived to the fountain. There used to be, I'd say, uh, a half a mile. You had to go down there and

get them on the big kettle, and in them days they put it on their head and take it home until, uh, until they, uh, start using, uh, little barrels, they used to put around the, uh, the animal. There's a horse, or, and then they, uh, you know, fill up these barrels, wooden barrels, and take it home. No, that's my sister.

SIGRIST:Did she want to come in? We're going to pause. (break in tape) We're now resuming, and we've been joined by Mrs. Anita Garrone, who is Mr. d'Orazio's sister, American-born. We were talking about the house that you lived in, and we were talking about bringing the water into the house.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST:What about bathroom facilities in your house?

D'ORAZIO:(he laughs) We used to have, like, these, uh, you know, 55-gallon barrels, and they used to cut them in half, so you used half of that, and you, uh, you know, filled that up and you, and take a bath. If there were two in there you take a bath first and he take a bath next.

SIGRIST:And how often did that happen?

D'ORAZIO:Maybe once a week.

SIGRIST:Um, what about furniture in the house? What do you remember about the furniture that was in the house?

D'ORAZIO:Furniture? Bed, which was in the corner, and then a few stools or some kind of a chair, and that's it. Nothing fancy.

SIGRIST:Was there ever any need to heat the house?

D'ORAZIO:No, we had a big fireplace. That's where we used to keep the, you know, the house warm.

SIGRIST:And what was burned in the fireplace?

D'ORAZIO:Wood.

SIGRIST:And where did that come from?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, hard work, chopping wood. (he laughs) We had wood. We had a lot of wood to take home and pile it up for the, for the duration of the winter. Yeah.

SIGRIST:How cold did it get in Abruzzi?

D'ORAZIO:In Italy, in Italy, well, the normal, the normal, uh,

weather in Italy is an average, like year-round it's about forty, forty-five degrees, but you used to get some night, you know, cold, like thirty-two, thirty-five degrees. But we didn't mind, because we lived with it.

SIGRIST:Did it ever snow that you can remember?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yes, oh, yes, oh, yes. Plenty snow. Oh, you, I could tell you a little story about snow.

SIGRIST:Please.

D'ORAZIO:Uh, one time we had such a big snowstorm, like this.

SIGRIST:How high is that? Remember, we're on audio tape.

D'ORAZIO:Say, when I was, when I was, say, ten years old, twelve years old, uh, now I'm only five feet, or five feet one, at that time I must have been maybe four. I walked out of the door. I was supposed to go see my grandmother, my other grandmother, on my mother's side. When I stooped down to the, to the, uh, the, uh, the road, the street there, and, uh, of course, there was a little. So I walked down around the corner about, oh, say, about, oh, five hundred yards, and I had to go down these little stairs, because

Europe is made out of little stairs when you go up the hill. And when I stepped down to these little stairs, I fell right into the snow, and I couldn't get out. So it happened a friend of mine, a next door neighbor, he happened to come up down the other end, and he heard somebody yelling. So he looked around and he says, "Where the hell is he?" So he looked at me, I was down there like a little bunny. He says, "What are you doing with this weather?" I said, "I was going to go see my grandmother." And he said, (Italian). That means, "You're crazy." (he laughs) So he picked me up just like this, and he put me on his, he took me back home. Because he used to live right next door to us. He was our neighbor. So he took me home. He says, "Stay there until next week."

SIGRIST:Was that an unusual occurrence, though, the snow that deep?

D'ORAZIO:It was a bad winter.

SIGRIST:That was a bad winter.

D'ORAZIO:It was a bad winter, yeah, like here this winter we had a bad winter.

SIGRIST:Yeah, a very bad winter, yes. What was your father's name?

D'ORAZIO:Michael.

SIGRIST:Michael.

D'ORAZIO:Miguel.

SIGRIST:Miguel. And, um, what did he do for a living in Italy?

D'ORAZIO:Farmer, you know, labor, farmers.

SIGRIST:What do you know about his family background?

D'ORAZIO:My grandfather Peter. I don't know anybody else but my grandfather Peter, and my grandmother that I talked to you all about it, yeah.

SIGRIST:Did your father ever talk about his childhood, or . . .

D'ORAZIO:Never.

SIGRIST:Or anything like that?

D'ORAZIO:Never, never.

SIGRIST:What was his personality like?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, my father was the kind of a guy that he worked, he

used to say, "You don't work you don't eat." Work, and have a Sunday home. And that was it. So he worked on the, in this country he worked on the railroad, he worked for a contractor, he worked for, uh, for, uh, the trolley car companies. He worked, he worked, he did everything, all labor. Just a labor man.

SIGRIST:What did your father do for his own pleasure when he wasn't working?

D'ORAZIO:Nienta, nothing. Just home, play cards, play cards, friends come in. The garden in the backyard. And that was it.

SIGRIST:We're going to pause just for a second. (break in tape) We're resuming now, and Mrs. Garrone has left.

D'ORAZIO:Left.

SIGRIST:(he laughs) Um, can you tell me a little bit about, um, your father worked hard, and that's what . . .

D'ORAZIO:Very hard.

SIGRIST:His life was, all about working.

D'ORAZIO:It was his life. And he raised five kids. (he
laughs) No, six.

ROBINSON:Six kids.

D'ORAZIO:Six kids. Four brothers and two sisters.

ROBINSON:And thank God that you, he wasn't with you for eight
years, or you would have had a few more. (she
laughs)

D'ORAZIO:Oh, we would have been eighteen in the family.

SIGRIST:What was your mother's name?

D'ORAZIO:Lucia.

SIGRIST:And her maiden name?

D'ORAZIO:La Fratta.

SIGRIST:Can you spell that, please?

D'ORAZIO:L-A-F-A-T-T-A [sic]. La Fratta.

SIGRIST:L-A, capital L-A, capital F-R-A-T-T-A.

D'ORAZIO:La Fratta.

SIGRIST:La Fratta. Um, what do you know about your mother's

family background?

D'ORAZIO:My mother comes from a family of masons and bricklayers, and stonecutters. I was, I was on that side. And, uh, she had, her father got, he died when he was about, uh, fifty-six years old. There was an accident.

SIGRIST:What kind of an accident, do you know?

D'ORAZIO:You don't want to know.

SIGRIST:Okay.

D'ORAZIO:You don't want to know. There was an accident. And, uh, and so she grew up. But then the mother married again, and married another, uh, bricklayer or stonecutter, and she had some, uh, you know, brothers, half brothers. She was the only, no, she had two, one brother, John and herself, and that was it, and the other ones are half brothers.

SIGRIST:From the second marriage.

D'ORAZIO:From the second marriage, yeah.

SIGRIST:Did she ever talk about, tell stories from her childhood, or anything like that?

D'ORAZIO:No, no.

SIGRIST:No.

D'ORAZIO:No. See, in Europe they very seldom do that, you know, because it's, think of the past and they just, they all lived for today, you know? Yesterday is gone, forget it.

SIGRIST:What was your mother's personality like?

D'ORAZIO:My mother was a saint, really a saint.

SIGRIST:What were some of the things that she did that would reflect that?

D'ORAZIO:My mother was a home person, a homebody. She loved music. And, uh, she was religious, you know, rosary beads in her hands every day. We went to church, you know, our usual time, you know, and just went home and just took care of the house. She didn't have any time to do anything else. She had six of them. (he laughs)

SIGRIST:Can you, uh, tell a story that might reflect her love of music?

D'ORAZIO:No. In Italy, you know, when, uh, in Italy people get together, you know, say the community, you know, somebody knew how to play the accordion, and she used to like, in fact, she used to like to play the tambourine, you know, like this. And, uh, then they used to pick at it, you know, start playing. They played, and then they danced, and they do the jigs and the cortrelle and all that stuff, and drinking wine and maybe have something, something to eat, and it would go on for two, three, four hours. But her life was home. Home, home, home. Never went, you know, never went anywhere. The only thing my mother ever did, travel the ocean once, two, three times, the way I did, and that's, that's her big excitement.

SIGRIST:Well, this is quite a good place to talk about why you ended up coming to America in 1916, the first time when you were five.

D'ORAZIO:My father came to this country way back in 19, uh, before, uh, he came here, I don't know what year was it. Pete was, my brother Pete was born 1890, 1902. And my other brother was born, no, my sister, Phil, was 1902, Peter was born two, three years later, and my other brother, Pete, was born in 1907. So my

father came here in 1907, then he came back to Italy, and I was born, and he came back, and he came back again, and my brother was born in 1915. He was, my father went across the ocean I'd say about three or four times. And, of course, you know, the fare in them days, thirty-five, forty bucks to take you across the ocean, and that was a lot of money. And, uh, so that's, so, uh, when he came here the last time, he never came back. So he called, you know, he called us to come to the country, my mother, uh, my mother, my older sister and, uh, Joe, my brother Joe, and myself, and Nick, and my brother Nick. Peter was already here.

SIGRIST:Okay. So that's the 1916 . . .

D'ORAZIO:That's in 1916.

SIGRIST:Where was your father living at that time?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, we were, we were just like gypsies.

SIGRIST:Before you got here, where was he living here in the States?

D'ORAZIO:In, in Pennsylvania.

SIGRIST:He was in Pennsylvania. And what was he doing?

D'ORAZIO:Working in the coal mine, coal mine, in Bristol, Pennsylvania. And that's where we landed the first time. Then we stayed there about maybe a year, I don't know, a year, then we came to Springfield, and we were living in Springfield for two years, and then we went back. The only reason we went back because my grandfather died, and my grandmother was left all by herself. And we had quite a bit of, you know, land to take care.

SIGRIST:These are your mother's parents?

D'ORAZIO:No, my father's parents.

SIGRIST:Your father's parents.

D'ORAZIO:My mother's parents was, they were still living. So she was all alone, and she was over the ninety years of age when we came back. So we, we had to take over some of the chores.

SIGRIST:What do you remember of the first passage leaving Italy and coming over?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, I never, I'll never forget it. The morning that we

left my home right in front of the house . . .

SIGRIST:In 1916.

D'ORAZIO:In 1916 my, we had a horse. My grandfather, uh, you know, packed the horse and all that, get it ready, and I remember he took me out, put me on the horse. He tied me down, and, uh, my mother and my sister and my brother, they walked. We had to walk quite a distance to get a train, and, to get to Naples. And then when we went to Naples we came with, uh, I remember the ship was, the name Ducco[ph], Ducco[ph] Abruzzi, Ducco[ph] d'Abruzzi, Abruzzi.

SIGRIST:And that was the 1916.

D'ORAZIO:That was in 1916.

SIGRIST:And do you remember being on the ship at all?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. (voices garbled) We had a heck of a trip. Storm, waves, and, so everybody slept, they didn't have a private cabin in them days. It was all like bunk beds. The whole area was all bunk beds so, you know, so, uh, we had our own little spot. And to get food in '16 we had to go in the, when you go in the ship they used to give you

utensils, a big pan and a small, tin plates. And, uh, so we used to go to the kitchen. "How many people are you? Four? Five?" And they fill up the thing for five or six people. So, and then you find a place on the boat, you sit down on the deck, and you eat. Everybody makes a dish like that. That was the, in them days.

SIGRIST:How long was the voyage?

D'ORAZIO:I don't remember. Thirteen or fourteen days.

SIGRIST:Uh-huh. And then, uh, do you have any recollection of coming into New York in 1916, or Ellis Island . . .

D'ORAZIO:Well, when we, I remember . . . (he clears his throat) When we came into, uh, the Hudson River, you know, where the, uh, where the, uh, island is, when we saw that, you know, all that lights and skylight, you know, everybody thought it was in heaven. Yep. And then we spend the, oh, I think it was a day, a day or more, on the ship, you know, before they let you, let you out. So you went down, you know, through those, you know, the gates there. They still got them over there. We went through those gates, and they check you out. They put

something on you, you know, so you don't get lost.
(he laughs) And we just got in there and waited to
be shipped. And they, somebody picked us up. I
don't know who it was.

SIGRIST:How did your mother feel about leaving Italy?

D'ORAZIO:Well, she, uh, her mother was very upset because she
didn't like to see her, you know, leave. But she had
to leave, it's her husband. You know, when you get
the call, you go.

SIGRIST:That's right. Tell me about that one year in
Pennsylvania.

D'ORAZIO:The year in Pennsylvania? Well, I was only, you know,
five, a little over five. And we lived in a, in a
little house and, uh, by the way, no bathroom in the
house. You used to go about a hundred feet away from
the house to the little, what you call it?

SIGRIST:An outhouse?

D'ORAZIO:The outhouse, yeah. And, uh, and that was, that was
our life over there.

SIGRIST:Did your mother work once she got to the United States?

D'ORAZIO:Never.

SIGRIST:No.

D'ORAZIO:My mother never worked.

SIGRIST:And what about school? Were you put into school for
that short amount of time?

D'ORAZIO:When we came to Springfield, I went to Howard Street
School.

SIGRIST:So that, so it was after the year you spent in
Pennsylvania . . .

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST:You then went to school.

D'ORAZIO:When I came there I was almost six years old, and I
went to Howard Street School. And, you know, it's
what I learned, the English, you know? We lived
right on Williams Street, just a little ways from it.
Yeah.

SIGRIST:Do you have any, uh, stories you can tell about the
process of learning English as a child?

D'ORAZIO:It's just, you know, you go in, you sit down and be a

good boy. (he laughs) And whatever they ask you, because they used to explain the words, you know, the door, and open the door, or close the door, you know, then go on from there. And it's, and it's, uh . . .

SIGRIST:What about your parents, though? Because they're much older. Did they . . .

D'ORAZIO:Did they, my parents, I'm sorry to say, they were illiterate. They never went to school. But they knew more than the professors, believe me.

SIGRIST:Tell me a little bit more, you said your grandparents were ill in Italy?

D'ORAZIO:No, my grandfather died.

SIGRIST>Your grandfather died.

D'ORAZIO:And my grandmother was left alone.

SIGRIST:She was alone.

D'ORAZIO:So we had to go back to take care of her.

SIGRIST:Whose decision really was that to do that?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, actually the whole, the whole thing started, after the war there was a lot of sickness, a lot of

sickness. They used to call it like influenza. And my mother got sick, see? So, uh, when she was recuperating, her doctor made a, said to her, says, "You know, Lucia," he said, "What," he said, "You know, I heard that you got, in Italy you got, you've got to go back. It'll be a good thing for you to go back." And he says, "In Italy it's a different air, you know, you'll get better, you know?" And that was that. But the idea was we had to take care of the old lady, because she was over ninety years old.

SIGRIST:When you mentioned World War One, one thing I should have asked you and didn't, when you were on the ship in 1916 . . .

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:Did World War One affect that passage in any way?

D'ORAZIO:No. We were, we were, uh, when we started from Naples, I remember this for, I can see it right now. We went about three days, three or four days, and we had to stop to get, uh, fuel. You know, in them days you used to, it would run by coal, underside. And, um, I think, because after I studied the, years later, like when we came back, the Azure, that's near Portugal

there, they stopped over there on the way to get all the coal and all that. And, you know, and, if I'm not mistaken, really, the people that were carrying the coal, you know, on, uh, bags on their shoulders.

They were just like, when you see a slave ship. That's the way they looked to me. In fact, I, now, I was only a little boy of five, or five-and-a-half. I went over to the kitchen and asked the kitchen, the man, that they gave me a bag of bread, a little, little buns, so every time one of those poor guys came up the thing, I handed them one of those, those bun, and they used to stick it in their shirt. And that's the only thing I remember about the, uh, and the storm, we had a bad storm, yeah. But that's all I remember.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

SIGRIST:All right. So your mother's doctor suggested that she go back to Italy.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, yeah, yeah, because her . . .

SIGRIST:Plus your grandmother's alone over there.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:What do you remember about leaving the United States?

D'ORAZIO:It didn't, it didn't phase me a bit because . . .

SIGRIST:Who went? Who went back to Italy?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, uh, when we went back, we had to go back, my
mother, my sister, and my, and my three brothers.

SIGRIST>Your sister Anita, who was just here.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah. She was just a year, a year old.

SIGRIST:She was a year old.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, yeah. And then my brother, my, uh, brother,
Joseph, and my brother, Nick. See, Nick, Pete stayed
here, because he was older. Now, while we went over
and get pictures to make on our passport, my brother-
in-law, my sister's husband and my brother-in-law,
Michael, he says, "Why take Nicky back in Italy,
because he's almost the age to go in the service."
You know, over there it's kind of strict, you've got
to go. So he, he talked my father into keep Nick
over here. So he took a scissor and he cut the
picture. In fact, that's one, that one over there.

SIGRIST:Oh, wait, you're wired up here! (referring to the
microphone) We'll look at it after.

ROBINSON:Wait . . . We'll get it after.

SIGRIST:We'll look at it afterwards. (he laughs) Okay?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, you've got that, you know. Well, anyway, uh, and
he cut him off and, uh, and just me and my brother
Joe and Enid[ph], we went back, and my mother.

SIGRIST:I see.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:Do you remember the name of the ship that you took back?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, it was a Cunard line, oh, gee, Cosalicki[ph]?
Cosalacki[ph]?

SIGRIST:Well, maybe as we're talking it'll come back to you.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah. It was The Cunard Line.

SIGRIST:What do you remember about . . .

D'ORAZIO:It took us nine days.

SIGRIST:It took nine days to get out.

D'ORAZIO:To get to Naples.

SIGRIST:Which is a lot less time than it took for . . .

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah. Well, and they had kitchen, and they had dining rooms. (he laughs)

SIGRIST:Yeah, so it was a much nicer . . .

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah. When we went back, we had a dining room and everything, and it had no more sleeping bunks. It was all cabins, the little cabins. Yeah.

SIGRIST:Was, um, was your mother ill on the ship from the influenza?

D'ORAZIO:No, she was getting, she got better over here. She was, treating her with something. In them days they, they didn't have, uh, all kinds of pills like today. In them days they used to give you, like, sulfa drug for infection, and that was it. Drink a lot of fluid, orange juice, and all that stuff. That's it.

SIGRIST:Well, and, of course, there was a terrible influenza epidemic . . .

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. Oh, it was a big epidemic.

SIGRIST:Right. Um, when, so the ship landed in Naples.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:And then did you go back to your home town directly?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah. From Naples you take a train, and then to go, the train goes to, uh, like, uh, Carbobasso[ph], that's the province, and then from Carbobasso[ph], you take, uh, a bus, you take a bus and you go to, uh, and then they just had the bus. In the other day, they only had horse and wagon.

SIGRIST:And the year is 1920, 1919?

D'ORAZIO:1919.

SIGRIST:1919.

D'ORAZIO:Right after, right after they sign the peace. Six months later we went back to Italy.

SIGRIST:Your grandfather was already buried at this point.

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST:He had been dead for some time.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, Peter was, died, yeah.

SIGRIST:Um, tell me a little bit about when you got back and, uh, setting up your life again in Italy with your grandmother.

D'ORAZIO:Oh, we just walked right in the same house where we were born and just took it up from there. And then about, uh, oh, about, about a year, six months later, three or four months later, you know, I went, I, uh, I was, I learned a trade, and, you know, I was going to be a tailor, so I used to go to the shops and, you know, watch the guy, and we were supposed to learn. But I used to go, and he'd put me on the needles, and I would start doing the little hemming, you know, a little stitching. I used to keep sticking it in my finger, and I used to go home and cry sometime. I says, "I don't want to do that." So my grandmother, my mother's mother, says, "I got it for you." She says, "We're going to make you scappari[ph]." That means a shoemaker. "Because you're sitting down, and you're working with your hands." And I became a shoemaker.

SIGRIST:Can you talk to me a little bit about learning how to make shoes?

D'ORAZIO:Oh . . .

SIGRIST:And who taught you?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, I spent, you know, like, the guy that was already, you know, had a shop, you go to him and you stay there from six o'clock in the morning until six o'clock at night, and go to school, and then go back over there right after school. In fact, when I first started, you know, when you pull nails off the shoes, nails, they didn't throw the nails away. They put them in the little container, and they gave me a job to straighten them out so he can use them over again. They use everything over and over, recycles, that's what you call recycle. (he laughs) And I spend, uh, seven years, you know, to become a shoemaker. Then when, uh, you know, when I left over there in '27 and come back, uh, I started to work over here about, oh, maybe three or four days I was down in Springfield, they got me a job with this friend of mine, a fellow that they knew.

SIGRIST:Doing the same, doing carpenter work.

D'ORAZIO:Doing the shoe, shoe repairing.

SIGRIST:Can you tell me, because no one has ever done this for us on tape before, the process of how someone makes a shoe, from the beginning to the end.

D'ORAZIO:Well, you get the hides, you know, the hide, you know . . .

SIGRIST:The height.

D'ORAZIO:You take a, you take a cowhide or a . . .

SIGRIST:The hide, yes.

D'ORAZIO:The fine material is made out of, uh, goat skins, and then the little kid skins, you know, the fine, fine stuff. They process it, and they make leather out of it, and then they, we buy them back, and we, you know, we make, uh, when you make, when you make a pair of shoes you have the, uh, a wooden form. Each, in fact, each customer that my, my boss had, he made that, that pair last for him, that was his.

SIGRIST:And we should say for the sake of the tape that a last is the wooden . . .

D'ORAZIO:The wooden . . .

SIGRIST:. . . form.

D'ORAZIO:The wooden form. That's what they call the last.

SIGRIST:Right.

D'ORAZIO:And, in fact, when you get through with making your shoes, they take it and they put it on the shelf. Then next time you use that, they'll be your shoes again. In case somebody had exactly the same size, he would use it. So you take the hide, you make, you make a pattern. You take papers and you make patterns. You know, you make the, uh, the, uh, the front part, and the back part, and the tongues and all that. Then you shape them, and you, you have, uh, you know, a sewing machine, you know, a Singer sewing machine that's been around for two hundred years.

SIGRIST:And you had one in Italy, too, a Singer . . .

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, oh, yeah. But most of the shoes was made by hands, no machine, no, no machine stitching the finish, and then the, it was all done by hands. You know, you shaped the stuff around this piece of wood, then you sew the welts on and, you know, the whole process, you know? And finishing,

you know, the rough part of it, we used to take pieces of glass. You break a piece of glass. You know how sharp, how sharp the glass is? First you use a rasp. You know what a rasp is, don't you?

SIGRIST:Like a file?

D'ORAZIO:A file, yeah. A rough, a rough, a rasp, they call. You use that to smooth it out, you know, to the finish. Then you take glass and you, you know, you smooth it out. That comes nice and smooth. Then you, we just have, uh, kind of a, you bought powder, black powder, and you mixed it with some water or vinegar to make the, uh, the stain, and that's how we stained the leather around. And we used to take a hot iron and we, we used to take some beeswax, you know, the wax that, uh, the little bugs make. We used to take that and we'd put the hot iron near there, and then we'd take it and we'd run it against the thing. It was shaped, you know, so it fit the piece of leather, and you go.

SIGRIST:Rubbing back and forth.

D'ORAZIO:Rubbing back and forth. That thing used to shine like glass. We used to do the whole thing like that.

SIGRIST:And in Italy what would a pair of shoes like that cost in 1925?

D'ORAZIO:1925? Uh . . .

SIGRIST:How many lire?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, lire? Well, maybe forty, fifty lire.

SIGRIST:And in terms of the economic climate at that time, was that an expensive thing for people to buy then, or . . .

D'ORAZIO:Believe me, in those days if you spend a quarter, it was a lot of money. And we didn't get paid by money, a lot of the people who used to go to the home and make shoes. We, they used to give us, like, if you had a lot of oil, olive oil, he paid us in oil. If he had the money, he'd give us money. Otherwise he would, we'd trade, like, see? Oil, grain, corn, you know, anything like that. I remember one time I did a job for somebody and I went back with a dozen of eggs. And that's the, that's the . . .

SIGRIST:That was just a standard practice . . .

D'ORAZIO:That's a standard practice in Europe.

SIGRIST:Uh-huh. Um, did everyone wear shoes all the time?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. We used to, you know, a pair of shoes used to last a year. It had to last a year, otherwise the farmer would come back and clobber you because the money they paid for it, you know? But this leather was strong stuff.

SIGRIST:What about women? Did you make women's shoes as well as men's shoes?

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, we made women's shoes. Yeah.

SIGRIST:And how, you said they would last a whole year.

D'ORAZIO:The same way.

SIGRIST:The same?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, same, same thing, only fancier.

SIGRIST:Do you remember making shoes for any member of your own family . . .

D'ORAZIO:Uh . . .

SIGRIST:In Italy.

D'ORAZIO:No. No, we didn't. But we made shoes, let me see, we

made shoes, they made shoes for myself one time, and they made, for my brother. Yeah, we made it for my brother, and my brother had such bad feet. He used to suffer a lot. We had to make sandals for him, open.

SIGRIST:What was wrong with his feet?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, I don't know. He used to smell terrible. Well, you know, you took a bath once a week. (he laughs) We used to make open shoes for him. And I don't think, the first pair of shoes he got, I think, when we came here. Me, I always had a nice pair of shoes.

SIGRIST:When you were in this apprenticeship, learning how to make shoes, were you paid?

D'ORAZIO:No.

SIGRIST:For seven years you were unpaid?

D'ORAZIO:Never got a dime. They, when the holiday rolled around, Easter, or Christmas, the boss used to give you something.

SIGRIST:Were you the only apprentice in that shop, or were there other . . .

D'ORAZIO:Oh, no, there were, there'd be two, three, four guys.

SIGRIST:Can you talk a little bit about the boss? First of all,
what was his name and . . .

D'ORAZIO:You heard the phrase Simon LeGree[ph]?

SIGRIST:(he laughs) Yes.

D'ORAZIO:That, they were Simon LeGree[ph].

SIGRIST:Uh-huh. Not a pleasant man.

D'ORAZIO:No, what, they were nice, they were pleasant. But
they, see, they, in Europe they, uh, you hadn't got
time to smile and explain things. They gave you a
job and they told you once, and you had, you know,
they told you, do it. They showed you once, and that
was it.

SIGRIST:Do you remember making a mistake once?

D'ORAZIO:Sure.

SIGRIST:You're pointing to your head. Does that, yes?

D'ORAZIO:I don't know if you see a little grew over here?

SIGRIST:Yeah, there's a little mark there.

D'ORAZIO:That's from a piece of, a strip of leather about that long.

SIGRIST:Three feet?

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, about that long. I made a mistake, and he hit me in the head, and the darn thing was wet. And hitting me, he made a line over here.

SIGRIST:That's right on the top of your head.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:Uh-huh. Did you live at the shop?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, no, we lived in our own house. The shop was, like, down the street.

SIGRIST:I see.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, a little hole in the wall.

SIGRIST:So it wasn't an apprenticeship where you actually lived . . .

D'ORAZIO:No, no, no, no. No, no. You'd go home every night. Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST:This is great information.

D'ORAZIO:And I worked, and I worked, I was a funny guy. I was a funny kid. Any time a guy wanted to get paid from me to learn, you know, like you go to school, college, you pay your dues, I never liked to, because I figured I was enough business-smart kid. I think I'm giving him 10 to 12 hours a day, why should I pay him, and I'm doing work. And I used to, I moved around. If he didn't want me free, I'd go to somebody else. (he laughs) And I moved. I went to three places.

SIGRIST:In America?

D'ORAZIO:No, no, no. In Europe, in Europe.

SIGRIST:Oh, I see. You moved to three different . . .

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, in Europe.

SIGRIST:Three different towns, or in the same town?

D'ORAZIO:No, same town.

SIGRIST:Same town.

D'ORAZIO:Oh, my town was barbers, shoemakers, little convenience store, or you're a farmer. (he laughs) That's all they were there.

SIGRIST:Did you have a special outfit that you wore when you, or something . . .

D'ORAZIO:Just an apron.

SIGRIST:What kind of an apron? What was it made out of?

D'ORAZIO:Denim, some kind of denim stuff, yeah. You know . . .

SIGRIST:Tie around the back.

D'ORAZIO:An apron. Just a regular apron, what you see. Brown or black, whatever they could get. Yeah.

SIGRIST:Tell me about, um, your mother when you went back to Italy and how her medical condition improved.

D'ORAZIO:She got, she got very, she got better.

SIGRIST:She got better.

D'ORAZIO:Very, better. Oh, yeah. When we, when we got there, she was, she was good.

SIGRIST:How was the family being supported?

D'ORAZIO:Well, my father used to send a few dollars, but then we used to have farms, you know, wheat, corn, olive trees, grapes. See, my father had quite a, my

grandfather had left quite a bit of property, but my father never enjoyed, because he left there when he was, you know, a young guy. In fact, he could never get along with his father anyway. (he laughs)

SIGRIST:Another reason why he left. What was he, I'm sorry, I forgot, what was he doing in Springfield when you went back to Italy for business, for a . . .

D'ORAZIO:My father?

SIGRIST:Yeah.

D'ORAZIO:He was working, I think, with the railroad.

SIGRIST:In Springfield.

D'ORAZIO:New York, New Haven (?).

SIGRIST:Uh-huh. Was there communication between you or your mother and your father . . .

D'ORAZIO:From Italy?

SIGRIST:From Italy.

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah, we used to write. Yeah, we used to write to, uh, to my brother-in-law and my sister there, and they, then my brother, and they'd write back.

SIGRIST:How did you feel, because you're a little bit older when you go back to Italy, how did you feel about having to go back to Italy?

D'ORAZIO:Well, I didn't have no, you know, we had to go back, and that was it. Your father and your mother, and you go back. And the other reason why, actually, you know, we took Nick out of there, because my father, he says, "What am I . . ." You know, he worked, he used to work like ten, twelve hours a day, where he was only a kid, you know, uh, fifteen, sixteen years old. He says, "What am I going to do with him?" So my brother-in-law says, "I'll keep him." You know, "He can stay with us until, you know, he goes to school and all that." And that's, uh, that's the way that happened.

SIGRIST:I was just wondering if you as, you know, how old were you, eight or something, when you went back.

D'ORAZIO:I was about eight-and-a-half.

SIGRIST:Eight-and-a-half.

D'ORAZIO:Well, say, 1916 and 1916 I was five, about eight, eight-and-a-half.

SIGRIST:I was just wondering how it must have felt for a child at that age who really has sort of been Americanized to some degree, I mean, in America, to have to go back to this country. You just did it.

D'ORAZIO:You had no choice. I mean, your mother took you and you go with your mother.

SIGRIST:When you got back to Italy, how did you fit in to the other groups of . . .

D'ORAZIO:I had, I had to work on it, because I had, they went to school. We went to school, they put me back in school, and my brother, you know, he was younger. And, uh, we used to, we used to travel, to go to school, I would say three, four miles, from the school to my house, because I lived on the end of town. And my, and my teacher was my godfather, another Simon LeGree[ph]. And, uh, and I went, I only went to fifth grade in Italy. That's all I ever had, my whole life, fifth grade, in Italian. In English, what I learned, I learned myself. I went two, two season in night school when I came to this country, 1927 and '28. But I got a job, I became seventeen, you know, seventeen-and-a-half, work,

work, work. And my first pay he gave me was, uh,
nine dollars a week.

SIGRIST:That was when you got back.

D'ORAZIO:When I come back.

SIGRIST:Did you have any opportunities to speak English when you
went back to Italy?

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, once in a while.

SIGRIST:With who?

D'ORAZIO:Because, like, well, the English language, it's all
over the world.

SIGRIST:Even then.

D'ORAZIO:Even then. And a lot of time I couldn't say, like now
I can't say some words in Italian, because I haven't
used Italian, you know, for years. I can speak it,
but I can't, some words I can't come up with it. So
I did the same thing over there. Half English, and
half in, uh, in Italian. But I never forgot the
Italian language. See, in Europe, each section of
Italy has their own dialect. In my own home town, we
had three dialects. The mountain people, the center

people and the out, the outskirts people, had
different sounds.

SIGRIST:And which did you speak? Which did your family speak,
the outskirts?

D'ORAZIO:The outskirts people.

SIGRIST:Uh-huh.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:Do you remember, um, because I'd like you to speak a
little Italian for us on tape, and this might be a
good time to do it, for instance, is there a prayer
that you can say in Italian, or something that you
remember, like a poem in Italian, that you can say
for us?

D'ORAZIO:Uh . . .

SIGRIST:Grace before dinner?

D'ORAZIO:If I remember one . . . (he pauses)

SIGRIST:Or a song, do you know a song that you can sing in
Italian.

D'ORAZIO:Uh, I used to know, I used to know a poem, we used to

say one, like when it rained and you had to be in the house all the time, we used to, let's see. (he recites in Italian) Uh, I can't finish it up.

SIGRIST:When I leave it will all come back. (he laughs)

D'ORAZIO:Hey, I'm eighty-six years old.

SIGRIST:Um, well, tell me a little bit then about, um, we'll come back to the Italian later. Tell me a little bit about how it was decided that you would go again in 1927.

D'ORAZIO:To Italy?

SIGRIST:Back to the United States.

D'ORAZIO:Oh, back to the United States? Well . . .

SIGRIST:You've been apprenticing all the time . . .

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah, all those years we've been apprenticed and all that. Well, uh, actually Italy was changing from, uh, from king to fascist, and it was getting tough, it's like communism. And, uh, I used to . . .

SIGRIST:Can you elaborate on that? What was becoming difficult?

D'ORAZIO:Well, when I used to, see, I had to go to school. When

we used to go to school, when the fascists started to take hold of Italy, everything changed. You had to dress the way they want to, you had to abide by the rules, you know, you had to do all what they said, you know? And, uh, I couldn't take it. I couldn't take it. And, uh, then my, you know, my father, you know, started saying, you know, come back, and he started sending letters, and then my sister, and that's how we, and then we had to wait from 1919, that we were there, we had to wait till 1927, a quota, you came on a quota in them days. They only let, like, sixty thousand or a hundred thousand immigrants a year. And we had to wait that long to get back here. And I had to go, I had to go to Naples to get some papers, I had to go to Rome to get some papers, we had, oh, I'll tell you, we had to do a lot of traveling.

SIGRIST:You're saying we, who else . . .

D'ORAZIO:My mother and my . . .

SIGRIST:So the whole family's going back in 1927.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah. And to come back we, the whole gang is coming back.

SIGRIST:Had your grandmother died?

D'ORAZIO:My mother had, my grandmother had died, yeah.

SIGRIST:Do you remember what year that was?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, I don't know. It was on a Christmas, uh, no, Easter week. Uh, on a, on a holy, on a Wednesday night, when the last bell rings before the, uh, you know, they ring the bell and then they silence the church bell for the rest of the week until Saturday morning, eleven o'clock. And, uh, and this went, I was right near her, because I loved my grandmother. I was right near her, talking to her, and she says, she said, "Mama Mia." That's all she was doing, praying, see? I says, (Italian). You know, I kept talking to her, and she would turn around, you know, (Italian), she'd go like this. "Bless you, bless you." And, uh, and she'd, and she died, uh, Wednesday before the, the last bell. She heard the last bell of the church, because we had a tremendous bells of our church, oh, they were big, because if you rang that thing you could hear it in the house. And, uh, she says, "Oh, (Italian)," that means, "My son." (Italian) "This is my last day." And she

died.

SIGRIST:And this was a couple of years before you left?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, 19, I think it was in 19, uh, '20 . . . About
1925.

SIGRIST:1925.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:Um, you said that when you were getting ready to leave
you had to run around and get a lot of papers and
things.

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST:Um, you mentioned the fascists regime coming in.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:Did they make it complicated for you to leave?

D'ORAZIO:No, no. It was just the beginning of it, just the
beginning of it. Uh, because the fascists didn't
really take a hold until late in the '30s, see?

SIGRIST:Right.

D'ORAZIO:See, late '30s. It was just the beginning of the

party. You know, I used to, night after night people like, you know, you'd see the gang running around the street smashing windows and all that. I was all in that turmoil. And many nights, you know, you got to scam and get under a porch somewhere, under a rock, because these guys, you know, fascists and communists, you know, they used to fight like crazy. And we had a lot of that in our town.

SIGRIST:It was very visible.

D'ORAZIO:Oh, wide open.

SIGRIST:Yeah, right there.

D'ORAZIO:You know, like when you see on TV, you know? Marchers. They march all over the town. If they know you were against the party, they'd pull you out and, you know, beat you up. That's been like that in Europe, you know, for thousands of years.

SIGRIST:What do you remember packing to take with you in 1927?

D'ORAZIO:Not a heck of a lot. We didn't have anything. You know, just, like a knapsack made out of cloth. No valise. We had only one trunk, made of, you know, these big box, you know, like you got. We had one of

those. And put everything in there, and then we shipped that out. But everything you had in there, socks, whatever you wore, make a change.

SIGRIST:Did your father request that you bring anything specific with you to America?

D'ORAZIO:No, no. No, no.

SIGRIST:Where did you go to get on the ship?

D'ORAZIO:Naples.

SIGRIST:To Naples.

D'ORAZIO:We had to go to Naples.

SIGRIST:You had to go to Naples. And do you remember what the name of the ship was that you took to America the second time, in 1927?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, it was another Cunard line. Uh, dear God, I forgot. (he whispers) It was an English name.

SIGRIST:Well, there were lots of ships, hundreds of them.

D'ORAZIO:It was an English, uh, Cunard Line is an English line.

SIGRIST:Right.

D'ORAZIO:I told you, I forgot. I forgot.

SIGRIST:That's fine, that's fine.

D'ORAZIO:And we had, when we came back in 1927, we had to stop in Lisbon, Portugal, into the, uh, the cove, like, to pick up passengers. We stayed there night into day, the first night into day that we left three o'clock in the afternoon. We were no more than, uh, five or six miles into the open ocean, a storm came up. God, what a storm. And my brother was one of these weasels. You know what a weasel is? Never stood still. Always go. The storm was so bad, the waves above the ship, so they wouldn't let you allowed to go outside. You had to go from one door to another door, and I lost him, I couldn't find him. And I went, my mother was going crazy, and I was going crazy because, you know, overboard, you can just, like. Finally I found him. He's laughing. I said, "I'm going to kill you." And I found him, and I brought him. But I tell you, and our mast, you know the wireless? Broke. We had only one wire left, so we couldn't even an SOS. And it took twenty--, I'd say twenty-four hours, I'd say, say fourteen, fifteen hours, the ship, to settle. That ship, every time

you hear crunch, like if it was splitting in half,
and we went down in the, in the galley, down in the
hold. We had to stay there. I'm telling you.

SIGRIST:We're going to pause just for a second, and I'm going to
put in the second tape, and we'll get you to America,
to Ellis Island, for your ten-day detention.

END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

SIGRIST:Okay. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park
Service. It's Tuesday, September 24, 1996. We're
beginning Tape Two with Antonio D'Orazio, and we are
now talking about his 1927 voyage, the second voyage
to America. And present also is his daughter, Jean
Robinson. We were just talking about the terrible
storm and your brother, you know, disappeared, and
thought it was very funny.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:What else sticks out in your mind about that particular
voyage? Um, did you get sick, for instance?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, three days. Three days sick. I mean, I mean sick.
Overboard, overboard. And, um . . .

SIGRIST:You mean throwing up overboard.

D'ORAZIO:Throwing up, throwing up, overboard. And, uh, after three days my stomach started settling down, so I went to the kitchen, and I got to be pretty friendly with the cook there, and I used to tell him, I says, I forgot his name, let's say Pasquale, I says, "What can you give me, you know, to settle my stomach?" So he made me small little stakes, little, like a blade steaks. He gave me a couple of those with some kind of, you know, baked bread, and all that. And, uh, and I started eating a little bit like that (he laughs) and it kind of settled my stomach. And it was terrible. I, I never want to get sick again like that. Oh, my God.

SIGRIST:What about your mother? How was she faring?

D'ORAZIO:My mother was all right. It didn't bother her. It didn't bother my brother. It didn't bother my sister. Because she was too young to know about it anyway.

SIGRIST:What were some of the differences that you noticed between going to American in 1916 on a ship and going

to America in 1927 on a ship? What, what improvements . . .

D'ORAZIO:Oh, great improvement. I mean, you, from the first ship to the third ship was luxury. You rode in luxury, you know? You rode in first class, or third class. I came in third class because it's all I could afford. See? And they treated us good. We had a dining room, they used to serve the meal and everything. Of course, at the end of the trip, you know, we gave the, uh, they call them camererie[ph], you know, they're, uh, your boy, we gave him a little, a little tip, you know, gave him a few, a few dollars.

SIGRIST:Were there organized activities on the ship that you remember?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, yeah, I think, for some of it, yeah, yeah. They used to have, uh, they used to have some kind of games on the, on the board, things like that, but I never bothered.

SIGRIST:You mentioned, of course, earlier, your mother's love of music. Were there any musical activities on the ship at all that she could have partaken in?

D'ORAZIO:Uh, in '27, uh, now, you got to, I hate to be quoted on it because of the year, but Caruso, Enrico Caruso, he's coming to this country, and he sang, you know, he sang for the people. That was in, that was in 1927. Yeah, he sang.

SIGRIST:Do you want me to pause this? We're going to pause.
(break in tape)

D'ORAZIO:Chamber of Commerce, they used to hire bands, a couple of bands to, for the, for the music at night, you know, operas and all that. In Italy, you know, it's all opera, you know? And Caruso came to our town and he, we had a bank right in the center of the town, he was on the balcony and he sang that night, because I, I remember it because I, I was there till, oh, past midnight, and I had fallen asleep near the door there, and to listen to him and the band. Yeah. But the ship, we had a, that's the only thing I remember that I sang, sang in opera when we came here. Then we landed in, uh, in Ellis Island.

SIGRIST:Yes, well, that's going to be my next question is tell me how did you end up being at Ellis Island for ten days?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, uh, when I was in Europe, in Italy, every year in the summertime, we used to go to Tarmolie. That's in the Adriatic.

SIGRIST:Can you spell that?

D'ORAZIO:Tarmolie.

SIGRIST:Tarmolie.

D'ORAZIO:Tarmolie.

SIGRIST:T-E-R, T-A-R, M-O-L-I-E?

D'ORAZIO:Tarmolie.

SIGRIST:Tarmolie. Is that, that's a town?

D'ORAZIO:That's the, it's a town. Yeah, it's a big city over there right on the, it's a beach. So all, the whole, beaches all over the place. And, uh, you know, what happened when you go to the beach and you get sunburned and all that, you peel. And I was peeling. And I'm telling you, I was scaling all over. When they saw my body, they thought I had a disease. Of course, you know, in them days doctors, they weren't as sharp as they were today. They didn't have no,

what do you call those guys, tomologists . . .

SIGRIST:Dermatologists?

D'ORAZIO:Dermatologist. (he laughs) So they held me. And then I had a broken leg. I didn't tell you that what happened. I had a broken leg.

SIGRIST:How did that happen?

D'ORAZIO:Well, when I lived in Pennsylvania.

SIGRIST:When you were a kid?

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, when I was, the five years old. My mother went to visit a friend and left me home with my old sister, see, because being a kid, you know, you're nasty, you cry and all that, you wanted to be, go with your mother, so she wasn't too far, it was just down the block, down the road, on the street there. So I went, and coming back I was carrying something that the lady had given us. I was walking on the side, it was the wintertime, froze, you know, ice on the sidewalk, and I slipped, and I landed on my knee, one knee. You know, one knee down, and the other leg the other way, and it cracked my, uh, kneecap.

SIGRIST:On which leg is that?

D'ORAZIO:On the left.

SIGRIST:The left leg.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah. So, uh, at the minute we didn't think nothing of it. But during the night I was sleeping with my brothers, and he kicked, and I, you know, I yelled and cried. So my father got up and, you know, and he saw my leg was swollen like this. So the next day they took me to some horse doctor over there and they put a, a cast on it, without resetting it. You see, in them days they didn't have no bone specialist. And I had a cast from here to here.

SIGRIST:It's you're whole leg you're indicating.

D'ORAZIO:The whole leg. And then, then, you know, we were planning on coming to Springfield, and we were going to go to see this, this doctor that we had over here, was supposed to be a better doctor, and they never did anything. So I end up with a, I end up with a bad leg.

SIGRIST:I see.

D'ORAZIO:And, uh, that's how I got this here.

SIGRIST:So at Ellis Island between the peeling skin . . .

D'ORAZIO:That was, they kept it. They quarantined me, and then you had to wait till they decide, you know, to get, to get some information and all that. But I kept telling them, I says, I says, now I would say the word, you know, beach bum. I said, "I used to go to the beach every day." Because with, with ten cents a night you could sleep somewhere. In one house, we used to sleep there. We used to pay two dollars, two dollars, I mean, two lira. Two lira, that's forty pennies. That's all we used to pay for rent, see? You didn't have a chateau, but it was a little hole in the wall there, and you slept.

SIGRIST:And was that right at the beach? I mean, that's where you . . .

D'ORAZIO:It was right near the beach. The houses were right along, all along the town there, you know, because the beach was, you know, Main Street here, the beach is over there, and the townhouses and all that. And that's how I happened to have all that scabbing. Then about the thing, you know, because, you know,

you do have a disease that it's a bone disease like tuberculosis. They thought I had kind of like that.

SIGRIST:They were very suspicious of you.

D'ORAZIO:Well, very suspicious. That's why they kept me there.

SIGRIST:Did they make you undergo tests to prove that you . . .

D'ORAZIO:Not a darn thing. I walked, I was walking anyway, because, should I go into the miracle? See, I used to walk with crutches. I walked with crutches for three years.

SIGRIST:When you were young.

D'ORAZIO:When I was, you know . . .

SIGRIST:Right after this happened.

D'ORAZIO:From five to eight-and-a-half years old, I walked with crutches, see? And then, uh, you know, because I had, I had given up the crutches from a miracle I left the crutches. You don't want to hear about that.

SIGRIST:I would if you'd like to tell it. Yeah, please do.

D'ORAZIO:When we were in Italy that we went back, I used to

have, you know, crutches. And in 1918 we heard of this, uh, friar, monk, got the stigma, (Italian), they call it. I don't know if you heard of them.

SIGRIST:Right, the nail marks.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, he had the nail marks. They was coming, and they were going, you know, when he first got it. They would show one day, and the next day would be healed. But eventually the whole thing came and stayed there. You know, God made, God made sure that he was worthy of, of the stigma. And so he was a full stigamtine[ph] priest, you know, monk. We heard about it, and my mother being a religious person, she says, you know, I'm going to take you to Santa Padro Bio[ph]. And I, uh, so I didn't, I didn't have no say in it. I loved to go into it, you know. So we decided to go. In the town we have, what do you call the, you know, the old western day, you drove on horses and, what?

SIGRIST:Horse and wagon?

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, you know, the, uh . . .

SIGRIST:Carriage?

ROBINSON: Like a (?)?

D'ORAZIO: You know the, uh . . .

SIGRIST: Stagecoach?

D'ORAZIO: Stagecoach, yeah, stagecoach. One, the guy in our home town, he used to do that service. He used to take people different places with stagecoach. And we went to San Joanna Rotundo, that's near Foggi[ph]. So we were in there, and one day we didn't see it, we couldn't see nobody, so the next day we still, we could see, but he was, he was so occupied with other people and all that, thousands and thousands of cripples and people over there. So on the second day I was walking up to the altar where he was saying the mass, it was eleven o'clock. I reached about, say, fifteen, say fifteen feet away from the altar. You see, in Europe, the churches didn't have no pews in them days. You sat on the floor. Yeah, on the cold marble floor. And, uh, while I was ready to do that, my crutches just slipped out of my hands, you know, and they slipped quite a ways. And I got up, I went over and picked this one and picked that one, and I brought it back like this, and I didn't put it down.

I never wore crutches since that day. So everybody said it was a miracle. And, uh, then the next morning, about sunup, we were sleeping in the corner, me, my mother and, uh, and a lady with her daughter, and the daughter was deaf, deaf and mute. She was born that way. She was there for the miracle, too. And the mother was crying and praying and all that. And on the third morning, when we woke up, say about six o'clock, the girl told her mother not to cry. "Mama, (Italian)," don't cry any more. She could speak. And that was a miracle, one of the two miracles that day, in the two days. See? And I never speak about this because people think, you know, they think you're nuts, you know? You're, because a lot of people don't believe, you know? And I always kept it to myself. Because there was another man with us, from my own home town. He was a shoemaker. He stabbed himself in the leg on purpose to avoid drafting, and he was crippled, crippled himself, and he came with us. And this Padre Bio[ph], when he went to, you know, for an audience with him, he had a little niche over there, you kneeled down and he talked to you, you know, and he said to him, he says, in English, he says, "I can't

do it." He said, "I can't do nothing for you, my son." He says, "You did that yourself. You're self-inflicted." You know, the guy, he accuses my mother that we had told him. And, I mean, you don't talk to a saint, gossip. I says, "You're . . ." You know, I was eight, eight-and-a-half, you know, eight and nine years old, I knew, I was never short of words. I says (Italian). I says, "My mother, my mother's a saint." I said, "She don't gossip." He couldn't believe that he knew. Do you know Padre Bio[ph] stood on the balcony when they were bombing thirty miles from there, Foggi[ph]. He stood . . .

SIGRIST:Careful, you're wired, you know.

D'ORAZIO:No, it's all right. He stood, he stood, just looking up, and people were saying to come down. He says, "They will not bomb this church. They will not bomb this church." When they came to the town, the plane just flew by, and they went someplace else. So he was a saint.

SIGRIST:Just fix your microphone.

D'ORAZIO:He was a real saint.

SIGRIST:We're going to pause just for a minute. (break in
tape) We're now going to resume. Well, let's get
back to Ellis Island. Did you try to explain . . .

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. Every, every morning, every
morning, you know, the guy call you for, for
breakfast, like that, and I used to tell this, this
guy, I says, I says, I says, "This is all sunburn,
and this leg was broken in Pennsylvania when I was
five years old." I says, "And that's the way it came
out. See?" I says, "No doctor," you know? And I
said, "This is all sunburn, sunburn." And after the
days of, in fact, one of the guys from Springfield
that works for the immigration, Mr. Lovitt, I never
forgot his name, Mr. Lovitt, I had to have an
audience with him, you know? I went in the office,
and I start talking to him, and he told me what, what
do I do for a living? I says, I says, "I'm a
shoemaker." "Oh," he says, "I got just the man
that's going to give you a job in Springfield." Just
like that, he said that. I said, "Fine." And, uh,
and then I spoke to him, uh, in Italian. I says, I
says, "This is all sunburn." I says, "I used to go
to the beach every, for one month every year I used

to go Tarmolie, in the Adriatic side, you know. Because, you know why? And my mother used to take me there, figure that sand, sand bath used to be good for me, for my, for my leg. Because I used to bury myself with hot sand, you know? And that's how I happened to go. I said, "And then they don't, they don't believe me." So he took a look at me like that, you know? And I says, you know, I mean, I said, "What are they going to do? Send me back to Italy?" I said, "My mother and brother's in Springfield. What do I, you know, go back for what?" And, uh, then my brother-in-law came down and they got together and before you know I, they let me out in passage to, uh, to the, uh, to the, uh, what they called it, the, uh, the ship, where they stop over there, what do you call it?

SIGRIST:The ferry going . . .

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, the, got on the ferry there, and went across on the other side, Manhattan island there, and we got on the train and we came home.

SIGRIST:Can you tell me where you slept at Ellis Island, what it looked like?

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, the, uh, well, you, you know, you go . . .

SIGRIST:But describe it for someone who doesn't know . . .

D'ORAZIO:But you know . . .

SIGRIST:I know the Island, yes.

D'ORAZIO:You know the building in there, we know the building when they got, they got those bunk beds? See, uh, originally we slept on cots, because they had a, you know that corridor over there? There were all cots all around, see? So when first I started, we slept on the cot. See? Because I was all there by myself, because my mother and brothers were left. And then, then we went up on, uh, upstairs, the bunk beds, and there's a big, big tub sink over there. That's where I used to wash. (he laughs) Yeah. And during the day I used to go through the, that door there on the other side of the building, go around, around the island to the other side where the hospital and the, uh, where they used to keep unwanted people. And that's all I used to do, walk back and forth, walk back and forth.

SIGRIST:What were some of the things that you saw walking back

and forth that stick out in your mind?

D'ORAZIO:Just a ship and water. (he laughs) Ship and water.

And people, I used to go over there one place, you know, the guy was inside the bar window there. I used to go over there and I, you know, if he was Italian I, I would speak Italian to him, you know? And we passed the time away, and that's all.

SIGRIST:Where, where did they feed you, or how did you eat when you were at Ellis Island?

D'ORAZIO:I used to, they used to give you, you know, a plate. You fill it up, you go there and they give you the thing and you eat. You ate on your bed and, you know, no dining room.

SIGRIST:Did you, do you remember eating anything that you had never eaten before?

D'ORAZIO:Ah, most of the, what they feed you in those places was potatoes and carrots and, you know, all vegetable stuff, meat maybe once a week.

SIGRIST:Did you still speak any English at this point?

D'ORAZIO:I used to know some word, yeah. Yeah, I knew some

word. I just, the fact that, you know, they used to kind of throw me off because sometimes I couldn't say a word in Italian, I would say it in English. If I couldn't say it in English, I would say it in Italian. Oh, yeah. I always spoke, you know, mixed the language together, what I had, because I, you know, my father, I mean, by us moving to this country, we moved to Pennsylvania, we moved to Springfield, crossed the ocean three times, it ruined my education. You understand? I had no roots. I could move, move, move all the time, and I didn't have a chance to finish school anywhere.

SIGRIST:Right, and it's not like you're just moving from one town to the next? You're moving to entire countries.

D'ORAZIO:No, this was from state, country, cross, cross to Europe. And in Europe, uh, by coming to this, like I say, I had to do a lot of, a lot of, you know, you know, I was ten, fifteen, sixteen years old, you know? I knew my marbles, and I knew how to get around. So we had to go to Naples to pass some kind of a physical. Then we had to go to Rome to pass another physical, and we had to get some kind of papers from somebody over there. So that's how I

happened to, to see part of Italy. I went to, to, all along the south coast, from Naples to North, to Rome, you know, the Coliseum, and churches, you know, I wish I was now, I would enjoy it much better, but I was only seventeen, see? So . . .

SIGRIST:When you were detailed at Ellis Island, your mother and brothers and sisters had gone on . . .

D'ORAZIO:Oh, no, they came out right away.

SIGRIST:Right. They had gone on to Springfield?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yeah, oh, yeah.

SIGRIST:So no one stayed there . . .

D'ORAZIO:I was the only one kept, kept, uh, behind.

SIGRIST:So you had no visitors or anything while you were there?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, no, no.

SIGRIST:Nothing like that. Um, do you remember, uh, when you were there, did, um, you mentioned they looked at your skin, they looked at your . . .

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST:Did you have to have a physical while you were there, a full physical, or were they just . . .

D'ORAZIO:No, just my skin and my leg. That's all they were concerned of.

SIGRIST:Well, how did you feel when your, your parents, when your mother was alive, to go ahead up to Springfield and you were held back? How did that make you feel?

D'ORAZIO:Well, I mean, you know, I don't remember I don't even, I don't think I ever cried, because it was the fact of life. You know, you know, a young man in Italy of fifteen years old, he's like a 35-year-old spoiled brat that you got today. I mean, you know your, you know, you lived.

SIGRIST:Right, you were a grown-up by then.

D'ORAZIO:You're grown up. Because you're working, you're, you know, you have a lot of responsibility, and I had a lot of responsibility, because I had the responsibility of getting people to work for our farms, I had the responsibility to go out at night and knock at the door, "Hey, Joe, you want to work a couple of days down the, certain place of the . . ."

And, you know, "How much?" "Ten lira a day," you know? So I'd pick up three or four guys, and I used to go, because I couldn't do it, you know?

SIGRIST:And you learned you own trade.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, and I was working every day to learn my trade. I used to cut wheat myself. In fact, I almost lost this finger (he laughs) with the scythe.

SIGRIST:Do you remember when they released you from Ellis Island what the process was?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, it was nothing. After I saw the, uh, the, uh, the, uh, Mr. Lovitt . . .

SIGRIST:Who was Italian, you said, or spoke Italian.

D'ORAZIO:No, no, he's Irish, and he spoke Italian.

SIGRIST:He spoke Italian.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah. After I seen Mr. Lovitt, Mr. Lovitt, you know, he talked me, and he, and he signed me up. He said, "You're all right." So I went down. My brother-in-law came and picked me up. We got on the, on the, uh, on the, the, uh, ship that (?), went across the river there, into the train, and back into

Springfield.

SIGRIST:Well, tell me about, about getting the job in
Springfield when you got here.

D'ORAZIO:Well, like, when that guy, Mr. Lovitt, says about the
shoemaker, and, uh, and some people around here,
where I lived, on Auburn Street, that's where we
moved in Springfield.

SIGRIST:Auburn?

D'ORAZIO:Auburn Street, yeah.

SIGRIST:A-U-B-U-R-N, Auburn.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, Auburn Street. There was, uh, a few Italian
people living over there. And one guy especially,
one of his, a friend, pizan, had a shoemaker shop,
Nick. And he used to be a produce person. He used
to sell vegetables and all that. And that's, got me
in, you know, introduced me to the guy, and I went
over there one day and he says, you know, he says,
"You want to," he said, "you want to fix shoes?" He
put me to work, and he could see what I could do, you
know, because I did a lot of, I used to make shoes.
I made shoes up until 1940. After 1940 I stopped

because I couldn't make any money on it, so shoe repair was the thing. So I started working, and he liked me, and he kept me, for five years. Then I went, no, not five years. I worked 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, yeah, I worked four-and-a-half years for the guy, and I started a shop on my own in (?). In 1931 I opened up a shop, and I was in business ever since.

SIGRIST:When, um, when you first got the job in America with the guy that Mr. Lovitt had . . .

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, his name was Alec, Alec Stella, Stella.

SIGRIST:S-T-E-L-L-A.

D'ORAZIO:Stella, yeah.

SIGRIST:Did he ask you to prove your . . .

D'ORAZIO:No, no.

SIGRIST:You didn't have to make a shoe for him?

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, he was a foreigner anyway. You know, we're all foreigners. When he saw what I could do, he says, he used to brag. He says, "Hey," in Italian, he says, (Italian). You know, "Fine shoemaker." Oh, I used to do everything. I never ran a machine in my life.

In a week I, I had it mastered.

SIGRIST:Do you remember how much you were paid for that first job?

D'ORAZIO:Nine dollars a week.

SIGRIST:Nine dollars a week. Now, was your family all living together? Did everyone move back in together when your mother and the rest of you came back?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, we always lived together. We never, like my father and mother and brothers, we all lived in the same house, no matter where we went. We moved around a lot. We moved around a lot. In fact, I lived, uh, in Springfield we lived on the South End, William Street, and when we moved on William Street we lived on Margaret Street, and from Margaret Street we went to, to, uh, Auburn Street. Auburn Street, we moved around.

SIGRIST:Why so much?

D'ORAZIO:I don't know, in them days, you know, the rent was, you know, rent was cheap, and some of the place you been was too dirty or something like that, so you tried to get something. So finally, finally we, we, it was a

house. I tell you, it was a house, but it was a dump, a mess. So we saw it. We bought the house for eight hundred dollars. And me and my brother and my father and whoever wanted to help, we cleaned out that place, we dug the cellar out, put a cellar under it, and we, then we had, you know, like my brother used to be a plasterer, did plastering, and a few friends, we fixed up the house and we lived over there for, for, till 1944.

SIGRIST:And what was the address?

D'ORAZIO:48 Auburn Street.

SIGRIST:Auburn Street, uh-huh. It was an old house?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, it was an old house. In fact, there used to be a barn in the back there for horses years ago. It was terrible.

SIGRIST:And so the whole family . . .

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, it was up and down.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

SIGRIST:Tell me how the, you know, the stock market crashes in

1929.

D'ORAZIO:'29.

SIGRIST:How does the Depression affect your business making the shoes?

D'ORAZIO:It was, it was tough, because people couldn't afford, you know, to, to spend any money, because a lot of people lost a lot of money. But the poor people that you do business with, you didn't have to worry about it because they didn't have any money, so they didn't lose it. We deal with, you know, uh . . .

SIGRIST:With poor . . .

D'ORAZIO:Middle class, middle class people.

SIGRIST:Yeah.

D'ORAZIO:Poor people.

SIGRIST:What did . . .

D'ORAZIO:Working people.

SIGRIST:What did a pair of shoes cost?

D'ORAZIO:In them days? Three dollars and seventy-five cents,

four dollars. I used to buy Thom McAnn shoes for three dollars and seventy-five cents. Yeah. And we used to get fourteen cents to put a pair of heels on.

SIGRIST:And they were leather heels, or . . .

D'ORAZIO:A piece of leather, or a piece of, you know, fine, uh, regular rubber heels we used to get twenty-nine cents.

SIGRIST:Were most of your clients Italians?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, no, we got all kinds, all kinds. And then when I, when I, uh, when I quit, I gave up my shop, and I got a job for, in a department store concession. This guy has three hundred shops across the country, shoemakers, and I got a shop over there, and I worked over there for a full, I'd say about two, three months. And they made me a manager. I ran the shop, and I had two people working for me. Then after that they made me a, a district supervisor. And I used to take care of seven shops. Albany, Schenectady, New York, Boston, Mass., Springfield, Mass., Pittsfield, Mass., Lowell, Mass. That's it. Seven shops. I used to, you know, take care of the help, and, a big headache. And I worked for that company on the road.

I worked there for thirteen-and-a-half years. I did one year on the road, and I quit.

SIGRIST:What year was that?

D'ORAZIO:1940 . . . '50. 1950.

SIGRIST:1950.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah.

SIGRIST:What year did you get married?

D'ORAZIO:1936.

SIGRIST:1936. And what was the name of your wife?

D'ORAZIO:Margaret.

SIGRIST:And her maiden name?

D'ORAZIO:Mastriani[ph].

SIGRIST:Mastriani[ph]. Can you tell me how you met her?

D'ORAZIO:My brother used to, used to go to the dances, you know, the social dances. Years ago they used to have social dance in City Hall, Town Hall, all over. In Springfield they had, they had the Butterfly Ballroom, they had the Torrione Hall on State Street,

Ballroom.

SIGRIST:Touring?

D'ORAZIO:Torrine, Torriner Hall, yeah. And, uh, so he used to, you know, he used to like to hoof it up. And I used to dance a little bit, but I, I was always, held me back because of my leg. Slow dances I could do. So one day he invited me to come to West Springfield, over here in the Town Hall. They were having a dance. And my, his, he had met this girl there, his wife, and his wife had a sister. So we went over there, and then they introduced me to the sister, and from then on I . . . (he laughs) I got married fifteen months later. (they laugh)

SIGRIST:And, um, how many children did you have?

D'ORAZIO:Five.

SIGRIST:And can you name them, please?

D'ORAZIO:Three boys. Number one is Gene, number two is Antoinette, number three is Pat, Patricia, number four is Anthony, and number five is Michael.

SIGRIST:Michael. And have you been back to Italy in your adult

life?

D'ORAZIO:No.

SIGRIST:After 1927?

D'ORAZIO:'27.

SIGRIST:Do you have any interest in going?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, I would love, I wanted to, in fact, I was going to go back in 1968, because my son was in the service over Alviano, Italy, and he met a girl, and he was going to get married. So my daughter and my son-in-law, Antoinette and Bob, they were going, they were going to Switzerland and all that, take a trip through Europe, and I was going to go with her. But I used to have angina attacks, and I was afraid to go because, you know, you drop dead, and then you've got to put them through all that rigmarole, you know? So I, I held back, and I didn't go, and I'm very sorry I didn't, because I would love to go back to Italy one more time.

SIGRIST:Did your parents ever want to go back?

D'ORAZIO:No.

SIGRIST:No.

D'ORAZIO:No.

SIGRIST:So even though, all that going back and forth your
father had done . . .

D'ORAZIO:My father, he didn't even want to hear about Italy,
because he had a hard time. He had a hard time.
Nobody wanted to hear about Italy.

SIGRIST:Well, as you said earlier in the interview, they tended
to just sort of forget the past.

D'ORAZIO:Forget the past.

SIGRIST:Uh-huh.

D'ORAZIO:Yesterday was yesterday. We were already tomorrow.
Today, tomorrow will take care of itself. That's the
way my father was.

SIGRIST:How do you think of yourself? Do you think of yourself
an American, as an Italian. How do you think of
yourself in terms of nationality?

D'ORAZIO:I love my country. I love my country. I can't forget
my country. I was born there. I mean, you know,

blood is there. But I love this country, because they didn't give me what they gave me over here. I had to work harder over here, but it wasn't that kind of a, you know, a, pushy and all that stuff. You did it because you wanted to. Over there you had to do it because you were told to do it. That's the difference.

SIGRIST:What did you do in this country that you were the most proud of in your life? What are you the most proud of when you look back on your life?

D'ORAZIO:Well, I think, you know, I think that the best thing that ever happened to me once I got married, when I got married, and I had all those children. I mean, they made my life, and, you know, and I never made a lot of money, because really, money, to me, that's a second, a second, what you say? How you use the word? That's a second thing, because if I, if I wanted the money, and I get a lot of money. I should have, actually today I should be a millionaire. I build real estate. But I never did it to make money. I had a house, I bought stores, I bought two stores. I bought seven pieces of property. And, but when I had these problems with myself physically, you know,

it was getting tough to take care of it, and I had to, then my wife got sick. She was sick from about, uh, from 19, uh, '74, '75, till she died seven years ago. And, uh, so that kind of, then my son, my number one son, he messed up his married life, and he left home. And my other son almost did the same thing, married somebody that I didn't agree, but he did it, and I came around and I looked, you know. And, uh, and I gave them everything. Money, I gave it. My three, my two grandchildren and my two sons, they cost me eighty-five thousand dollars.

SIGRIST: So you think that, so that the family is more important to you than money?

D'ORAZIO: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. What father would take seventy, eighty thousand dollars and keep giving, giving, giving, without getting nothing back? Where do you see it? I know fathers that say, "Yeah, I'll loan you the money, but you got to pay me back." But I never did that.

SIGRIST: Did your parents become citizens?

D'ORAZIO: Yes.

SIGRIST:How old was your father when he became a citizen?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, sixty-five. My mother was close to seventy, I'd say.

SIGRIST:And did you have to, did you become a citizen?

D'ORAZIO:Oh, yes.

SIGRIST:Did you do it on your own, or through your parents?

D'ORAZIO:On my own, on my own. In fact, I had to teach my parents, you know, my father couldn't read or write.

SIGRIST:Well, tell me a little bit about helping him learn to become a citizen.

D'ORAZIO:Well, my mother says, "I want to become American citizen." And I said, "Okay, Ma, but you got to study." So I used to get the book, and they used to tell you about the laws and all that, Washington and all that. And then at nighttime I used to get in there and put a pen in her hands and I'd take her hands and I'd write her name, see? And I'd write it and, you know, she got the hang of it, and she finally learned how to write her name. And my father, the same way. But he couldn't read it, you

know? After they wrote it, they know it was her name. And then I used to, the books used to have questions, you know, about the laws, the Constitution, the freedom, and number one, two and three and, you know, all your, uh, what do you call them, the constitution, you know? And, uh, so I said, "Ma, who's the first president of the United States?" "Uh, I don't know." I said, "I'm going to tell you. It's Washington." So that's, we kept on saying that, and we did that for, you know, months. And finally, within two-and-a-half years, you know, you had to wait two-and-a-half years, they learned pretty good. Then when they went over to the, to the court, to get their citizen paper that day, the judge didn't ask no questions. When they got home, they were mad. They said, "You made me study all this stuff all this day." And he said, "And he, the judge no ask me nothing." I said, "That's good, Ma, but he know that you know now." See? I said, "They did the same thing to me." I studied the darn thing for months, you know, and I had it pat. I knew everything. When I went over there, two questions, why you want to become a citizen, and who was the first president of the United States, and that was

it. I said, "That's all?" I says, "Why'd I spend all those months studying?" He said, "But you know now." He said, "You've got it up here." (he laughs) "Anybody asks you about the Constitution, you can answer it." So I went, and that was great. And my mother was so proud, I tell you. The day we went over there, you know, the old people used to dress, you know, hats. She had a favorite hat. She'd go down there. When he come back he said, "I'm American citizen." (he laughs) Proud. Yeah, really proud.

SIGRIST:Oh, well, that's a good place, I think, for us to end.
That's a good story.

D'ORAZIO:Yeah, she was great.

SIGRIST:Uh, this is Paul Sigrist signing off with Antonio D'Orazio on September 24, 1996, a Tuesday afternoon, here in West Springfield, Massachusetts. Thank you very much.

D'ORAZIO:Thank you.