

KECK-169

PASQUALE FORLINGIERI

BIRTH DATE: JUNE 28, 1913

INTERVIEW DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 1986

RUNNING TIME: 1:10:00

INTERVIEWER: DEBBY DANE

RECORDING ENGINEER: UNKNOWN

INTERVIEW LOCATION: PROVIDENCE, RI

TRANSCRIPT ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY:

TRANSCRIPT RECONCEIVED BY: CHICK LEMONICK, 6/1995

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

ITALY, 1925

AGE 12

DANE: This is Debby Dane and I'm speaking with Mr. Pasquale Forlingieri on Tuesday, February 4th, 1986. We're beginning the interview at 4:05, we're about to interview Mr. Forlingieri about his immigration experience from Italy in 1925. He was twelve years old, and this is Interview Number 169. We'll start at the very beginning. For historical purposes, what day were you born and what time were you born?

FORLINGIERI: I was born in the town of Mousana Appio, province of Caserta, Italy, on June 28, 1913.

DANE: Uh-huh. And what kind of town was it. Could you describe what life was like there?

FORLINGIERI: Well, it was a small town of about three thousand people. Oh, quite a few shops, uh, and some people used to make, uh, baskets, wine baskets especially because it was, uh, a wine, uh, area, uh, wine and chestnuts were the most, uh, uh, things that we had there.

DANE: You were telling me a story earlier about September.

And when the wind would blow and children would be going to school except when the winds blew--

FORLINGIERI: Oh, that's a little story about the chestnuts. Uh, like, uh, a chestnut, when it comes September, most of your fruit are finished, and the only thing that was left were the chestnuts. And the chestnuts were known as, uh, shall I say it in Italian or English? In Italian? (Italian poem)

DANE: And what does that mean?

FORLINGIERI: Well it means, I'm little and round, I'm brunette and, uh, I'm the little boys of, uh, what

shall I say. That they go for. It's something they, they, they like. They indulge in it. And, uh, they go crazy for. And they had their pockets full of it. And they just eat them raw or they can eat them cooked, or boiled.

DANE: It sounds like it rhymes. Is it a rhyme?

FORLINGIERI: It is, a chestnut is round.

DANE: No, a rhyme. Is it a rhyme?

FORLINGIERI: Oh, yes it rhymes, but it has to do with the chestnuts, I mean just the way the chestnut is. The color, uh, the shape, the size and, uh, and loved by the children.

DANE: Would you sing that as a kid or was it something that your mother's would tell you? How did you learn that?

FORLINGIERI: Yes, yes, well, it was brought on to all the children of, uh, that time came when the chestnuts came

about, uh, ready to be, uh, when they matured and they were ready to be eaten. They used to tell us in what the, uh, the story of the, of the chestnut. And that was it.

DANE: Then you were telling me, if you could tell me again about when it became a requirement to go to school. And truant officers would come if you didn't go to school except when the winds blew in September.

FORLINGIERI: Well, being, uh, more or less a farming area, was not a city, uh, every family practically owned a little piece of land whether they had chestnuts or they had, uh, uh, olives or they could have had even, uh, uh, it's, it's given to the animals, the, uh, the oak. The fruit of the oak tree. The acorn. Uh, when they would, when it becomes windy, they would fall onto the street. So the families that have two or three children, instead of sending them to school that particular morning they get them up early out of bed and go and pick all these acorns or chestnuts, had fallen to the wind blown, uh, so that, uh, they be gathered before someone else, a stranger would go

by and pick them.

DANE: And every year, would you look forward?

FORLINGIERI: Oh yes, that's, every time there was a windstorm or,
or, anything like that around at crop
time, that's what happens.

DANE: And your father, how did he make a living?

FORLINGIERI: My daddy, he never worked, he, when he got to be at
the age of eighteen, he went into the army
and he did, he served the army. And after two weeks
when he came back he was, uh, uh, fixing his house
that my grandfather had given him and at that very
day when he had plastermen there, uh, a notice, a
courier came on a motorcycle putting up placards on
walls, that a war had broken up in Tripoli, Africa.
And he had to stop everything and he was, had to go
back to war. And that is the reason how I happen to
be in the United States, really. Then when he came
out, after the war in Tripoli in 1912, he, uh, he got
married and his best friend was telling him that if

he thought the war in Africa was bad there was another one in the making that would make that one look sick. And my dad said, "Well, I'm not war material." And so he came to the United States before I was even born. And I never met my dad until I was eight years old. He came, he returned to Italy once and he stayed there for about twenty months and he says, "Well, it hasn't changed, good enough for me to stay here." He said, "I'm going back to America."

And after three years when he was here he bought himself a business and he sent for his wife, my mother and myself. Uh, my mother came here as a citizen because as soon as he became a citizen, automatically she became a citizen. But I was born before my dad became a citizen and that did not make me a citizen and we had a difficult job to come here.

When we reached New York, we were told that all the American citizens could go ashore. And my mother had me by the hand. When we reached near the gang plank to go down, uh, she was told that I could not go with her because I was not an American citizen. And she said, "I cannot leave my twelve year old boy by himself." Well, in that case then, you both have to

go to Ellis Island. And that's what brought me to Ellis Island. And I stayed there a whole day.

DANE: Okay. Before we get into the details of Ellis Island, I'm gonna move you back and ask you a few more questions. Uh, your father came back. Was he living in Providence at this point?

FORLINGIERI: Yes, he was in Providence.

DANE: What was, what was he doing for employment?

FORLINGIERI: He was a barber. He had one of the, uh, largest barber shops here in this state. He had four men working for him when I came here.

DANE: Would you get letters from him? Would your mother get letters from him?

FORLINGIERI: Oh yes, yes. My mother used to get letters, uh, regularly. I had known him through pictures. Uh, he, uh, I would listen to the letters that he would write to us but I never seen him until he came after eight years that he had been away.

DANE: Would he describe what America was like? Did you
form an image of what it must be like here?

FORLINGIERI: Yes he did. He used to tell me that, uh, the only
thing that I hesitated even in coming to
America when he told me that most of the houses were
made out of wood. And, uh, and, and there were quite
a few fire fighters practically in every corner of
the city. Because a lot of these homes used to get
on fire. And I would say, "Well, is it going to
happen that perhaps even the house that we're going
to live in it gets on fire?" Uh, that he did tell
me, where as there, regardless of how poor the
families were, the houses were all made out of, uh,
either bricks or stones or concrete.

DANE: Uh-huh. So, was it an unusual idea to live in a
wooden structure. Were you excited about
coming to America when your father finally sent
enough money and said, "Okay, I'm ready for you all
to come?"

FORLINGIERI: Well, I really wasn't too excited about it because I was doing quite well in school. I was the only son of the only daughter. And the only grandson on my, uh, mother's, uh, of my maternal grandparents. But, of course, I remember my mother saying that, uh, the laws were that a wife should follow the husband whatever he goes. And even though she had her parents there, she knew that she had to follow the husband if the husband wanted the wife to go and I had to go along with her.

DANE: Did her mother, did your grandparents want you to go or did they say--

FORLINGIERI: They didn't say anything. They accepted what my mother said. That, uh, she married for better or worse and she married, also, to follow the husband wherever he went.

DANE: Looking back on it as an adult, do you think that it's strange, this is what many people did. They separated from their husbands for years and yet they would pick up their family, move away from their

own parents, to go live with a man that they had only seen three times over an eight year period. Did you think that was strange? Did it occur to you that, "I don't even know this man, really, why am I leaving everything I know just to move to this new place?"

FORLINGIERI: Well, I knew that he was my dad because when I saw him, I had seen pictures before that. That when I was told that he was my dad, he was my dad and it's understood, I had to accept him as such. And then, of course, when I came here, uh, and I noted that he was in business, the very same day that I arrived the wire, most of our friends and relatives were talking to my mother, uh, my dad said, uh, "Well I had to leave you because I have three men and I haven't been there the last couple of days." And I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going to my shop." I said, "I want to come along." And the very first day I went into his shop and he introduced me to his, uh, barbers that were working for him. And , uh, it was something different for me. To see that.

DANE: It was time to go. The day you left your town and your grandparents, do you remember that at all, what you brought with you, what kind of preparations were under way for you to take this voyage in this big ship and come to America. Did you bring anything in particular with you?

FORLINGIERI: Well, I didn't take anything in particular, uh, very small gift, like a pocket knife or, I brought a little box, a little box that I kind of liked of my grandmother had. And she had her gold in it. And I said, "May I have the little box as a remembrance?" And I still have it.

DANE: Do you really?

FORLINGIERI: It's a little box of about four inches by six inches wide with a little key. It's made of solid oak.

DANE: That's wonderful. And you mother, did she prepare any special foods for the trip?

FORLINGIERI: Yes she did because she had a, uh, a very sensitive

stomach. And she wasn't sure that food that she would have on the ship, so she had made, oh, a box full of, uh, Italian biscuits. That she figured would last at least for eight or nine days if I don't like their food, I'm not going to go hungry with a cup of tea or cup of coffee and I can, uh, munch on these, uh, few things that she had made. That I do remember. The box that we took along with us. In fact, they were so good that, we went through the, uh, uh, inspection in Naples and, of course, we had to open that box. The inspector, when he saw them, he filled both his pockets.

DANE: He took some?

FORLINGIERI: Yes. He said, "Oh they look very lovely." And, uh, in fact he said, "Your going to America, God bless you." He said, "I have been in America once, but I couldn't stand it. It;s a nice country but only the woman, uh, leads there. She's the boss." He says, "And I couldn't take it." So he returned. That's the very first time that I've heard first man that found fault with America. That the woman controls.

DANE: And when you left, was it a sad day, or a happy day? Do you remember the actual--

FORLINGIERI: Well, it was kind of sad because I left my school teacher, I left all my, uh, school friends that I had and I remember was about, oh, nine o'clock in the morning that we were walking to get, uh, uh, to, uh, a little buggy that took us to the railroad station. And in fact, it's at the railroad station which is about four miles away from the town that I met the last two people which were neighbors. One of them was a policeman. That he was, uh, getting, uh, someone that was arrested and was bringing up to Naples and the other one was our church organist. We met those two. They were the last two people that we met. And on the ship, we met a girl that she used to come and visit her aunt at that town and she married a man that came from America. And we met them on the ship.

DANE: When you got to Naples, that's the port that you left from, and you saw this ship that you were going to get on, was it impressive to you, did it make any impression?

FORLINGIERI: It was because it was a brand new ship. It was it's maiden voyage. The name was Count Bianco Mano. And it was owned by a British and an Italian company known as Lloyd Sabato.

DANE: Were you excited as a, as a boy?

FORLINGIERI: Yes, that I was. I, uh, I walked that, to and fro that ship, probably hundreds of times during my nine days of, uh, staying on the ship. I mean there were nine long days. My, my dad used to tell me that before he used to take around anywhere from 19 to 23 days for some of the smaller ships. But to me, even nine days and nine nights were quite long.

DANE: What passage did you travel? Were you first, second, third class, was there still steerage?

FORLINGIERI: Uh, I think it was third class.

DANE: Did you have cabins or was it communal?

FORLINGIERI: We had cabins. Yes, the ship was brand new and, uh, we did have cabins.

DANE: Food. Do you remember how you were fed? What the menu

FORLINGIERI: Oh, the menu was excellent. I mean, uh, uh, there was plenty too choose from. There was more, it was better than, perhaps, most of the people expected. Some of the people that was sitting at our table, uh, was saying that the food was much better than it was on their previous, some of them had traveled previously, uh, by other ships. They admitted that the food was much better.

DANE: Lot of people say that they saw, except you came from a farming area, saw their first oranges on, uh, on board ship when they came over.

FORLINGIERI: Well, no, no, no, no. We had oranges. I had oranges in my own backyard. So that was no news to me. No. The only thing that we never had was bananas. That I never seen, only until I reached here.

DANE: You also, as a boy of 12 there wasn't much for you to do on the boat, it sounds like.

FORLINGIERI: No it wasn't. All it was is going up and down, walk back and forth and try to look for, uh, if I

could see any whales or how the ship would break the waters and that's about it.

DANE: Any storms that you--

FORLINGIERI: Yes, we got to be about, uh, after Gibraltar, uh, we had a day which was pretty stormy. And, uh, the ship was, uh, going, uh, up and down, sideways that uh, at one time I thought I was, I had to hold on I thought I was going to roll off my bed.

DANE: Did you ever get sick? Sea sick?

FORLINGIERI: Not really. No. I've seen other people that was sick than me but I wasn't sick of anything. I ate everyday.

DANE: And tell me the story about, in your passport there's, uh, a pamphlet, actually, and what does it say?

FORLINGIERI: Oh, uh, the pamphlet says Advertenza par Immigante d'Italieni. It's a little booklet that tells, it gives us, uh, you people that are leaving the, uh, your, your, mother country. Your going to a

foreign land and, of course, these are made for people that are going anywhere in the world not only in the United States. So it gives it to us in Italian that it says that you're leaving your country. Whatever country you're going to become a citizen of that country so that you can be, uh, uh, come in under all the conditions or, uh, whatever other people get from that particular country. But in the meantime to be a good citizen and do not forget your country of birth.

DANE: And that was advice that would get handed out to everyone.

FORLINGIERI: That was advice that was given by the, uh, this little booklet, uh, that it says, Commissionare di Generale de l'Immigrazione. It was commissioned by the, uh, immigration commissioners.

DANE: And did you read that one time?

FORLINGIERI: Oh if I read it once, I must have read it 50 times.

DANE: Did you understand it as a kid?

FORLINGIERI: Well, yes, because I had finished my, uh, first year

of high school. So, uh, I was pretty well aware of what was written there.

DANE: What's another sampling? Can you translate any more of it off hand? Is that easy for you to do or is that hard? I'm so intrigued when I can't understand what it says.

FORLINGIERI: Well, would you want, well I don't know what you, uh, you want me to read it in Italian or what?

DANE: Just a little bit, just to see.

FORLINGIERI: For instance it says here, (says in Italian). It means to the arrival of your destination. (?) In other words, it's giving us, uh, to be helpful, to answer every question, uh, be as clear as possible and, uh, do not be impatient, and, uh, because it may be difficult, the country that your going to, and there's a reason why they're asking you these questions.

DANE: So it's really advice to sort of don't--worry?

FORLINGIERI: Oh yes, that's advice to, uh, uh, to the, uh, person, wherever he's going to, to be helpful. After all, he is going to that particular country, they're not asking him to go. He is going for some reason. Whatever he is going to, uh, that his relatives are sending for him or whether he is going by himself to better himself or whatever.

DANE: I've never seen that before. Out of all the people I've talked to.

FORLINGIERI: No kidding.

DANE: Yeah. I had no idea that they did that.

FORLINGIERI: well, at that time, we were under the Royal House of Savoy. And so, uh, they tried to be helpful all the way. They were very democratic about it.

DANE: Then we get you to New York and you come into New York Harbor, did you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

FORLINGIERI: Oh yes. Early in the morning when we came, most of the women said, "Ah, now we have reached America. That's where the woman controls. To let the Statue of Liberty." So all I did is listen to what was going on, uh, they, uh, many of the older people knew about the Statue of Liberty, of course, I didn't. It wasn't much for me to read about it, even in the Italian history, about the Statue of Liberty itself. But the older people knew about it. That, uh, once you see the Statue of Liberty, uh, it's not much more, you're in America, really and within a very short while, we reached the port of New York. As soon as we arrived, uh, they announced over the loud speakers that all American citizens could have gone ashore. And, of course, my mother being an American citizen, when she heard the announcement, uh, she started to, uh, get ready to go. When we reached near the gate, they looked at her papers, they said, "Go right ahead." When they looked at my papers they said, "Oh no, he cannot go. He's not an American citizen." My mother said, uh, "Well, what are we going to do about it?" Well he has to go to

Ellis Island. And my mother said, "Well, I cannot leave a boy of twelve years old to go to Ellis Island." Well then if you don't want to leave him alone, you go with him. And, then she was forced to go to Ellis Island and when she did, she was no longer considered an American citizen. She had to go through all the rituals that I had to go with the examination, all the way through until the end of the day when we were brought back to New York again.

DANE: Were you aware of this discussion that was going on that your mother was going to be allowed to get off but that you had to go to Ellis Island?

FORLINGIERI: Oh that I knew. Because I could hear my mother saying, "Well, I cannot leave a twelve year old boy." And they said, "Well, if you cannot leave him--? This is the difficult part that I could not understand. Uh, they tried to keep me behind in Naples. The American Consul, uh, asked my mother if I could stay with her parents. And she said, "Well, her parents were too old for, to take care of me." And she says, "I cannot take that responsibility of

leaving him with them and I don't think they want that responsibility." So special papers were made for me and all I could understand at the time that if the quota was say 500 Italians or 1,000 Italians that were able to come to the United, allowed to come to, to the United States, I was 501 or 1,001 to come over. Which my papers were known as fouri quota. But, I expected, my mother expected that when we got to New York that I was allowed to go ashore with her, even though I came as fouri quota. That's the time when she found out that I had to go to Ellis Island and go through all the examinations of whatever was to be given at Ellis Island.

DANE: What's fouri quota? Could you spell it?

FORLINGIERI: Fouri quota. Fouri quota. Yes, in other words a quota. You know, the quota is, uh, like, now I think that there is only, oh I don't know what the quota is now. Forty-three hundred Italians came from Italy last year that I read in the newspapers here. But there is a quota from every country in the world of how many people can come to the United States.

So, if there were 500 Italians allowed to come and I wasn't in that 500, I was the five hundred and first or 501. It means, that I had special papers that I was forced to come here or they could not refuse me to come because of the condition of my father being a citizen and my mother being a citizen but I came fouri quota, meaning not as a citizen but as special papers being a minor. Had I been, uh, 21, then the American government would have said, "You stay behind." And my mother and father had no alternative over that.

DANE: How do you spell it?

FORLINGIERI: Fouri. Fouri. F-O-U-R-I. That's fouri, outside the quota.

DANE: I see. Then at Ellis Island, what did they do to you? Do you remember you got off the ferry that brings you to the Island--

FORLINGIERI: Well, yes, we went through all sorts of examinations. We went through, uh, uh, went through a bath

house, oh, I don't know how many baths, it was a long, long hall with so many baths, we went through that. And then we went through different, uh, examinations. Eyes examination especially. Uh, general examination, but eyes especially.

DANE: What did they do?

FORLINGIERI: Well, they examined you, I don't know if there was any, uh, uh, I understand that there was some kind of a sickness, uh, they would not allow you, they could reject you.

DANE: Trachoma?

FORLINGIERI: No, I don't think it was a glaucoma because usually you don't find glaucoma in a young person. Uh, and glaucoma is not transmittable.

DANE: Trachoma. Would they flip your eyes up?

FORLINGIERI: Oh, yes they did, I mean they, uh, it was an eye examination they would usually a, a, eye doctor would do it now. And, uh, I

suppose if there was any other, uh, such as tuberculosis, I don't know if they reject them for that or not, but, uh, uh, nothing was wrong with me and so after the whole day that we stayed there they allowed us to come back.

DANE: While you were there, were you fed?

FORLINGIERI: Yes, while we were there, that's the first day that I tasted American cheese. A slice of American cheese was thicker than the American bread. Uh, but while I munching on this sandwich that they gave us, they also gave us, they came by with coffee urns on push carts and the coffee was so hot that they filled the paper cup and I was waiting for the coffee to cool so that I could drink it, but the paper cup was waxed. It was not made the way they are made today. Those were usually known as a for cold drinks and the wax melted and the hot coffee went all over my trousers.

DANE: Oh. What a disaster. (He laughs,)

FORLINGIERI: Well, that was the first, really, pain that I had when I reached New York. (She laughs.)

DANE: There was another story you told me about, uh, wasn't it--yeah.

FORLINGIERI: Wanting to go to the bathroom?

DANE: Hold on just a second, we've got to turn the tape over. This is the end of side one. Mr. Forlingieri Interview
Number 169.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

DANE: This is the beginning of side two, Mr. Forlingieri, Interview Number 169. It is 4:40. We're still on Ellis Island and there's one adventure that involved going to the bathroom, why don't you tell us the story.

FORLINGIERI: Well, we had to wait until the entire group finished going through the examinations before we could get back on to the boat and back to New York. Then

in the meantime, I wanted to go to the bathroom. But I knew where the bathrooms were because we had gone there when we went through the examinations. But, we were in a great big hall and I had to go through an entrance and there was great big Black policeman there that after you go through that entrance you don't return to it. Not to get you mixed with the ones that still have to go through the examinations.

But I wanted to go back and I couldn't tell him that I wanted to go to the bathroom, so while he was talking to another person, at one time, I tried to sneak behind him and he grabbed me and pushed me over with the stick and he said, "You go over there and sit." And, uh, but I still wanted to go to the bathroom and, and I'm crissing and crossing my legs and finally he, I had to let go. (He laughs.) I urinated into my trousers because I couldn't get to the bathroom.

DANE: How frustrating, because you couldn't speak English.

FORLINGIERI: I couldn't speak English is right. That's right.

DANE: You couldn't explain to him. If you could be a TV camera, that day, what did it look like? Was it crowded with lots of people that were speaking lots of different languages?

FORLINGIERI: Well, coming from Italy there weren't different languages. All the languages were all the same. They were all Italians. I see that, I, uh, of all the people that I've heard speaking, they all spoke Italian there was no other nationalities on the ship. So, that was all the people that could not speak a word of English unless they were citizens returning from Italy. Which were very few. I mean, with us it was, uh, a lady that, she could speak English because she was married to a plumber from Michigan. She was a, and she was, she became friendly with my mother. And, uh, that's about the only one that I know that she spoke, uh, English.

DANE: And on Ellis Island, were there people from other countries the day that you were there?

FORLINGIERI: No. No, no. No, there were no other nationalities on the ship that I know of.

DANE: But on the Island. On Ellis Island--

FORLINGIERI: On Ellis Island?

DANE: Yeah, do you remember hearing--

FORLINGIERI: Well on Ellis Island I didn't meet anyone. I ,mean, there was a whole, uh, group of people going through the examinations but I don't know what nationality they were.

DANE: Other first impressions, had you ever seen a Black person before?

FORLINGIERI: No. I had seen, the only Black person that I had seen in my history book in Italy, uh, a young girl, a picture, and it said, (Italian), this is the Black race. But I never seen it until I had reached New York and I seen that policeman. And, uh, but that didn't scare me because I had read that there were all types of nationalities here and, uh, and that was one of them. In fact the first school that

I went to, uh, it just happened that a Black girl was sitting in front of me by the name of Esther. And she was a very clean, respectable girl and I says, "Well, maybe she's an American born, she's entitled to stay here more so than I am."

DANE: And you remember her name.

FORLINGIERI: And I remember her name, Esther. And then I went to another school and, uh, being a foreigner and at times like unable to express myself of whatever went on during the day and if someone would pick on you, uh, I had a colored boy by the name of Joe Robinson and he would defend me.

DANE: Would people make fun of you?

FORLINGIERI: Well, reading, sometimes reading, uh, uh, our lessons during the day, until I took the English language, I mean, as I said before, uh, the, uh, the alphabet in Italy, it's pronounced just the way you read it, or you read it just the way it's pronounced, it never changes. R, it's r. And E it's eh. And

regardless whether you find it at the beginning of the word in the middle of the word or at the end of the word it's always "eh." Or as here is where you change it accordingly. Uh, for instance the teacher told me that the is the. And I was finding it difficult to pronounce the. To put my tongue between my teeth. And I used to say, "da." It sounded as though "da." Uh, the class would laugh at me when she was trying to teach me but then I found out something that the Americans could not pronounce, "gli," is "gli." And, uh, instead of being, uh, Piggly Wiggly, you would say it's "piyie viyie" and here you would have to say Piggly. Because you cannot pronounce "gl" as "ge." So they had just as much difficulty of pronouncing foreign names as I had in pronouncing the English language.

DANE: And you created your own little system, didn't you?

FORLINGIERI: Well, in order to learn the alphabet, I created my own. In order to learn fast because I knew that, uh, I was going to live here and I had to grasp as much as possible and, uh, I knew that I wanted to

learn it, and learn it properly. So, on top of the alphabet, when the teacher would put it on the board, it's, uh, "r" in Italian, it's "a" in English, so I put "ei," which in Italian is pronounced as "a." And "b," is "bi," and the letter "c" in Italian is "chi," and here in English, in English it's pronounced "c" so I put "si" which in Italian is pronounced as "c." And what I did all this from a to z, I learned the alphabet in a very short time. Within a matter of a couple of days.

DANE: And you thought that up all by yourself?

FORLINGIERI: I thought that by myself.

DANE: Were you ever called a greenhorn? Did you ever--

FORLINGIERI: Oh yes, now and then. It all depended, in different schools. Uh, like, uh, if I was living in American section, uh, I would be called that. But then if I went into an Italian section and lived where the majority of the boys were Italo-Americans, I would say, then that disappeared.

DANE: And your name. Did anyone ever make an effort to change your name?

FORLINGIERI: Well, uh, I was told by my dad that my name was my name regardless of where I went. And, uh, in fact we had a lawyer here that he became a judge and his name was Capodosto, known as "hot head." The translation of Capodosto. And he said, "I came from Naples, my name is Capodosto and it shall remain Antonio Capodosto until I die." So I'm following the same procedure. My name is Pasquale and, uh, some people might call me Patsy or Pat but when I write it it's still Pasquale. And, uh, in fact I've been of that system that anybody that came here from all parts of the world I try to pronounce their names the way it's pronounced in their country. If it's Kru, if it's Nikita Kruschev in Russian, it's Nikita Kruschev and it's not Niky or Kruschief or in any other way. So my name is Forlingieri, I pronounce it Forlingieri. It's difficult for some of the Americans to pronounce it, uh, and yet I found other people saying it wasn't as difficult as they thought

it would be. For instance, the girl that is interviewing me now, she pronounced it quite well, Forlingieri.

DANE: Oh, thank you. It almost sounds like a point of pride, also, not to become Americanized, but your name is what you were born with and why change it?

FORLINGIERI: That's right. That's right. The only, the only, uh, thing that I would allow a name to be changed, I was reading a story on, uh, uh, Mario Lanza, the great opera singer. And unfortunately, his last name was Cogoza, which means squash. And I can see that if he became an opera star, and probably, if he ever lived long enough to sing at, uh, at the Metropolitan Opera, when you say that's Cogoza singing, it didn't sound too well, so he took his mother's maiden name, which was Lanza. I can see it that way. But otherwise there's no other reason why a name should be changed.

DANE: As a young boy living in Providence, coming from a

country town in Italy, what were some of the things that were new and different? Electricity? You told us a story--

FORLINGIERI: Yes. The, uh, the very first, second, or third day that I came, I saw a receptacle on a wall which was a hole in it to put an adaptor and I asked my aunt, I said, "What is this hole here for?" And as I asked the question, I stuck my finger in it and I got the first shock of my life of electricity. And that's when I learned after that, electricity, you don't see it but you see what it does.

DANE: Did it seem like magic to you? Did you understand?

FORLINGIERI: Well, in a way it was. But, uh, whatever I didn't know, I made it my business to look into and find more about it. In fact, it was back in 1936 that I made a little switch and I put it inside of a clock to put my radio on in the morning. Long before GE came out with the timer. And I still have it. I would set, in fact, when the War was declared between England and Germany, at five o'clock in the morning I heard Neville Chamberlain declare war on Germany because I knew he was going to speak and I set my radio at five o'clock at BBC and sure enough, my radio went on at five minutes before and I heard them declare war on to Hitler.

DANE: That's a wonderful story. Did, were you allowed to

finish high school, or did jobs and necessity of making money interrupt?

FORLINGIERI: Well, when I finished my grammar school here, the Great Depression came, and that was the biggest blow of my life. School teachers were making \$25 per week and you had to be fortunate to find a job. My dad had four men working for him and it dwindled down to him alone, one by one he had to eliminate them because people didn't have any money. In the meantime my mother became paralyzed and that was the end of my school years. So I had to be a, uh, bookworm and learn by myself the best I could do. We had a gentleman. he used to come to my father's shop and I asked him if there was a job in his plant. And he said, "Not right now." But within a couple of months, he came over and he said that there was room for a boy and he gave me a job as an errand boy and I was making \$20 per week to start with and I thought it was much better than uh, at the time the school teachers were making \$25. And in doing so, I had plenty of spare time by myself that I learned what the machinist were doing there in textile and when the War came the

manager of the plant went to my local board and said, "I need this man because I'm doing two million dollars worth of navy work and if you take my key man I cannot finish the work on time." And, uh, he put me on one of those jobs.

DANE: What company was this?

FORLINGIERI: That was A. D. Juilliard of New York.

DANE: And what were you doing exactly?

FORLINGIERI: Uh, that's, uh, twist, it's, uh, spinning machine. But it's the French and English system and not the American system. The machines ran on tracks, like a train, and they were 200 feet long. One machine is 200 feet long. It comes out like that. But in the center is all the works. And as the spool would fill you have to judge by yourself, more or less, what movement to make. There is nothing written on it. Your eye has to tell you what movement to make.

DANE: What is it making?

FORLINGIERI: It makes. it, it, it, uh, spins the yarn into a spool
 and then from there it goes into to be woven
 into cloth. We were making,uh, Air Force uniforms.
 For the navy. And he himself went, when I received
 my 1-A card and I went to the office to shake hands
 with them and thank them for what he did for me ge
 said, "Where are you going?" And I said, "I'm going
 into the service." "Oh," he said, "They can't do
 that to me," he said, "They can't take my key man
 with me, uh, out of me." So he went to the school,
 to the local board and he said, "I need, when I took
 the navy contract for two million dollars I was
 planning on my key men and if you take them away from
 me I cannot finish the work on time." And he got me
 18 months deferment. And, but then, after the War,
 everything went to shamble, uh, European merchandise
 started to come in, uh, at a much less price. And
 the textile industry went dead in Massachusetts which
 was the, uh, the world's area where they made textile
 and also Rhode Island. And from there I moved into
 something entirely different that I didn't know

anything about it and I wanted to work in a medical laboratory for 14 years as an assistant to a chemist.

Well he had a drugstore downstairs and we made all whatever syrups or whatever was needed for the drugstore instead of buying it from other areas. Including, uh, vitamins, liquid vitamins and antacids. Known as sodium titrate.

DANE: And you did that for 15 years?

FORLINGIERI: I did that for 14 years and then the man wanted me to buy in with him because he was quite elderly and he had no heirs but I could see that we were too small to compete with larger manufacturers and I was asked by a pharmaceutical house if I would move over to them and I became a buyer with them ever since for the past 22 years.

DANE: At what point did you become a citizen? When you were young or did you wait until you got older and take a test?

FORLINGIERI: Uh, no, when I was here, I never bothered really to

become one. It was, uh, a problem I never started to vote because I knew I wasn't considered a citizen and in 1952, I believe, was it in '52? No, no, we took the first trip to Europe, oh, '54. And in '52, knowing that we would take a trip to Europe I started to inquire what I had to do to become an American citizen. And I went into a building that I was guided to go into and I met a Mr. Clark. And this gentleman told me, he said, "I'm going to make you a citizen in 24 hours by just bringing your father's papers here." And that's what I did. And he took all the information and he said, uh, "Wait for the papers when they come from Washington." And that's how I got it.

DANE: Was he doing you a favor?

FORLINGIERI: No. He said that the law had changed again and again since that I didn't have to wait five years the first, uh, the first half paper and then the following half paper at the end of the fifth year. And he said, "You had all the troubles when you came here but now that you are here all you have to prove

that you are a son of a citizen and we'll give you your own paper."

DANE: I ask everyone this and they all have different things to say about it, uh, about their feelings as American citizens. You're Italian born, still, uh, have close ties to Italy, and you're an American citizen. What are your feelings as an American citizen? As someone that lives here now. Are you, and how does it relate to your Italian--

FORLINGIERI: Well, my feelings are, especially, uh, I'm going to put it this way, I wish every American born was able to take a trip around the world and when he comes back he's going to appreciate America a great deal more than he does before he goes on that trip. Uh, America's a land of opportunity and, uh, many people may probably complain about the different nationalities are held back, but I don't find it that way. I found it to be very helpful and I found people that were trying to be helpful to me. So I don't think there's another country in the world that can equal America. And, uh, unfortunately many, uh,

uh, American born, as I said before, expect too much from America. And the only thing that I can see is repeat the words of, uh, President Kennedy. "Do not ask what America can do for you, let's ask what America can do, what you can do for America." And that's really, in order to make, keep America for what it is. Because we are surrounded by, uh, by hounds that they would like to strip everything away from us. And we have to be careful that it might happen if we don't take it seriously enough.

DANE: Are you proud to be an American?

FORLINGIERI: Oh definitely.

DANE: And what about your Italianess? How do, do you consider yourself Italian--

FORLINGIERI: Oh, I consider, I'm an Italian born, I'm not going to deny that. Being an American citizen doesn't make me an American born. It makes me a naturalized citizen, uh, that once upon a time I came from Italy. So I'm proud of my ancestry, I'm proud of the

Italian, in fact, Italy, as small as it is. If one was to take a survey, oh, each country in the world, what they had given to the world, I would say that even though Italy is small, uh, if you were to weigh it on a scale from one to ten, Italy, for whatever they give to the world, would rate anywhere eight or nine. That's the way I consider what the, what the Italians have done to the world. Not only to America, but to the world. What they have given to the world.

DANE: At any time in your childhood, did you ever wish that you had never come here? That you could go back home to where your grandmother was and place that you knew and spoke the same language?

FORLINGIERI: Well, no, uh, I wished that I could have gone back sooner than I did, uh, my wife and I have traveled so much that we have 216 jet flying hours around the world. Uh, but I didn't get to Italy until after my grandparents from both sides, uh, passed away. I wished that I could have seen them before they did. Probably I could have told them, uh, even given them a taste of America, uh, for a few weeks or so. That, unfortunately didn't happen. Uh, early enough for that. But, I'm satisfied here and I'm

going to continue to stay here. I may continue to travel about. I like to learn more about the world, but every night when I return to my hotel I always say, "God bless America."

DANE: This is the end of side two, Mr. Forlingieri,
Interview Number 169. It is 5:15.