Federal Hill Project: Interview with Anthony Pulcini by Peter Pulcini - June 19, 1978 - TAPE 2

Anthony Pulcini

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Oral History Interview

with

Anthony Pulcini

June 19, 1978
286 Laurel Hill Avenue Providence, R.I.

By Peter Pulcini

Interviewer: This section is on your life in Italy. O.K. Where were you born?

Interviewee: I was born in Provincia de P in Italy.

Interviewer: What type of town is that, is it a big town or small?

Interviewee: Well, you might call it mid-sized town. It was about 20,000 people at that time.

Interviewer: That big?

Interviewee: At that time, yes.

Interviewer: What kind of industry?

Interviewee: Industry were absolutely nothing, I think. Well, no not absolutely nothing. There was some small industry, like the pottery industry. Pottery. But it wasn't that big. Other industries, there was mostly farming around the town and.

Interviewer: What was, what was the nearest large city to P?

Interviewee: The largest city? It was about 125 kilometers from Rome.

Interviewer: Rome?

Interviewee: And the same from Naples, about the same distance from Naples.
Interviewer: What was, would you say the people were economically well-off, financially well-off?

Interviewee: At that time, no. I mean

Interviewer: How long ago was that?

Interviewee: Oh well, this was, when I came in this country was in 1939.

So at that time people were not well-off at all, especially the, what would you call, the working people. Course there was, there were people that had good jobs naturally they were well-off or people had money

Interviewer: About the people of the town themselves, how did they feel about each other more or less? Were they closer than this, the American counterpart or?

Interviewee: I think so.

Interviewer: Closer?

Interviewee: I think so. It was a little bit closer. Course it's quite some time ago now that I left there.

Interviewer: Yeah, but as you remembered it?

Interviewee: As I remembered I think I think friends were more, more closely I don't know if you call it trusted or I don't. See, we used to we used to be if you were friends we like brothers and as I remember this, I had friends, I had especially couple friends who were friends of mine that we really couple brothers to me.

Interviewer: How were the people of the town? How was the community held together more or less?

Interviewee: Well, I believe course at that time I was 18 years old,
when I came here and as I remember it, it was held mostly by, by the family and the religion.

Interviewer: Which do you think was more important to the average individual, the family or religion?

Interviewee: Well, I believe to me it more important the family. The religion was very important and, of course, there was another thing that was important at that time which was the country.

Interviewer: Oh really, yeah?

Interviewee: Sure!

Interviewer: At that time?

Interviewee: It was, sure. It was the era of the Fascist era which we were actually forced in a way to to believe in that kind of government and idea because when I was introduced to that thing I was only a kid, was only, was going to school and we were brought up with that idea that the country and the Fascist was more important than to the mother and father.

Interviewer: Before you came to America what, did you work in Italy at all?

Interviewee: No, I never work. I went to school there and but I never had I never held a job. No... I went for well, maybe a week. I was learning to be a mechanic. I wanted to be a mechanic but it didn't last because the guy, the master, what we used to call the master, he would, he would insult people he would insult kids that work for him and if you do something wrong he tells you to do something you do something wrong he would say that you
were stupid that you be better off going home and stay
home and. Because there was no union, naturally, because
if it was he wouldn't be able to do that and things like
that. But that's the only thing I, the only, the only job
I ever held. Was about a week, I'd say.

Interviewer: But mostly you went to school there?

Interviewee: I went to school, yes.

Interviewer: What did you do for your leisure time? What did you do then?

Interviewee: Leisure time? Well, the most, most important thing was
our soccer game, naturally.

Interviewer: You played with the people your age or?

Interviewee: Yeah, with people our age, naturally I never participated
in any organized league or anything like that. We just
play we just play when we were kid and as we get a little
older we start to get interested in girls, naturally and
the school. Recreation we used to go maybe used to go
swimming in the river the town.

Interviewer: The people of the town were, the families, did they take
vacations like they, we do there or?

Interviewee: They might do now, but.

Interviewer: But at that time?

Interviewee: We never did. Well, I never, well, the only thing I ever
did was we, I used to go my uncles' farms which is where
I wouldn't say up in the mountains but they were kind of
high and some kind of hills that were there and we used
to enjoy it very much when. Once in awhile well, maybe
couple times we went to the to the beach, the seashore, whatever call over here and but that's about all.

Interviewer: Now you were 18 when you left?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Therefore you were used to the customs and the ways of Italy. Do you still observe any of them now after all these years?

Interviewee: The customs, well, I imagine so sure, sure. The, especially the ways of the family.

Interviewer: Holidays?

Interviewee: Holidays, yes.

Interviewer: Food?

Interviewee: We're not, we're not. Food, oh, especially the food, naturally, sure. Food and course we like other things that we seen over here for the first time, naturally. But like pasta and things like that will never go go away from us.

Interviewer: It's obviously living in a different country you have pressure from the culture of that country, the change. How did you manage to keep the customs that you've kept?

Interviewee: Well, you see, when when we came here, I mean when I came here I went to live with my father, naturally. He was boarding with somebody and I went the same to the same place and there were Italian people and naturally me being an Italian naturally we got along good together. And course they had kids that were born in this country which was a help to me at that time. Because even though they
couldn't speak very good Italian, but they could make
themselves understood.

Interviewer: So it wasn't that hard to?

Interviewee: Well, wasn't wasn't that hard but that's in the only contact
I had beside my father and friends, of course, friends that
my father had.

Interviewer: So there probably wasn't even that much pressure to change?

Interviewee: To begin, well, yes. yes. No. because then then came the
tings that I don't, I wasn't satisfied with that, just have
those few friends, those few people that I could talk to
that was hard, I mean all the others I couldn't, I just
say hello and goodbye or something like that. And I think
my mother then my brother came over here about six months
after and things start, start to pick up a little better
because we would have friends coming in the house, we'll go
visit them, maybe not that often because we were living down
Warwick Neck. We didn't come to Providence at the
beginning because my father had a job over there. He always
was there and then after awhile after my father got sick
we couldn't work no more so we moved to Providence.

Interviewer: And that's when more or less you, you started becoming more
and more American?

Interviewee: Oh, yes, absolutely. Then I had more friends thath I could
understand. They could teach me things because I, they
would they would know what, what I was going through because
I fathers probably couldn't speak English , English
themselves, yeah.
Interviewer: Now you were, you were in the service, right?
Interviewee: Oh, Yes.

Interviewer: That was a big?
Interviewee: Oh, that was a big change, that was a big big event, I guess.

Interviewer: How many years were you in the service?
Interviewee: Three.

Interviewer: Three years?
Interviewee: Three years.

Interviewer: Do you consider yourself now more American or Italian?
Interviewee: Oh, I consider more, more American than Italian right now.
Oh, sure.

Interviewer: But yet all the Italian customs are still observed?
Interviewee: Oh, all the the things. Oh, sure I mean, I wouldn't, I wouldn't call myself like an American French or an American English, I would call myself an American Italian or Italian-American.

Interviewer: But the culture of Italy is still strong?

Interviewee: But the culture still there. I mean, you can't the blood, what's in the blood the attraction to the people to our to our relatives in Italy. We still have a lot of relatives which is strong but being I would consider more American though than Italian.

Interviewer: When you came over from Italy, what sort of possessions did you bring with you? Did you bring a lot of money, were you well-off?

Interviewee: No.
Interviewer: Did you bring a lot of material stuff?
Interviewee: No, no a thing.
Interviewer: Nothing much?
Interviewee: Not much, no.
Interviewer: O.K. Did you find it sort of difficult to adjust at that time? Was it because of the Italian community around you that you were able to get into it rather easily or by steps or were you just thrown into an American culture?
Interviewee: Well, at the beginning I was just thrown in. As I said, I went to live with this family that it was a good thing it was Italian and I could understand them and that was a great help. But as time went on, as I said, I wanted more. I wanted, you know, I wanted to be able to understand everything I wanted to learn. And, of course, that was a good thing because every time somebody would say something to me in English if I didn't understand I would I would try to remember and ask somebody what it meant. But, as I said, then when we came over here in Providence things start to be much better.
Interviewer: Where did you live in Providence when you first move into Providence?
Interviewee: In Silver Lake what they call Silver Lake?
Interviewer: Why didn't you live in Federal Hill? Did you know about Federal Hill then?
Interviewee: Well, yes. Sure. Oh, we knew about Federal Hill. We used to go shopping on Federal Hill from Warwick Neck.
Interviewer: Oh, really?

Interviewee: Oh, sure. Well, you see they came from little town 20,000 people it's not a small town, it's not a big town but it was, you had lot of friends. As I said, over here friends, I couldn't make friends right away because of the language but I find other people even though they were not Italians they were very, very kind. People were would try to help you understand. They'd make signs with hands, with their head, with the eyes whatever try to make you understand what they wanted, what they meant. I never find anybody that really would insult me that was not an Italian. Actually, you know, the Italians were more, more insulting than other, than other

Interviewer: Is that right?

Interviewee: Sure, than other nationalities, sure, that's true.

Interviewer: Did the American understanding, kindness or understanding as you put it, was that what impressed you the most about the United States?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Or was it the material stuff or the or?

Interviewee: Well, what I, that would impress me, the material stuff, especially cars, naturally. Cars and what can I say? Well, let's say bananas, for instance. When I came this country, the only time I ate bananas in the old country was once. I ate one banana in the old country where at that time it cost me one lire which was quite a bit of money at that
time. And when I came in this country I, my father asked me what I wanted. I says, Gee, I don't know I would like to eat, you know, a couple bananas. So he bought me a bunch of bananas.

Interviewer: So in other words, it was the availability of things?

Interviewee: The availability of things, yes.

Interviewer: Things you weren't able to get in Italy?

Interviewee: Right. Not because we didn't, because we were better off than most of the people because of my father was in this country was send us the money. We didn't have to live

Interviewer: Wasn't available there?

Interviewee: But it was even if they were available but it was not reachable the way it was in this country.

And cars, naturally. I mean over there to own a car at that time you had to be really rich, a rich person.

Interviewer: Your father was here in the United States before you came, right?

Interviewee: Oh, yes, my father was over here.

Interviewer: Anybody else?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Nobody?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: And he was the first on actually that you met when you came to the United States.

Interviewee: Right. that's right.

Interviewer: O.K. Well, we'll discuss community now. How did Federal Hill appear to you when you first, the first time you saw it? Do you remember that?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: When you first went up there, the buildings, the people.
How did they present themselves to You? What were your impressions?

Interviewee: The what Federal Hill impressed me was that I felt I was in Italy. I felt I was in Italy, naturally.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Interviewee: Yeah, I mean they had sidewalk fruit stands and they had fish and I understand they had, of course, it's quite a big now, it's quite a long time but I mean they had all food they used to sell it on the streets. And they used to have carts that person would push carts with fruits, vegetables. And I saw that in Naples, I saw that from the town where I came from. And people used to speak Italian. Course, that impressed me, you know. I'm an American here's people that speak nothing but Italian over here.

Interviewer: What did Federal Hill have or was able to supply you with that no other place could, like Silver Lake couldn't handle, Silver Lake didn't have? Federal Hill was unique in being able to give you this? Not only material I mean like a social thing or just an emotional need, maybe something material. What do you think Federal Hill had that was unique at that time?

Interviewee: At that time, I because see Federal Hill could not supply me with anything because I wasn't really free to go wherever I wanted. Was I still was under my father's guidance and discipline.

Interviewer: What about when you got a little older? Where you could
make up your own mind to go places?

Interviewee: Well, then that would have been after the war. See, after the war then I got so that I let's say, I got Americanized.

Interviewer: Did you go to Federal Hill after that?

Interviewee: Oh, yes we used to go to Federal Hill.

Interviewer: What for?

Interviewee: Mostly to shop.

Interviewer: You wouldn't go up there for recreation or just to spend some time?

Interviewee: No, I don't remember being over there for recreation or anything like that because recreation see, after that you start you learn the English language and you sort of forget, you sort of not forget but you just get away a little bit at the time from the Italian let's say, the Italian culture. And you start going to the American movies more often naturally even though there used to be a lot of these Italian shows come to Providence. Of course, we used to go then before the war. We used to go to these Italian shows. I went to a few of them, quite a few of them. But as I said after then, after the war which you know you start to understand the English language better and you go to and you get you get friends with these with the people born in this country even though they're Italians I mean, been born in this country and and you get used to it. You go, they ask you to go someplace, you like it, you go again and maybe you get away from the Italian culture a little
bit but you can't get away too much from it because it's it's in the family and you get used to more living in this country but still there though.

Interviewer: When you were still, you know, pretty much Italian, you know, and the American culture seemed very strange to you at that time, were there any was there anything up Federal Hill or besides friends and relatives that would help you to adjust? Something a club or a mutual aid society or an agency of some sort that would help you find a job or something? Was there anything at that time like that, do you remember?

Interviewee: I couldn't, I couldn't say that I couldn't. I really couldn't I was I was never in in the need probably for that.

Interviewer: So you really didn't need them that much?

Interviewee: I really didn't need them much, yes, that's right. But I wouldn't be a bit surprised if it was.

Interviewer: Do you think that they were something important at that time or were most people that you knew really didn't pay much attention to them?

Interviewee: You mean people themselves?

Interviewer: Other people that were in the same position as you. That were Italians, they were coming here to make a life.

Interviewee: Well, wait a minute now. At that time there were very few that were come from Italy over here. It's not like now after the war, after let's say in the 50's I guess. Yes, but right after the war there was nobody coming except warbrides til the laws were passed that was more liberalized
for the Italians to immigrate but before it was very strict
very few people would come over. In fact, I don't remember
I don't remember but few people that came the same time
I did or right after that. Very few because I met a few
people from my own hometown and little towns around us that
I made friends with but there weren't too many.

Interviewer: The Italians are noted for not being Italians, being from
different parts of Italy like Sicily, I'm Sicilian, I'm
Calabrese, I'm Napolitan.

Interviewee: Oh, absolutely.

Interviewer: Did Federal Hill give them a common heritage do you think,
in your opinion or did they still fiercely stay separate?

Interviewee: No, I believe, I believe that probably their prime thing
was Italian.

Interviewer: Being Italian?

Interviewee: Being Italian. "Cause yes, then would come naturally if
you're Italian if you are among Italians naturally you
try to divide yourself from one from see you're not no matter
what

Interviewer: ....

Interviewee: Yes, until a time but either you're or either
you're Calabrese or you're who knows maybe Sicilian or
something like that, you see.

Interviewer: Right, right.

Interviewee: Now would be the distinction among Italians,
of course.

Interviewer: Federal Hill did sort of give them a
Interviewee: Oh, the unity of being Itâlians. Oh, yes because I guess well Federal Hill was the center naturally, the Italian.

Interviewer: Do you think most of the Italians had the same traditions, same customs mostly, I mean not?

Interviewee: Mostly.

Interviewer: The big things like Christmas, for Easter or do you think that customs are so different for different parts?

Interviewee: Well, they have a different custom for different parts of Italy, sure. Oh, yes.

Interviewer: But on the whole do you think they are?

Interviewee: On the whole, gee, that's I alot alot of places in Italy that it's very hard to to say because I never was there when I was a kid when I was in Italy but the people that were over here let's say zhey were Calabrese and they would have a lot of customs that I never heard before. Especially with the Sicilians, course they never had much to do with Sicilians or with Calabrese. I mean you know but because sometimes you don't even know what they are because you probably don't even care after while what if they came from Sicily from Calabria or.

Interviewer: Yeah, so

Interviewee: But there are things, there are things that different. There are customs that are different I couldn't tell you right now what.

Interviewer: Do you think that melting all these cultures together customs together in the Federal Hill area that it it was different than what you would have been exposed to in Italy,
let's say if you hadn't come over from

Interviewee: Oh, yeah. Oh, sure because

Interviewer: You don't think that coming right over from Italy you would have found the exact same thing then in Federal Hill?

Interviewee: No, you wouldn't find the same thing, no.

Interviewer: It was basically the same thing though?

Interviewee: It was basically because they're Italians, because they were Italians but you would understand that let's say from here from here to Warwick there's a distance of what maybe fifteen miles or something like that?

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: All right you take fifteen miles from the town where was born in you go to another town fifteen miles and language already it's it's a little bit different. I mean, not the language itself but expressions maybe.

A dialect?

A dialect, sure. So you would find that maybe that the patron saint already's different, is not St. John, we have St. John which was our patron saint.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewer: O.K. You go to some other place they, they don't care about St. John. They care St. Peter, maybe or something like that which St. John maybe doesn't even exist for them the way St. Peter didn't exist for us, you know. That's all we waited for, for the feast of St. John. That's different I think.
Interviewer: Do you have the same feeling today being Italian as you did that many years ago? Or do you think now you've become more and more American?

Interviewee: Oh, I've become more and more American.

Interviewer: Has this affected your links with other Italians?

Interviewee: No, no, no.

Interviewer: You can still say to Italians that come over from Italy let's say two years ago?

Interviewee: I, I cannot relate to them in a sense that they they're how the heck do you say the the idea that they bring with them.

Interviewer: Oh, alright.

Interviewee: I cannot relate to that because

Interviewer: What sort of idea I mean?

Interviewee: Well, the idea that they, that they most of them come over here they say they don't like this, they don't like that and they don't as a matter of fact they don't like nothing about America, you know, but still they come over and that that makes me a little bit mad about it.

Interviewer: O.K. Let's say you get off the subject of America. Let's talk about the subject of family, the subject of religion and the subject of finance, money. Do you think your ideas are still in agreement with theirs?

Interviewee: I, I doubt it, I doubt it very much.

Interviewer: Would you tend to go more towards do you who would do you think would be more conservative in the idea of family? You or the person who's just come over from Italy?

Interviewee: Well, if you talk about myself personally.

Interviewer: You, personally.
Interviewee: Personally, I believe that I am.
Interviewer: O.K.
Interviewee: Because things have changed over there quite a bit.
Interviewer: You think they've modernized?
Interviewee: Oh, yes, yes.
Interviewer: What about the ideas of religion? Do you think?
Interviewee: Religion? Oh, well, religion it's over there it's well, religion today everywhere I guess it's
Interviewer: It's coming down?
Interviewee: It's coming down, it's coming down but over there it's been down for a long time. It's been down, see over there you have to separate the men from the women.
Interviewer: Yeah. Even now?
Interviewee: The women even now to a certain extent even now because I was over there last year took a little trip after 22 years and the women are still the ones as a matter of fact I give you a little incident that we got a telephone call from Brazil while I was there. One of my cousins died and I was over his brother's house. Now on a Sunday so we all went to mass and my cousin especially he don't want to come. He says I don't believe in that stuff he says what the heck am I gonna go giving money to the priest for all that stuff, you know. I says yeah, but this is different. This is your brother, it's my cousin let's go to church. Well, he came but his son, his grandson they don't want to go but all the women went. And I noticed in the church who was in the church. There was about us, me and my cousin and another two men.
Interviewer: And the rest were women?

Interviewee: The rest were women.

Interviewer: O.K. Let me switch the tape here.

O.K. I think we can pick up, I think it's alright now. So go on.

Interviewee: So, the subject of religion, I believe it's still mostly with women in Italy. That is, in the part where I come from. In northern Italy I got relatives over there, too but we never, we never really talked about religion when I was there that I remember, so I really, I really couldn't tell you actually the subject of religion in Italy today. I really don't know what but what I could see in that town where I was in was it's mostly women that go to church.

Interviewer: O.K. Do you know what the Federal Hill House is?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: O.K. Do you know what purpose it serves?

Interviewee: Well, I think the main purpose, I'm not that familiar with it, but the main purpose I think it serves is to help Italians in any way they can, I imagine. I imagine they have classes over there for to learn Italian, I mean English. I think they have organization I guess to help a lot of ways, wasn't one way.

Interviewer: Do you think this would have been helpful to you when you first came?

Interviewee: Oh, yes, sure, sure.

Interviewer: How much schooling did you have in Italy?

Interviewee: I went to school in Italy as when I was up to 18 years old. No up to 18 I came this country. Almost 18, yes, 17

Interviewer: So you think it's equivalent to finishing high school?
Interviewee: Well, see I don't know how the heck but no I don't think so. Maybe junior high school.

Interviewer: Oh, O.K. What did you study a particular subject or was it more or less everybody studied that subjects you studied?

Interviewee: Well, the what the heck would you call it, the medium, medium school over there I went it was a school of agrarian.

Interviewer: Oh, agricultural?

Interviewee: Agricultural school, yes and I graduated that school then you see I say about that my to transfer from one place from one school to another I lost a year and then another Year I was that's why I say up to 18 years I went to school but I wouldn't should've been graduated from high school but I didn't because I lost a couple of years in between and

Interviewer: What do you think of today's schools here in the United States?

Interviewee: Well, I really, I really can't tell you because I never I never went to school.

Interviewer: Well, just tell me whaz you know about them, what other people have told you.

Interviewee: Well, what other people see my brother went to school went to school being my nephew you talk about it naturally, I think this is the best the best way to teach to teach kids.

Interviewer: What's the do you think is different?

Interviewee: Well, the difference I as I remember the school I attended in Italy everything you had to memorize especially especially poetry. You had to learn more poetry by heart than anything else. And I remember couple of teachers especially even in science they would they would so he would , I mean we would
have to memorize notes that the teacher would give us. More than let's say you learn the, you know, the subject what it says what but he would want us to learn by memory that I didn't like I didn't I like better what they do over here.

Interviewer: O.K. How do you think the American schools here help help Italians, let's say, the Italian community as a whole? Do you think they help us? Do you think they hurt the Italian community by making it less Italian or more Italian or?

Interviewee: Well, I

Interviewer: Or have you ever even considered?

Interviewee: No, because never considered because we are in this country as Americans of Italian descent, I mean if you mean to say to teach more Italian subjects or .

Interviewer: Well, I know that in many grammar schools they teach Italian as the foreign language.

Interviewee: Oh!

Interviewer: Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing?

Interviewee: Well, I think it's a good thing to learn any language any kind of language. Course, I would rather see I would rather see teach Italian naturally because being Italian and.

Interviewer: Would you like to see more Italian?

Interviewee: I would like to see more.

Interviewer: Like Italian culture?

Interviewee: Sure, oh, yes. Yes, I would like to see more after all we
got great a great history.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know. I know. How do you think they fail? Do they fail in any in any respects that way? Are they doing yeah, do you think they're doing enough or do you think they're doing enough or not enough or?

Interviewee: Well, if you consider only the Italians they're not doing enough.

Interviewer: I'm thinking about our group, your group, the Italians.

Interviewee: Oh, just the Italians. Well, naturally, no. They're not doing enough just for us, no. But then you consider that we got other cultures in this country. They have to satisfy them, too.

Interviewer: Yeah. What would you say if you know let's say the Silver Lake area we have the Saint Bartholomew school. Do you think they should do more than what they're doing? Because almost every child in there is is Italian.

Interviewee: Is Italian, right, yeah. Well, I imagine, I imagine that probably see I don't know exactly how much Italian they do.

Interviewer: Well, they teach you Italian language.

Interviewee: Italian language, yeah.

Interviewer: Very little of the culture.

Interviewee: Very little? We..., then they should teach more of the culture I think because I know, I know other other cultures they do I think they even have special school for kids in certain certain part of the country, naturally other cultures that would just teach their culture.
Interviewer: Do you or do people in your family have any trouble with American schools? Those that have been educated by American schools?

Interviewee: I don't think so, no. The only, the only one that had anything to do with school in my family was my brother which he didn't attend too much anyway to think couple of years maybe.

Interviewer: How did the children treat him? Because he was pretty much an immigrant, too.

Interviewee: Right. Well, see that that comes to what I said before, once before that who would who would treat him better was not Italian, it wasn't you know they're not Italian. The Italians should kid him, would make fun of him more than you know than non-Italians and then it was disturbing to me for.

Interviewer: How were the teachers?

Interviewee: The teachers?

Interviewer: Towards

Interviewee: Towards him? We... the teachers I think they tried to help him they tried to help him especially therr was one teacher that I think he was put into the room with her. She used to teach Italian and she used to teach Latin and languages I think she used to zeach that's waht she. And he used to be with her all the time. And she treat him very good.

Interviewer: How important is school to you, schooling and education?

Interviewee: Very, very, very important. I mean.

Interviewer: Let's say you had a child. How far would you push him or her not push but encourage him?
Interviewee: I would encourage him to go as far as he could. I mean I wouldn't push him if he wasn't capable or she wasn't capable. But if it was capable to go to high school, to college, to medical school, whatever, I would push him. I would not push him, I would encourage him to go.

Interviewer: Why? What do you think that all this education will help him with?

Interviewee: Will help him, well?

Interviewer: Do you think it'll, you know, first of all you must think it's beneficial to him because you'd want him to do it.

Interviewee: Course, just, just knowledge of a person that acquires it's important even though he doesn't let's say goes to college doesn't land a job that he went to college for but just the knowledge they acquired is enough.

Interviewer: O.K. What kind of well we know you didn't really work in Italy

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Can't really say you worked. What do you do now?

Interviewee: Right now, I am, I work for the United States Postal Service and I am a letter carrier.

Interviewer: What did you do when you first came?

Interviewee: When I first came, the first job I had was washing dishes, right. Course it lasted only one night 'cause they didn't call me back no more I don't know why probably didn't no. That was a club that was the country club in Warwick that probably needed somebody and the person that hired me was the son of the lady that we were boarding with that's why he was the manager of the place he says I need somebody
tonight if you wanna come so

Interviewer: What was the first sort of steady job?

Interviewee: Oh, steady job that I had was laborer.

Interviewer: Laborer?

Interviewee: Laborer.

Interviewer: What kind of work?

Interviewee: Construction.

Interviewer: Oh, O.K. The next well the way your family is set up, you're single.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Right. We're gonna ask you questions about how a woman's place should be. First of all do you think a woman should go to work? If yes, tell us under what conditions. If no, tell us why.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: And if it would apply to bad conditions.

Interviewee: I would say, you mean, you talking about women in general or if it was my wife or?

Interviewer: Alright, let's say your wife.

Interviewee: My wife. If I had a wife for what, I would like to see my wife go to work if I was not in a position to provide a fair living.

Interviewer: Let's say you could provide a the basic things but let's say you couldn't afford a car.

Interviewee: Right, well, yes.

Interviewer: Would you want her to go to work?
Interviewee: Then probably I would consent for her to go to work, yes. But if I could afford the car, I could afford the house and I would rather see the woman stay home not, not go to work.

Interviewer: What would she do when she stayed home? I mean, what would you expect of her at home?

Interviewee: I expect just to keep the house.

Interviewer: Not to raise a family, I mean?

Interviewee: Oh, yes, raise a family.

Interviewer: You would have children?

Interviewee: Oh, yes, of course, yes.

Interviewer: What about, let's say this your wife got up and said you know I want to go to work in the beginning. But then things got better for you and you can support her but she was building a career. Let's say she was making dresses. And all of a sudden she's got a good business on her hands. Would you, would you say to her stop I want you to stay home or would you say it's your career you do what you want to do?

Interviewee: It's a very interesting question. I, I'll be very frank with you, I don't know what I would do because I never been married so I don't know what. I'd probably, I'd probably quit my job and go with her and

Interviewer: Your business?

Interviewee: In business, sure.

Interviewer: And both of you would work?

Interviewee: Probably.
Interviewer: What do you think about women having a career in general?

Interviewee: Well, I think that today fine. I mean, what the heck, that's what they want if they want, want to have a career, if they can keep their husband satisfied and keep, somebody's gotta keep a house. I don't know who the heck would keep the house. Then probably the man has to keep the house. I don't know see, I don't, I mean, I wouldn't like personally, I wouldn't like it, I would not like it.

Interviewer: O.K. Let's say your wife is working. Would you help with the housework? I mean, if she was working.

Interviewee: If she was working, yes, if she was working, of course, yes.

Interviewer: Do you think you'd get 50% of the housework?

Interviewee: I don't know about 50%.

Interviewer: you know mostly this is mostly your job and you're going to work because you want to so you should do 75%, I'll do a quarter.

Interviewee: I probably, I probably would have to keep the outside like if you have a house you probably keep the outside and do most, most of the heavy work and but gee, I don't, I really, see, I never been so I don't know actually what.

Interviewer: What's, do you see any differences between men and women's work? Do you think that a woman could do man's work?

Interviewee: Certain, certain jobs, yes.

Interviewer: I mean around the house?

Interviewee: Around the house? Oh, yes. I mean, I've seen women mow the lawn and I know lot of women who would not do that. So that's really a question you have to go through in order to
answer truthfully, you know.

Interviewer: In your opinion, where do the children of Italian background, Italian ethic learn, learn a trade? Let's say they're not gonna go to college but let's say do you think they go work with their fathers and learn what their fathers do or do they pick out a trade that they want and they just work their way into the business that way? In your experience?

Interviewee: My experience, if you go back a few years, quite a few years, I would say that a good majority probably would go in with their fathers but not today. I've seen a lot of kids they don't, they don't want, want nothing to do with the father's business. They don't like it and they don't want to do it.

Interviewer: Why? Why do you think that?

Interviewee: Why? Because they're more liberal I think they're more freer today than they were before.

Interviewer: Or is it that they want to be free?

Interviewee: They want to be free probably. You never probably it's that.

Interviewer: I mean, you figure if he's gonna work with his father he's got to listen to everything he says.

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: He can't say

Interviewee: That's probably

Interviewer: This heck with you, I quit.

Interviewee: Sure, but that's that's a lot of them probably they just wanna or either they cannot make it outside they probably know
they cannot make it by themselves in some other trade, in some other business. They probably stick with their fathers.

Interviewer: Oh, O.K. well, that leads right into the next thing. Where you know as well as I do that in the working world you can't be totally honest. You know, if you go around telling people that you don't like that, you don't like 'em or you know say you're fed up that day you don't feel like putting out 100% effort in your job you don't just come out and tell your boss I don't feel like working too much today. Where does a where does a child learn how to, you know, what to say in front of theri boss what not to say to fellow-workers, you know because you might get in troublSB? How does he learn, where does he learn it? Is it?

Interviewee: Today, I don't know. See, today I don't know what the heck these kids because they they got something in their mind, they tell you.

Interviewer: Where did they learn it years ago?

Interviewee: Where did we learn? We learn from our parents. We learn from our relatives, we learn from our from the el-erly people and. But today seems that they going with their own mind as soon as they're born.

Interviewer: Right now, what do you, what do you do in your life for enjoyment, recreation when you're not working, when you don't have to do things around the house, you have free time?

Interviewee: Well, I really don't have too much to do. I got my mother which is close to 90 and in the house is just her and I. A lot of times just not to leave her alone, I don't go anywhere.
I mean, I take vacations.

Interviewer: Where do you go on these vacations?

Interviewee: Well, usually go down Florida or either Brazil. I went to Italy last year.

Interviewer: So you travel more or less?

Interviewee: Oh, I travel. I like to travel, yes. Instead of spending money let's say go to a bar which I don't drink I either

Interviewer: Movies?

Interviewee: Movies I go once in awhile now but that that what it takes now to go to a movie it would take time at night which I would have to leave my mother alone because I got my brother my and my nephew, my niece I could ask to stay but when I feel like maybe they can't stay, you know, so I would rather go let's say one month a year just go and.

Interviewer: What kind of well, are you friends now mostly American or mostly Italians? I mean, now when I say Italians not just from Italy Italians, but people who were basically

Interviewee: Who were born over there?

Interviewer: Traditional and

Interviewee: Well, I imagine that most of I mean my friends are Italians, mostly but I mean I got lot of specially at work I work with lotta different nationalities.

Interviewer: Do you make , do you have a lot of friends who are not Italians?

Interviewee: Yes. Oh, yes.

Interviewer: Do you spend most of your time with the family or with your friends 'cause you're single?

Interviewee: Mostly, mostly with my family my family.
Interviewer: In your opinion, has the way parents raise their children changed has the attitude that a father would have for a son and a son for a father changed throughout the years?

Interviewee: I believe so.

Interviewer: The Italians now

Interviewee: I believe so.

Interviewer: You think so?

Interviewee: Sure.

Interviewer: Is that pretty much everywhere even in?

Interviewee: Pretty much, even in Italy. Oh, yes.

Interviewer: Yeah, So it's a matter of times?

Interviewee: Oh, yes, the times, now it's not, the times have changed, have changed everywhere.

Interviewer: And how have they changed?

Interviewee: How have they changed? I, I don't think that that the family is not close together the way it used to be. The family today I think they get married and they're more, they're more independent. The children today are more independent from their fathers and mothers than they used to be for the simple reason that there's more jobs there's more money around and they don't depend too much on the mother and father the way they used to.

Interviewer: Do you think it's an economic thing?

Interviewee: It's economic absolutely, oh, yes.

Interviewer: What about education? Can you, can you conceive of a well-educated son married being just as close with the family as years ago because he doesn't have a job? Or do you think
that because of that good job it tears him away it gives him so much other responsibility?

Interviewer: he's got more responsibility on the outside, too.

Interviewee: But can you see a well-educated person staying close to his family like that? O.K. We're past that one now. Let's see. O.K. We're on religion. Do you go to church?

Interviewee: Not too often.

Interviewer: Why, I mean?

Interviewee: Why?

Interviewer: Let's distinguish right now the difference between church and religion.

Interviewee: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: O.K. Religion is your beliefs and church is the formal institution that will guide you, you know.

Interviewee: Yeah, it's the guidance that I don't care too much for it.

Interviewer: But you are religious?

Interviewee: I am religious, I believe in God of course. Oh, yes.

Interviewer: Which church would you go to if you know when you do attend?

Interviewee: Oh, I'm a Catholic, naturally.

Interviewer: Yeah, any particular church?

Interviewee: Yes, St. Bart, St. Bartholomew's, yes.

Interviewer: Why, why that church?

Interviewee: Well, because it's well, we live right next to it almost.

Interviewer: Oh, O.K. Just because it's close?

Interviewee: It's close, naturally, sure, yeah.

Interviewer: You consider yourself more an American now than an Italian?
Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: You have returned to Italy though two years ago did you say?

Interviewee: No, last year.

Interviewer: Oh, last year. How did you feel when you went to Italy and you were back there? What were the feelings?

Interviewee: The feelings was very oh, gee I wish I could explain it.

Interviewer: Well, first of all did it change?

Interviewee: Oh, Italy has changed boy I was, as I said, I said it before I was away 22 years, I never went back since 1955. It has changed that the old neighborhoods where I was brought up, the people naturally lot of them are gone unfortunately. They're gone, the old people are gone and the ones that you know they have they remember you, you tell them who you are maybe they'll remember by the face because it's been 22 years and they're glad to see you. But then they have their sons and their daughters which they don't know you, you feel kind of strange. It's it's another feeling. I don't know it's not like when I went 22 years ago. Most of the people I saw they they knew me or they heard of me.

Interviewer: Well, did they have the same respect for you that the people 22 years would have had or have they changed a lot also?

Interviewee: Well, they have changed in their ways too, you know, they their economic

Interviewer: Level?

Interviewee: Level has changed. Most of the people, they don't care for Americans.

Interviewer: They consider you an American?
They consider well, sure they say hey, here comes the American, you know, they don't say there comes the P

Interviewer: You speak Italian right?

Interviewee: I speak Italian.

Interviewer: Do you speak Italian in your home?

Interviewee: Oh, yes. All the time, sure.

Interviewer: So even though you're completely Italian by American standards in Italy you're an American?

Interviewee: Yeah, I'm an American in Italy, of course.

Interviewer: How have you changed I mean what would make them call you an American? In even in your own mind how have you changed by living in America 22 years?

Interviewee: Well, gee that's me I mean I can adjust you know, I can adjust to both things now. I can go over there be an Italian forcing myself I can be I can be what they are. I mean I know what they are but what

Interviewer: Their views?

Interviewee: Their views I can ignore'em because the views they have I really don't don't care for, most of them. But I mean I can ignore 'em because I know they're not exactly true what they say is the truth. But everyday it's the everyday things that has changed too, to them. Laws are different for instance. I mean what bothered me most over there was a certain day of the week one afternoon he can't go to a store & buy something.

Interviewer: was the Italian setting. You couldn't adjust to little Italian lifestyle?
Interviewee: Maybe after after awhile you could adjust to that but, you know, right away you know, you don't if you're not over there for awhile, you know, you don't know you don't think of it as let's say a Thursday afternoon everything is closed. And you wanna go buy a loaf of bread or something like that. Well, you can't do it because the stores are closed, always closed.

Interviewer: O.K. Well, then talking about the Italian things you would have to adjust to, what things in America do you like the best?

Interviewee: Gee, I don't know, it's the the economic structure is what I like. It's

Interviewer: You think an individual can get ahead better here?

Interviewee: Oh, yes. Oh, absolutely, absolutely, I mean in general I'm not talking about certain people over there they get ahead too. But I mean in general they got a better chance in this country than you have over there.

Interviewer: O.K. What do you think in this country is the you like the least?

Interviewee: Like the least? I don't know, it's, I can't think of nothing I mean that. I mean, compared to, I don't like lot of things.

Interviewer: Just name one, then.

Interviewee: Oh. Don't like lot of things, I don't like lot of laws that in this country but they're much better than the others.

Interviewer: So in comparison, they're better but

Interviewee: They're better but

Interviewer: You think they could be better?

Interviewee: Oh, absolutely everything. There's, sure, there's can be an improvement. Could be an improvement in law. I would
like to see more respect. Go back to the old they have respect more for elderly people, for instance.

Interviewer: O.K. Alright.

Interviewee: I would like to see more laws and these break-ins that you have in the neighborhood.

Interviewer: More strict you mean?

Interviewee: More strict, more, for instance they catch some kids, they what they do they don't do nothing and

Interviewer: Yeah. If you had it all over to do again when you were first coming back, coming to America would you like to have lived in Federal Hill, I mean started living there nor would you still?

Interviewee: Oh, sure.

Interviewer: Like to have gone to?

Interviewee: No, I would've I would've rather lived in Federal Hill, naturally. If for no other reason if for the language for the language, if to live in the community where there's a lot of people not in a not in the Warwick Neck we were living.

Interviewer: Isolated?

Interviewee: Isolated actually. We were isolated to tell you the truth.

Interviewer: What do you think Federal Hill's future is going, is like? Do you think it's got a good one?

Interviewee: Well, I think it has a good future now that with this urban renewal.

Interviewer: Well, that's economic. Do you think it's going to help or hinder the Italian culture there?

Interviewee: Oh, the Italian culture that's
Interviewer: No, no the first question you answered it fine. But now about the culture.

Interviewee: Oh, the culture.

Interviewer: Will it, will it survive the economic?

Interviewee: The economic structure of the old Federal Hill, you mean?

Interviewer: Will it survive it, do you think?

Interviewee: Gee, I don't know.

Interviewer: Be better, worse or go down?

Interviewee: Gee, I wish I knew that but I know will will benefit more. The people come from the old country let's say now after everything's finished the way the plan has been explained to use and the thing that outside cafes they're gonna have all this. I think well, I think it would be more helpful to the Italians who understand us poor more than they did before because actually that's where the Italians who come over here they don't they seem to be lost for the simple reason that they don't have places to go like they have in the old country. They go to a cafe in the old country, right, cafes are outside in the summer you stay outside and you have a cup of coffee and you meet all your friends and you talk about football, you talk about religion, politics or whatever. Over here you don't have places lied that unless you join a club some kind of a social club but I don't know if they have anything like this over here or on Federal Hill. I don't know.

Interviewer: So you think it might actually be better?

Interviewee: It might. It might be better for the for the well, matter
of fact, for the whole community will be better. Well, naturally, it will be something new, I mean I don't think I if they go through with what I heard they’re gonna go through, it's gonna be much better.

Interviewer: 0.K. Thank you.

Interviewee: That's it? Oh, thank you.