

Questions	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2
<b>Date of Interview</b>	November 8, 2022	November 8, 2022
<b>Name of Interviewee</b>	Dominic Dotto	Maria Prigione
1. What age group/generation are you in?	Baby Boomer	Baby Boomer
2. What first brought your parents to Canada?	<p>His dad (Angelo) came to Canada after the war. During the war, he got caught right away and was a POW for four years. After the war, it took him a year to get home and his family thought he was dead. He just showed up one day because it took him that long to get home. Angelo's brother was already in Canada and offered to sponsor him because there was a lot of work in Canada. When Angelo arrived in Canada, he ended up working on the railway in Sudbury at Sault Ste. Marie. From what Domenic understands, all the Italians headed up there when they came to Canada. If it wasn't the railway, they were working in the mines.</p> <p>In 1956, he went back to Italy around November where he ran into Domenic's mother (Maria). They got married two months later and came to Guelph in January of 1957. Domenic was born in November.</p>	
3. Did your mom know anyone in Canada before she came over?	His dad had his brother here. His mother didn't have any family here but she knew a lot of the Italians that settled in Guelph because a lot of them were from Treviso.	Before the war, it was all mostly southern immigration from Italy. And then after the war, the majority that came from Italy came from the Treviso district or Abruzzi.
When your dad was captured, which side was he captured on?	When he was captured, Italy had already flipped and came over with the Americans. He was in a German camp somewhere in Austria.	Her great uncle and all his brothers were captured in Berlin. It took him a year to go back home after the war because they all had to walk home. He was so skinny, his mother was the only one that recognized her son.

	<p>His father's stomach was that of an eight-year-old because of malnutrition. Their diet was potato skins.</p>	
<p>4. Where did your dad first arrive in Canada? Did he come straight to Guelph?</p>	<p>He was in Sudbury first. He spent two years in Sunbury before he came to Guelph. He arrived at Halifax at Pier 21 and then went to Sudbury. When Angelo came back with Maria in 1957, they went from Halifax to Guelph by train.</p>	
<p>5. How old were your parents when they immigrated to Canada?</p>	<p>His mother was 31 and his father was 35.</p>	
<p>6. What was the journey to Canada like for your parents? Did they tell you any stories about the experience?</p>	<p>His mother was pregnant with Domenic on the voyage to Canada and she had a rough time. She was seasick.</p>	
<p>7. Did your parents encounter any obstacles or barriers as new immigrants to Canada?</p>	<p>The language. Neither one of them spoke English. They learned over time. They had one suitcase and \$14 between them. And Maria was pregnant with Domenic.</p>	<p>It was January when they arrived, so it was very cold. Italy never got as cold as Canada.</p>
<p>Did the Italian community help them?</p>	<p>Yes. They were all friends. The people that they knew were already here. When somebody was building a house, the whole Italian community went out and built that house. Domenic remembers that every weekend, they were building a house. The whole day would be spent with the community.</p>	
<p>8. Did your parents bring any items of importance with them when</p>	<p>Just clothes. When his dad bought their first house on Stevenson Street, they were looking for a crib for Domenic. His dad brought a crib home that he bought</p>	

<p>they came to Canada? (i.e. photographs, family heirlooms, mementos).</p>	<p>somewhere, and he sanded it all down and painted it. Domenic remembers his dad telling the story about him and the crib. When his dad bought the crib from these people, they were using it for their dog to sleep in.</p> <p>His dad was very resourceful. He never bought anything new. They couldn't afford to. His dad got his first car in 1969, 12 years after he arrived in Canada.</p> <p>He bought his first house in the summer of 57. In 1968, they moved from one end of the Stevenson to the other end. Back then there was a real estate agent called Marty Serato who did all the deals for all the Italians. His dad was \$2,000 short of paying cash for the second house and Marty lent him the money.</p>	
<p>9. Did your mother mention if she had any difficulties with your birth in Canada?</p>	<p>No, but he knows he was a big baby. He was almost a 12 pounds.</p>	
<p>10. Did your parents exchange letters with relatives in Italy?</p>	<p>They communicated all the time. His mother would send letters weekly. If something happened like in an emergency, it was a telegram.</p>	
<p>11. Did your parents always think of Italy as their home, or did Guelph become home for them?</p>	<p>Home was always Italy. They always talked about Italy in that way. They were very appreciative of being here. But to them, home was always in Italy.</p> <p>They used to go back every two years so that his parents could help with the fields and the farm. His grandparents couldn't do it on their own, so his parents would help with the fall harvest. They would stay for 4 to 8 weeks. So 1 to 2 months.</p>	
<p>Do you know why they considered Italy</p>	<p>From his mom's family, only her and her brother Jean came to Canada—their other three siblings stayed in Italy. On his dad's</p>	

<p>to be their home? Did they have more family there? Or was it because of their cultural background?</p>	<p>side, he and his brother John came to Canada. His other brother, Louis went to Switzerland, instead of Canada. His dad had a choice of Australia, Canada, or Venezuela / Argentina.</p>	
<p>12. Looking back on your parents' experience, do you think your parents would have done anything differently?</p>	<p>When his parents emigrated to Canada, Italy was in bad shape after the second world war and then the Industrial Revolution happened. But by the late 60s, the ones that immigrated here were questioned their decision to come to Canada and that they should have stayed home because Italy started to prosper. The ones that stayed behind became very well off. Meanwhile, the ones that came to Canada busted their butts your entire life. There was a bit of a regret of leaving because who knew that was going to happen.</p>	
<p>Did that progress happen quickly after they came to Canada?</p>	<p>It took about 10 years. Things started to change in the 70s, where things just started working out for the ones that stayed behind. They started selling this and that, and some of their land and they were all very well off.</p>	<p>Some came to Canada, made money and then went back home for good.</p>
<p>13. Do you consider yourself Italian? Canadian? Italian-Canadian?</p>	<p>Italian-Canadian.</p>	
<p>Do you have a stronger connection to one side?</p>	<p>Canada for sure because this is where he was born and raised right.</p>	
<p>Do you have any traditions that you've kept from your parents?</p>	<p>Good Friday, where you have a big fish dinner. Now they do it as a group at the club. Christmas Eve mass. Cooking Italian food—all of them do that.</p>	<p>Tasting the new wine and the tomato sauce.  They took a lot of traditions for granted because it was just part of their daily life.</p>

	<p>It's funny now that he's older, he sees a group of them that wants to bring all those traditions back.</p> <p>He never paid much attention to traditions when he was growing up.</p> <p>Sacred Heart church was where whoever was born here to an Italian family was baptized. They all lived and grew up in the Ward.</p>	<p>Faith because their parents were very faithful.</p>
<p>Have there been any traditions that have been changed or adapted? (e.g., to fit with Canadian values)</p>	<p>Halloween is new because their parents had Carnival.</p> <p>They called white, sliced bread English bread.</p> <p>Gardens were popular. His dad's garden was 50 feet wide by 25 feet long—the whole backyard was a garden. They had peach, pear, and apple trees.</p> <p>Veggie gardens were also a passion for many Italians, but Domenic doesn't have that passion.</p>	<p>On Fridays, no one would eat meat, which was part of the Catholic faith. Some families kept the tradition, some became more lax with it, eg they would eat fish and not red meat.</p> <p>Some families gave up meat for Lent instead of every Friday.</p> <p>There are some foods that would only be made for specific holidays, but now it's spread to include other special occasions. Eg frying the zucchini flower.</p> <p>"Canadian" Canadian kids would make fun of their school lunches. They would have a bread man who would deliver Italian bread fresh.</p> <p>Flower gardens in the front yard. They would share their flowers with each other. One time her mom got Calla Lillies from another Italian lady so they would split them.</p> <p>Nothing went to waste. They weren't wasteful because they came with nothing.</p>
<p>14. After your parents came to Canada, did any other members of your family also emigrate?</p>	<p>No, it was just his parents and uncle. Everyone else stayed back.</p>	<p>Her uncle was also the only one that came other than her parents.</p>
<p>15. Did you grow up speaking a</p>		

<p>language or dialect other than English or French at home?</p>	<p>Italian, the Trevisani dialect. He was held back two years because he couldn't speak proper English.</p> <p>In his last trip to Italy, he arrived in Venice, told a cab driver where he wanted to go. The cab driver stopped the car and asked him where he was from—Domenic said Canada—because he was curious where he learnt how to speak in a perfect Trevisani dialect. He told him that no one in Italy speak it anymore as good as Domenic did. Now the dialect in Treviso is a mishmash of a Southern dialects and other dialect—almost like a slang. He couldn't believe how well he could speak Trevi.</p>	<p>Locals are afraid they're losing the dialect. It's not really a dialect but rather the language of that region before Italy was unified.</p> <p>When she went back to Italy, she also had a similar experience. She was at the airport in Venice and a guy asked her if she was from there, and she said, "No, I'm from Canada." Her cousins clarified and said that her dad was from there and that's why she has that dialect.</p> <p>They appreciate different dialects now, when in the 80s, not so much. They used to make fun of her sister's speech.</p> <p>They're trying to teach the dialects in the schools again, but they're slowly dying out. And they're trying to hold onto their history.</p>
<p>You mentioned that you were held back 2 years. Was only Italian spoken at home?</p>	<p>Yes. All he spoke was Italian.</p>	
<p>When you were older, did you still only speak Italian at home? Or was it a mix of Italian and English? Did you also speak Italian with people in the community?</p>	<p>In grade 4, he came into his own, but up until then, he had a hell of a time.</p> <p>At home it was only Italian.</p> <p>Yes, the whole community spoke Italian.</p>	
<p>Among your friends was English spoken more often or was there a mix?</p>	<p>When he moved from the Ward to the other end of Stevenson in 1968, then he had other friends who spoke only English. That's when he started to come into his own re speaking English.</p> <p>Within the Ward, it was all Italian.</p>	

<p>16. Did you grow up in or currently live within an ethnic community of your own heritage or of a different heritage? How would you describe your experience growing up in the Ward?</p>	<p>Yes. That's where they were all born and raised.</p> <p>It was fun. Every weekend was a lot of fun. He couldn't wait for Sundays because he would see all the guys his own age.</p> <p>Their dads would go and play bocce and drink or play cards or whatever, but from 12 Noon to five o'clock, everyone was at the Ward. When somebody blew a whistle, everybody would disperse and go home for Sunday night dinner, which was a big deal. His family always had people over every Sunday, and they would stay for dinner.</p> <p>Dinner wasn't a couple of hot dogs and a burger, it was like a four or five course meal.</p> <p>"Oh, I'm not kidding you. Oh, my God. It was, it was pretty incredible. It really was. They were the good years. Everybody was happy. You know, everybody was prospering. And then, and then they started dying one by one. Our dads, you know?"</p>	<p>So that era, that generation, slowly... Those that are left are in their late 80s, 90s.</p>
<p>Did you still go to the Ward after you moved out of the area?</p>	<p>He goes back there today. He almost bought a house down there just for the hell of it.</p> <p>The Ward is the trendy place to live nowadays.</p>	<p>The Ward is regentrifying now.</p> <p>Everybody knew where everybody lived. You didn't have to worry about someone snatching your kid or whatever, because everybody looked out for everybody.</p>
<p>Is there anything else you want to share?</p>		<p>The Ward was a mix—you had residential, commercial, and industrial. It was a good neighborhood for raising kids. Everything was in the same area and in walking distance, even to go downtown to do your banking and things like that.</p> <p>It was very much a communal space.</p>
<p>Did any more Italians</p>	<p>No they didn't. Not in the way they came in the 50s.</p>	<p>Some came in the 60s.</p>

<p>immigrate to Canada when you were growing up?</p>	<p>There used to be waves of them coming, but once it got into the 70s, things started getting better back in Italy and they would have no reason to leave.</p> <p>His mom and dad always said “How would we have known? If we only had known.”</p> <p>His dad also didn’t say much about the war. The only time he heard his dad talk about the war was with his neighbor, who was a German and was a German soldier during the Second World War, but the two of them got along great.</p> <p>His mother remembered the sirens going off, and then they hit the bunkers.</p> <p>There was just nothing there after the war. There was no work. They were still recovering from the war.              His dad came here in 53 to work eight years after the war, but it took it took 30 years to rebuild. There was little chance of people who stayed in Italy to leave after the rebuilding effort.</p> <p>He thinks 50% of the Italians, would have gone back, had they known.</p>	<p>Italy was devastated after the war, so no one could have known they would bounce back so quick.</p> <p>Her dad was born in 1936 so he was a kid during the war. She talk to him about the war because her nonno didn't like to talk about the war.</p> <p>Her dad would talk from his perspective as a kid. And her aunt was 15 months younger, so Maria never really asked her till her dad was dead for her experience and what she remembers of the war.</p> <p>Her dad would talk about the bombs. Hearing the bombs go over them and her aunt said they were so low, you could see the planes like you could see everything on the plane. That's how low they were.</p> <p>Her dad's house was right beside [Vela ammo?]. The Germans used that as their headquarters, because the train station in the town was across the road. Her great aunts had to sew for the Germans, and they would have to do it because they were right there.</p> <p>That whole generation—Dominic's parents, my dad—they left, to make a life.</p>
<p>How old was your dad when the war was happening?</p>	<p>He was 18 when he got caught.</p>	<p>They automatically had to serve at 18.</p>