Interviewer: Hello, Eleanor, how are you today?

Interviewee: Just fine.

Interviewer: O.K. Eleanor, I was going to ask you a couple of questions concerning your parents. Do you recall what town in Italy they came from?

Interviewee: Yes, my mother came from C which is near Naples, and my father came from it would be in that day.

Interviewer: Did your parents ever discuss what conditions were like in their towns? What kind of work they did?

Interviewee: My mother's father used to raise horses and of course they had a farm. My father used mostly farming.

Interviewer: Did they tell you any stories or beliefs that they
Can you tell us anything about your father? What was he like?

Interviewee: My father was a wonderful man. He lived in Cranston and he was a landscape gardener and a contractor. He built many foundations in Cranston and he took care of many gardens. He was a very well-liked man. As a matter of fact, back in 1925, he used to have a horse and he would come to Federal Hill with the horse and buggy to visit his sisters lived on Jones St. And my cousins there would say well here comes the prince with the horse and buggy and they were very proud of him.

Interviewer: Did he rule your house with an iron fist? Was he a typical Italian in that respect?

Interviewee: Yes he was.

Interviewer: What are your feelings about being Italian and the man being the head of the household? Do you feel that that should be so, even today?

Interviewee: To a certain extent, yes. A woman's place should be in the home if they're raising children. I say until the children are old enough to care for themselves well then the mother should be home with them and then if she wants to take a parttime job or pursue a career, fine.

Interviewer: What about the husband pitching in to help out with chores around the house, household work? Should he or shouldn't he?
Interviewee: In sickness yes.

Interviewer: Only in sickness?

Interviewee: Well, and then if she's working he should help out too.

Interviewer: What about education and religious rearing of the children? Whose responsibility do you feel that should be?

Interviewee: The mother's responsibility is to take the children to Church, see that they receive their sacraments and see that they go to school.

Interviewer: Why do you feel that that's the mother's responsibility and not the father's?

Interviewee: Because the mother is more with the children. The father has to go out and earn a living to keep the family together.

Interviewer: But do you think that's true today now that more women are in the work force due to the fact that the economy is such that women have to work now to support the families as well?

Interviewee: Well, I still feel that the mother should be home with the children while they're small. And then if they really need it well that's a different story.

Interviewer: Why did your parents settle on Federal Hill? You mentioned your mother settled on Federal Hill. What was the reason for them settling here?
Interviewee: There was a domestic problem between my mother and father. So my mother took all of us here to Federal Hill and at first while we were small, she used to take care of other people's children. She used to have as many as fifteen children to take care of and she found it no problem at all. She used to always have something for them to eat and I tell in the stories they admired her very much, and loved her.

Interviewer: You said she owned a little shop. When did she start going into business for herself like that?

Interviewee: She opened the store I imagine I think it was about 1930. A little variety store, candy, cigarettes, tomato paste, soda; later on she got ice cream and if two children came in the store and only one of them had money the other one was sure to go with candy also.

Interviewer: That's the way she was; she was a kind-hearted woman. That seems to be a common trait among the Italians, especially the ones living on Federal Hill. Can you tell me where you were born? Were you born on the Hill?

Interviewee: No, I was born in Cranston and at the age of five my mother brought me here to the Hill. Then I went back to Cranston at the age of ten and I come back to Federal Hill 1958 and been here ever since.
Interviewer: What was the community like back then, when you came back? Was it any different than it is today?

Interviewee: Yes, we had more people then than we do today due to the construction or I should say the destruction of the lower end of Federal Hill where they're going to put Route 6. I believe that they chased the people out too quickly. They could have remained there at least five to at least seven years, because what they've done there now they did in two years and it was really not necessary to destroy it as quickly as they did.

Interviewer: Do you think there's still a sense of strong community ties, strong feelings of family in this neighborhood like when you first moved up here? Or is that changed in any way?

Interviewee: It has changed some because we don't have the families well, we do and then we don't. The upper part of Federal Hill the families have been there for years and yes, there's still strong ties I would say.

Interviewer: Were there any agencies that existed when you first moved up here to help, let's say, Italian immigrants who were coming into the neighborhood? Were there any to help?

Interviewee: Yes there was the Federal House and I remember my mother taking us there for our vaccinations. They
had a health clinic and I believe they used to teach the immigrants talk American, and even learn for your citizenship too.

Interviewer: Are there any agencies here on the Hill today that try to help solve people's problems?

Interviewee: Yes, we still have the Federal House and then we have S which is a community organization and if you have problems you come to them and they help out.

Interviewer: What kind of problems specifically does S try to handle for people?

Interviewee: If your garbage is not picked up in time, if you have slum landlords they get after the landlords to help you out. In traffic problems...

Interviewer: So they basically try to organize the people around issues that represents their need then?

Interviewee: Yes they do.

Interviewer: Is there any movements towards building of new homes in the neighborhood?

Interviewee: Yes, we have the New Homes of Federal Hill Organization and so far we've built two brand new homes, starting on the third and anyone that wants to build brand new homes we could help them out.

Interviewer: How long has New Homes been in operation?

Interviewee: I'd say about seven years.
Interviewer: I see quite a lot of work being done on Atwells Ave. do you know anything about what this project entails, with the rebuilding of the street...Why are they doing this?

Interviewee: Well, we did need to have the street redone anyhow so they do want to improve it to bring more people back into the neighborhood.

Interviewer: Do you think this project will be successful in doing that?

Interviewee: Yes I do I really do.

Interviewer: What about the business district? Do you think they might try to improve their store fronts or do you think new businesses will come up to the Hill?

Interviewee: Yes, already several stores have improved their store fronts and I noticed just today there's another one fixing the front of his store and yes we will get more new businesses naturally.

Interviewer: Have you noticed any new businesses opening up on the Hill since this project began?

Interviewee: Yes, we have a hairdresser that came on the Avenue and I heard that there's going to be others coming too, other kinds of businesses.

Interviewer: I see. What do you do for recreation and for social activities? Do you belong to any clubs?

Interviewee: Yes, I do. I belong to St. John's Women's Guild, I'm on the Board of Directors for New Homes for
Federal Hill, for the Federal Hill Tutorial Center, and I also am on the board. And we always have some sort of an activities going...dinner dance.

Interviewer: Yes, I noticed that from time to time I pass by the neighborhood and you're involved also in like street festivities. Has there been any street festivities lately on the Hill?

Interviewee: Yes, at St. John's Church we celebrated the Madonna del Assumpta and that ran from June 22 to the 25th and I would say it was very successful. I saw many strange faces during the festival.

Interviewer: I'm going to hit you with some kind of social commentary-type questions. Accusations have been made that Federal Hill's a community of old people. How true is that?

Interviewee: We do have quite a few old people but I'd say we have middle-aged and young people.

Interviewer: How are the needs of senior citizens met on the Hill? What programs exist to help them with their needs?

Interviewee: We have the program of the Federal House where they provide them with their lunches, we have the bus that transport the people, and I don't think they lack anything. I mean, really, whatever they want, it's there.
Interviewer: Do you feel there are enough...you mentioned that there are young people also, are there enough recre- ational facilities for young people in the neighbor- hood? Are their needs fairly?

Interviewee: We should have more recreation for the younger people, the teenagers especially. There really isn't anything for them.

Interviewer: Some people also say that Federal Hill is an Italian ghetto and that young people move out as soon as they're old enough to do so. Is that true in your opinion-do you see it that way?

Interviewee: I don't think so. No, I've known children that were raised in Federal Hill and some of them are still here. Some do move away but we do still have them here.

Interviewer: You said you're a member of St. John's parish and you said that as a child your mother led you to believe in going to Church and in belief in God. How strong is your feelings towards religion today? Are they still basically what they were when you were a little child?

Interviewee: Yes, I believe that once you're trained to be a Catholic, you're brought up as a Catholic you'll always remain a Catholic and it's up to the indivi-
dual to continue to do this. You have to have faith in something so stick to your own religion.

Interviewer: Can you tell me something about the history of St. John? I was told that Italians many years ago were not allowed to attend that Church. Is that true?

Interviewee: No, the Church was always open to anyone but I understand yes it was an Irish parish, and when the Italians moved in I believe the Irish moved out. And St. John's is predominantly Italian now, yes.

Interviewer: When you were a little girl, was there a feeling of discrimination or a sense of discrimination against Italians?

Interviewee: Not here on Federal Hill but when I was in Cranston there certainly was.

Interviewer: What was the attitude of the people towards Italian people in Cranston in those days?

Interviewee: They used to make fun of them, the Irish, the Swedish, because the neighborhood I was brought up in Cranston was mostly Irish, Swedish, and different nationalities, very few Italians and so we were looked down on.

Interviewer: What about employment opportunities for Italians in those days? Were they discriminated against when they went looking for work?
Interviewee: A little bit. At the jewelry shop, I think they always took you in jewelry shops and mills.

Interviewer: I noticed that you, from time to time, when you're with these festivals you wear the colors of the Italian flag so I would assume then that you are proud of being Italian.

Interviewee: I certainly am proud to be Italian. I'll always be proud of being Italian. My children, I've brought them all up the Italian way although their father is Yankee but even he loved the Italian ways.

Interviewer: Then in what ways has he become Italianized as a result of marrying an Italian?

Interviewee: Well, he loves all the Italian foods and all the Italian feasts, anything Italian, he's right there.

Interviewer: You've lived here quite a number of years on the Hill, what do you like best about Federal Hill?

Interviewee: Well, we have so many stores and I try to patronize all of them. I don't go in just one store and we are close to downtown. You're able to walk downtown or you can take a bus. But like I said, we have so many different stores, the fruits and vegetables you can get fresh almost every day and it's just wonderful that you can shop.

Interviewer: Are there any things about Federal Hill that you would
like to see improved in any way?

Interviewee: Yes. Mainly I would like to see a post office up here and a comfort station.

Interviewer: Why do you see these as being important needs for the community?

Interviewee: I remember years ago we used to have a comfort station in the old fire station on the corner of St. and there was a person there at all times so there wasn't any vandalism and I really feel that we should have one up here.

Interviewer: And your need for the post office. Why is that?

Interviewee: Well, there again, it would be convenient, especially during the holidays.

Interviewer: This being a political year, I'm going to get on the subject of politics for a while. In comparing the Doorley years with the Cianci regime that's in power now, have there been any changes made under both regimes? How did the Mayor of the town, both Doorley and Cianci treat the people of Federal Hill?

Interviewee: Well, the Doorley administration, you could never see Mr. Doorley but with Mr. Cianci we have been able to talk to him and I have seen him many, many times up at the Hill, at the different functions that we have, he's there.
Interviewer: Do you feel it's because possibly as a result of him being also an Itlo-American that this is so or is it that he has a genuine love for the neighborhood and he really doesn't get politics involved?

Interviewee: I would say it's both.

Interviewer: A combination of the two.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: I agree with you, I've seen him many times at various block functions and he seems to be responsive to the needs of the people. What about police protection in the neighborhood? I know that several years ago people were complaining that the police department wasn't responding. Has that changed in any way?

Interviewee: Well, it seems as though it has changed, that we don't need as much protection as we used to.

Interviewer: There are claims that this is one of the few neighborhoods in the city of Providence or for that matter in the country that you can walk the streets at night safely. How true is that?

Interviewee: That is very true. I myself would walk from my girlfriend's house at two o'clock in the morning while I was there to see her and no one has ever, ever bothered me.
Interviewer: There are some new schools that have been constructed in the neighborhood, one of them being the new Brigham Middle School. Did the parents at all have any input in getting that school or was that just strictly a school department matter?

Interviewee: No. The parents had to get together and the administration said that they didn't have land for it. Well the people went and found and then we even were allowed to help design the school. And I think they did a fine job, wonderful job.

Interviewer: One of the accusations that I always hear up on the Hill is that if you want to get anything from City Hall regardless of who's in power, you have to fight for it, because response has always been kind of negative towards this neighborhood. How true is that?

Interviewee: I suppose it depends on what you want. And if it's for the good of the people I think mainly we have gotten it.

Interviewer: What do you think of the present quality of education in our public schools in the city of Providence? I know your children, not your children but your grandchildren, not your grandchildren, your nieces and nephews, I'm sorry, I'm making you
older than what you are, attend public schools. Do you feel they're getting a good education?

Interviewee: No, I'm very disappointed in the school system today. To me the children aren't learning much. I've heard that children as far as the seventh grade don't know how to write their name and I think that's disgraceful. What are they doing in school? Playing or learning?

Interviewer: Are there any movements to improve let's say recreational facilities for the kids in the neighborhood. You mentioned earlier that there should be more. Have they done anything in any way.

Interviewee: Well, with that Tutorial Center I believe they're teaching and they're also bringing them to different parks and museums and libraries and so forth. And I think that that is good for the children.

Interviewer: Is there any movements to build any kind of recreational facilities or improve existing ones.

Interviewee: Well, when they get the streets cleaned I think they should kind of keep close watch on that and then they did promise that the Kenyon St. School is supposed to get a playground and I think that would help quite a bit too.
Interviewer: What about news in the neighborhood? Is there any agencies that write articles or how is news communicated through the neighborhood is what I'm trying to get at.

Interviewee: We do have the Italian ECHO and they do pick up bits that goes on in the neighborhood.

Interviewer: How good are they at reporting the news that exists in the neighborhood?

Interviewee: I think they could work at it a little better. I noticed that they've made several mistakes and they should improve on it because I remember years ago the Italian ECHO was a very fine paper and I would like to see it continue and to really progress.

Interviewer: Several years ago there was talk about closing down the Atwells Ave. fire station. What happened on that issue?

Interviewee: There again at the time, seeing there was noise, they got the people together and we went more or less from street to street and we fought for it. We did not want it closed because we felt it would be less protection for our neighborhood.

Interviewer: What was the reason of the fire department as to the closing of this station? Why did they want
Interviewee: To save money.

Interviewer: To save money. They seemed to be more concerned with money than with human lives. Have there been any other issues like that where they've tried to close down streets or even close down programs to help people in the neighborhood? Well, for example, there was, I understand, a movement to close Atwells Ave. Why did they want to close Atwells Ave.?

Interviewee: Well, the railroad bridge is in very bad condition and they did want to close off Atwells Ave. completely while they repaired it. But the merchants and the people from the Hill fought for it and so they built a temporary bridge for us and business went on as usual. It was a little inconvenient but it kept the Hill going.

Interviewer: In what ways, these accusations that one of the problems with not only Federal Hill but the entire city of Providence, downtown district that is, that if you try to go shopping at local stores there's a lack of parking facilities. Is there any plans to improve upon the parking facilities in Federal Hill?

Interviewee: Yes, they have a certain sight on Spruce St. that there's a few houses left and they will be condemned
and they do want to put a parking lot there. But I feel that they should have done that years ago. When they were taking the other houses they should have taken that whole area, that one side of the street and did it all at once, than do it piece-meal the way they have now.

Interviewer: Can you give me a description of what this project on Atwells Ave. was going to look like. What are some of the plans or the projected overall look or new appearance of the Avenue. What will it look like?

Interviewee: We're going to have new street lights, the streets of course are being repaved, and the sidewalks are going to be brick sidewalks. In front of the Churches, well of course Mt. Carmel is taking care of its own, but in front of St. John's there's supposed to be like a little piazza and the same with the Holy Ghost. And then DePasquale Ave. down to Spruce St. will be closed off and that will be a piazza with a fountain and they're going to try to bring pushcarts back there.

Interviewer: Do you recall the pushcarts when you were little?

Interviewee: I certainly do. I remember when I was a child,
they had pushcarts from the beginning of Acorn St. right around Spruce St., up DePasquale and on Atwells Ave. And in those days, especially Saturday, Saturday evenings, there was people from sidewalk to sidewalk. You could just about walk. And the prices, naturally, were very low. So we used to get good bargains on a Saturday night.

Interviewer: You think that that will be successful again, the idea of the pushcarts coming back?

Interviewee: I think so because I think people enjoy looking at it and

Interviewer: A sense of nostalgia more or less.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Just on a funny note, I just remembered, I understand that to the entrance of Atwells Ave., when this job is completed, they intend to put an iron archway and as a symbol representing the Italian people there will be a pine cone and I've been told that this pine cone looked something like a hand grenade and there's been a lot of bickering over it. What's the story behind that?

Interviewee: Well, when they saw it, it's supposed to be a pigna in Italian, but someone interpreted it as a pineapple and people felt pineapple doesn't belong up the Hill. You think of Hawaii when you think of pineapple.
But they say pigna is supposed to be a sign of plentiful and friendship. So I hope everyone will get the real meaning of it.

Interviewer: Eleanor, before the break, I detected a certain amount of cynicism on your part when you mentioned the reconstruction of Atwells Ave. You said Mt. Carmel is doing their own thing. What did you mean by that? Is there a rivalry among the Churches?

Interviewee: I believe there is. I would say that Msgr. Cavalharo is a very powerful man. Three years ago, SINO went down to the Chancery and we come up with the idea of having a festival with all four Churches of Federal Hill included. Well, we got all pastors at one meeting and I noticed that the one that spoke the loudest was Msgr. Cavalharo. And it seemed as though he just took over and that was it. Whatever had to be done we had to do by his rules. He asked us different ideas. So I came up, I mentioned well why don't we have fireworks? And he said, "Oh no, that would cost too much money." But then in the finalization of the plans, we were having fireworks. And I think it was a real...well the whole festival as a whole, we went one week and we called it the Festival of the Madonnas. And it did. It was
a very wonderful festival. And it seems that from then on, we've been having these different kinds of feasts at Federal Hill. And I think we need them because the people enjoy them.

Interviewer: What about the St. Joseph's Day Feast. Why did that happen this year?

Interviewee: Mainly, I believe, because it fell on Palm Sunday. And that's a rather religious day, during Lent. And then I think the fact that Atwells Ave. was being torn up was another problem why we didn't havetit. But I believe it will continue next year.

Interviewer: What was the previous years festival like? St. Joseph's Day, that draws a lot of people. Can you give us a blow by blow description of what it was like?

Interviewee: Well, they have a Mass in one Church, and then they have a procession. They have different bands, and religious people, the Mayor, in the parade. And then in all the stores they passed out the zeppolas and wine, and different ones passed out coffee with the Anisette. And it really drew the people here on the Hill. And I think it's really interesting. People like this sort of thing.

Interviewer: When you were a little girl, did they have these festivals?
Interviewee: When I was a little girl, we had many of these festivals. And they used to decorate the streets with colorful lights and flags and they always had band concerts. And I remember distinctly there was a little cart that carried rows of nuts which were really delicious. And I wish today they would bring one back because I've never seen one since.

Interviewer: On the sidewalks of New York you see from time to time the vendors of the chestnuts that you referred to. Are there any plans for any festivals over the summer?

Interviewee: Well we had that one at St. John's. I'm not sure if there will be any more. There may. But I know they're planning a festival for Columbus Day, which will involve Federal Hill.

Interviewer: What about the Fourth of July? Is there anything planned for the Fourth of July?

Interviewee: Oh yes. SINO has a little block party sort of, for Square, which takes in Carpenter St., and D St. something like that. And we sell hot dogs and watermelon and soda, all for 10¢ a piece to draw the children there. And we have a
band that plays all types of music. And we have found that it cuts down the false alarms and fires ever so much. We have it one night at D Square and another night at Ring and Knight St. but I believe this year it will be at D Square and the Columbus Bank parking lot.

Interviewer: It sounds good. What about activities in the summer months? Do any of the Churches put on any activities for the people?

Interviewee: The Holy Ghost generally has different things. They have little bazaars and I'm sure they will be coming out with different things. Course the Holy Ghost has bingos every Tuesday night which I attend when I can. I enjoy it. They have a full house, every time, every night, I mean when it's being held.

Interviewer: What about dancing in the streets? Does any of that occur?

Interviewee: Oh yes. Monday nights in front of Mt. Carmel they have a band and people get up and do the line dancing and Thursday night is at Garibaldi Park they have a band, and there again there's line dancing with all types of people---the young, the senior citizens, middle aged.
Interviewer: Line dancing seems to be quite popular in this neighborhood. Do the Churches try to compete at all on trying to draw crowds to line dances?

Interviewee: Well, they first started at Mt. Carmel on Friday night. I believe they carry it during the winter months and early Spring, but they start from summer. Then we got it at St. John's on a Sunday night and we seem to be getting quite a crowd there. So far I think two weeks in July there'll be four of them and they'll continue for the summer.

Interviewer: Has St. John made any renovations to its building? I know it's the oldest Church in the community.

Interviewee: Yes it is. Last year the Bishop Angell, he's our Bishop, he's been there for three or four years, he got the people of our parish together and put the question before the people, if we wanted to renovate the Church, because the expense would be tremendous. But the people said yes, we do. So they redid the whole basement and its one of the best-looking halls in the State I would have to say the truth. And we've had many functions there and they've always been well attended and the people love to come there because there's a warm feeling among them and they just enjoy themselves there.
Interviewer: One thing I'm curious of, I've just recently joined St. John's parish and I've noticed that attendance at Mass at best is limited to just about maybe a hundred families at most at any given Mass. And yet at the other parishes in the neighborhood, they're usually packed. Why is that?

Interviewee: The Holy Ghost I believe draws the biggest amount because mostly Italians attend there and I don't know, Italian people are inclined to...religiously they stick together. Mt Carmel used to have a big parish but I understand they're dropping off. St. John's, we're in-between, so we catch people from out of the parish and then people from the neighborhood.

Interviewer: With Holy Ghost do you think you think that a lot of that is outsiders who at one time or other lived on the Hill and just come back?

Interviewee: Yes, there's a portion that did have to move away because of the redevelopment and they still come back.

Interviewer: You mentioned Garibaldi Park. How long has that park been there? Is this a recent development?

Interviewee: Yes, it is. We used to have the old bathhouse there at one time where years ago people didn't have showers or tubs and you were able to go there and take a bath. But then I would say within the last fifteen or twenty years they stopped using it. It was just sitting there doing nothing. I myself would have liked to have seen it restored as a building so that senior citizens or almost anyone could go sit there and play cards, draw, or whatever. But
the neighbors around that area wanted it torn down because it was being vandalized so they decided that they would like it completely torn and the results is Garibaldi Park.

Interviewer: I understand that there was a little discontent among certain priests about placing Garibaldi's statue there because supposedly Garibaldi wasn't the greatest Catholic or believer of Christiandom. Is there any stories behind that?

Interviewee: Well, I understand he was in some building downtown and someone discovered him there and they really didn't want him there so they said...I don't know whether it was a person from the Hill, they said well bring him up to Garibaldi Park. Although, that Garibaldi, it was named a long, long time ago. It's been Garibaldi Park for...there used to be an older field there I remember with a little bit of a pool there. When I was a child I remember wading there and they used to call it Garibaldi Park then. But now, it's a new Garibaldi Park. We have the grass, the benches.

Interviewer: So there is quite a bit of festivities up here. Is that a common occurrence in Italian communities to have all these different festivals and feasts days?

Interviewee: Yes it is.

Interviewer: Why do you think that's so?

Interviewee: I think the Italian people like to be happy and be friendly and be generous. Like my mother, she use to invent two or three birthdays of the year in order to give free candy to the children from the store.

Interviewer: You say you frequent the stores, you patronize the stores, on the Hill, do you think the quality of food
is better here than if you were to buy it in the supermarket or someplace else?

Interviewee: Yes, I think it's better because you have the salespeople that, they know you.

Interviewer: So it's like a personal touch.

Interviewee: Yes, it's a very personal touch.

Interviewer: What about prices? How are the prices in the stores? How do they compare with stores outside the neighborhood?

Interviewee: I find the prices here on the Hill are even better than the ones in the market. The only times you get a bargain is if they're having a big sale, in the markets. Otherwise, the prices are pretty much the same.

Interviewer: Do you think there's a need for more parking? I think I asked you that before. Where would you locate it if there was to be more parking in the neighborhood, besides Spruce St.?

Interviewee: Well, I would eliminate this parking on both sides of the street, especially the narrow streets, because that creates a hazard. But there isn't too much of an area where you could park.

Interviewer: Are there any plans for any additional gardens or parks in the neighborhood?

Interviewee: The land originally belonged to New Homes and we (SINO) more or less borrowed it from them. There was an empty lot and we come up with the idea of having gardens and parking. The gardens I believe they're 15 X 25 that we allowed to a person and we gave it first come first served. And I was there just the other day looking at these gardens and they're beautiful. And of course it was run mostly by the Italian people. And course there's asphalt on both sides of it. So far it looks beautiful and
I hope they keep it this way. Because we need to have things like this up here.

Interviewer: You say mostly run by the Italian people, has there been a shift in population? Are there less Italians living up here now? Or is it still predominantly an Italian neighborhood?

Interviewee: I would say it's predominantly Italian.

Interviewer: Why do you Italians who lived here years ago, why would they have moved out? What were the reasons for them to have moved out of this neighborhood?

Interviewee: Mainly because of the redevelopment. They scared them away. A lot of people didn't know... they would say "Your street going to be taken" or "Your house has to come down." And it was really true like I say. When they took that land to the Route 6 people could have stayed there at least another five to seven years.

Interviewer: What were the plans during that period of time, we're going back maybe eight or ten years, did redevelopment have any plans of redesigning the neighborhood in any shape or form?

Interviewee: I did see a set of plans prior to that one. Oh, there was so many different changes up on Federal Hill, but none of them ever did come to materialize. The only thing I did see is that they did start the Route 6 connector and it's never been finished.

Interviewer: At that time, was there any input from the community? Did the civic leaders come and question the people about what they thought were the needs of the community or did they just decide to do things on their own?

Interviewee: They just went ahead and planned it and I don't think the people were educated as to what was going on, at the time. With SINO, New Homes for Federal
Hill, we knew more about it today. And we're not going to let it happen again.

Interviewer: You mentioned that New Homes has been successful in constructing several new homes in the neighborhood. What other things has New Homes done to improve houses?

Interviewee: We went to Glochester one day and saw an old abandoned school that had been turned into apartments. And it was very beautiful. So that now with the Grove St. School which has been empty for years, New Homes would like to restore it and and put apartments there. And perhaps with the St. School also.

Interviewer: Does New Homes have any kind of a loan program to assist home owners?

Interviewee: Yes, we have that HIP program, which we are the only community in the State that run it ourselves. They did help through the grants and the loans they did help the people up here. To begin with when New Homes put up their first house, I noticed that people started to fix their property and naturally with this money coming in, more people were able to fix up their property. And the Hill looks a lot better than it used to.

Interviewer: Can businessmen exploit the funds, the facilities for improvement to businesses and improvement within?

Interviewee: Yes, there is a program also for them that they could go to, the PCEDO, something like that. They could help.

Interviewer: Is this part of New Homes for Federal Hill or is it a separate program altogether?
Interviewee: I'm not sure whether it's an off-shoot of Federal Hill program or not, of the New Homes. But I know it's been organized up here.

Interviewer: You said you're a grandparent. Do you have any stories to tell me about your grandchildren?

Interviewee: Well, they just moved into the neighborhood and they're really enjoying it. I have two of them going to Brigham St. School and they've never seen a school so beautiful. And one goes to Central and he's enjoying that. And...

Interviewer: And they really enjoy these schools, in comparison to the Warwick schools where they've gone previously.

Interviewer: Do you feel this would be a viable community for young people to move into and raise families?

Interviewee: Yes I do, absolutely.

Interviewer: There's still that sense of warmth then that you can feel in this neighborhood.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Years ago my father mentioned that, he didn't come from Federal Hill he came from Charles St., but he mentioned that there was, in the sense of community that if let's say his parents were sick, or working, that another parent in the neighborhood would take care of everyone's children who were either sick or or parents weren't able to take care of them because of work. Has that changed in any respect?

Interviewee: No we still have that. If there's a death in the family. Not as much like it used to be but really a death in the family, sickness. There's always someone there to help out. If I had a family and let's say five children, well five more wouldn't make any difference. We would all pitch in.
Interviewer: How about the women in the community? When there's feasts, do they pitch in to try to get the food and the occasion set up? How does that work?

Interviewee: Well, they get together and they go to one house, two houses, and maybe four or five will go prepare the eggplant and meatballs, and some other houses will prepare the pastries. We all work together and have a lot of fun. Get things done.

Interviewer: Are your friends mostly of Italian decent?

Interviewee: Yes they are.

Interviewer: Why is that? What is your interaction with say non-Italians? Do you have any friends who are non-Italian?

Interviewee: Yes. We have a couple that comes from Garden City and they're French people and they've been with our Church now for two, three years and they just love us up here. Because we're so warm and friendly. And they enjoy doing what we do.

Interviewer: Why are most of your friends of Italian decent? Why is that? Me myself I get along with anyone but I think the Italian people have more warmth than any other nationality.

Interviewer: Is there anything that you contribute that to? Why are they so warm?

Interviewee: We're just friendly and want to be helpful.

Interviewer: Do you think there's any kind of common bond maybe when they first came here that they didn't know the language and maybe that's what brought them together?

Interviewee: Yes that could be it. Right. And it seemed that one family helped one, well they were always ready to help the next family.

Interviewer: What do you see as the future of Federal Hill? Where is Federal Hill going?
Interviewee: I say we’re going to progress more and more. Right.

Interviewer: Do you see any more houses built and more businesses?

Interviewee: Yes I would say so. Absolutely, right.

Interviewer: This project on Atwells Ave. do you feel this will be a spin-off to have other government aids to assist improving the side streets of the neighborhood? Or will Federal Hill in the future just be Atwells Ave. or do you think that it will expand to the other streets on the Hill?

Interviewee: Well, it could possibly expand to the other streets. Like take Broadway now, that it a beautiful avenue. And there are some beautiful houses there. And they should be restored for what... Most of them are but there are a few that really should be restored to what they used to be.

Interviewer: There were mansions like on Broadway, since we’re on Broadway, what were they like when you first moved here? How have they changed? Who lived in these homes?

Interviewee: Well, we used to have state senators, judges, and a lot of learned people and very prominent people. I know of one family as a matter of fact that I used to help with... The woman she lost her husband and she was there alone. And the house was beautiful--- mohaghony panelling, not panelling real mahoghany. And in the mahoghany there were figures of angels. And there'd be a fireplace. This particular house had, I believe, three floors to it and plus a recreation room on the top. And each one of these floors had a fireplace with different backgrounds to them. And they really were very beautiful, solid houses. They could never be restored, replaced today. They could never build a house like that again.
Interviewer: I'm going to switch to a little different topic now. Being of Italian decent, I'm sure that from time to time, you've heard mention of the Italians being crooked people, (Italian), real members of the Mafia, and T.V. and the movies have kind of portrayed this image. What is your attitude toward that?

Interviewee: We may have had some of it, that is for sure. But the majority of the people were more intelligent.

Interviewer: You would say then they were hard-working people.


Interviewer: Why have they stereotyped Italians in this way in movies? Like for example movies like The Godfather. Why do you think they stereotype Italians in this way? To play the part of gangsters all the time. Is there any specific reason why?

Interviewee: Course back in Sicily, they did have the real Mafia and I guess they portray it. That's from then. And it's almost traditional that they have to pick on a certain person or a certain thing and carry it through to publicize it.

Interviewer: Just to publicize it.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Do you have any attitudes towards T.V. shows that depict Italians in this way?

Interviewee: Well, when they insult us I don't like it.

Interviewer: Have there been any recent insults of Italians in the papers or on T.V.

Interviewee: Yes, they did at one press club there. They had made up a song about the Italians and it really wasn't necessary because I think the Italians have done more for the country, more good, more educational, cultural things and not gangsters and so forth.
Interviewer: O.K. so then you would say that it's just more or less like a stereotyping but it's not exactly a true picture.

Interviewee: No it's not.

Interviewer: Right now were going to close this conversations but before we do I was wondering if you had any statements you wanted to make.

Interviewee: Well, I just think Italian is beautiful and the Italian people are always closer to my heart because they're warmer and they're always ready to lend a hand in times of need. And I'm proud to be Italian.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Eleanor.

Interviewee: You're welcome.

Interviewer: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.