

THE HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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TAPE 2, SIDE 1

PS: We're here with Marie Totaro, and she's going to give us a little background why one of her grandfathers chose to come to Hoboken -- and she'll tell us which grandfather this is.

MT: Yes. This is the maternal grandfather -- Joseph Macaluso. The grandmother -- I think I already said it before but I'll say it again -- is Lucy, or Lucia Macaluso. Her maiden name was Gallini. Do you know what that means, gallini?

PS: No.

MT: Chicken.

All right. Now Joseph, as I said in the last interview -- from Italy, they came to New York and married. But I don't think my grandfather wanted to stay in New York, so he went on the ferry and he took a trip over here, to Hoboken. He cased everything, he looked, and he went down to Jackson Street. Now going down Jackson Street, he thought he was going on a "farm," because from Fifth to Sixth Streets was the "lots." We called it "the lots." It was empty space but not flat, like a playground (we thought it was a playground). So he saw this, and he saw all goats. He went back to my grandmother and he said, "Oh, Lucia, this place is beautiful! Oh, let's go there with Fannie." That's my mother, whose name was Alfonsina, and a Jewish woman named her Fannie.

PS: And she went by Fannie.

MT: F-a-n-n-i-e -- named by a Jewish woman. Because my grandmother, as I said before, was a dressmaker and my grandfather a tailor, so she was one of the neighbors. I don't know whether my grandfather made suits for her husband -- because he used to make suits for the men, big, heavy men, who couldn't buy suits.

Okay. Now he says, "All right, Lucia, I want to show you this place. It's beautiful." So Grandfather Joseph showed Grandmother Lucia the area, and they just loved it. So they took their three-year-old daughter, and that's how that began. Then *he* bought goats. He bought goats, and he used to bring them to graze up on the hill.

PS: Well, where would he keep his goats?

MT: In the yard.

PS: In the backyard of --

MT: Oh, yeah! That's where everyone -- that's where they had their goat. That's where they would milk the goats. My mother was telling me this. And she would tell me, "I would never drink that milk," and, oh, they used to get so annoyed with her. "Oh," she said, "it was terrible. I'd see all those hairs!"

Anyway, they loved it. They loved it, and that's the part I wanted to add on to why they settled in Hoboken.

PS: That's great. Okay.

MT: All right. I wanted to tell you about Grandma Lucy. She loved to sing. She would be the greatest whistler. My grandfather, when they went to parties or weddings, he would say to her, "Lucia, 'canta, canta.'" That means "Sing." I thought I'd like to tell you that little bit about Lucia.

Now I'll tell you a little bit about Grandma Marie. I already did, in the other interview, but I'd like to tell you that she made wine.

PS: One quick thing -- this was Marie --

MT: -- Luongo. Her maiden name was Lisa.

Now she made wine. Well, her candy and grocery store was in a basement, a lower-level, and I would say not in the yard, in the cellar, in the cellar, that's where she would make the wine. Well, she wouldn't, naturally, make it. It was my father who would make it. But I remember those huge barrels, huge, and I especially remember the press. The press, you had to put a large rod into it --

PS: There was like a hole in it.

MT: Yes. And you would have to go back and forth, and back and forth. It was pretty difficult. I was maybe eight years old, and she used to say to me, "Maria, Maria, come, come. You try." "Oh, Ma!" I used to call her Ma. "I can't. I can't." But I used to try. And she *sold* this wine.

PS: Who did she sell it to?

MT: Anybody who wanted to buy it. I remember her -- the men used to come into the candy store-grocery store, and in the middle room there was [storage and wine] (we called it a middle room), and then the other room was a kitchen. She lived upstairs -- her bedroom, her apartment. But she used to charge, I think, like fifteen cents [a glass.]

PS: This is strict Prohibition, right?

MT: Ah, that's what I'm thinking. It had to be. Because it had to be in the '30s. It had to be in the '30s. So that was really Prohibition. She could have

gotten my father in trouble, but she was selling it anyway.

Now my grandmother made sure every *drop* of juice came out of that press. I told you about the little rod. She would have gotten juice out of the vine if she could have. I mean it. But her wine was delicious. She'd sell it by the glass or the gallon, and like you said, maybe --

PS: Now would somebody bring their own gallon to be filled?

MT: No. She had the gallons all ready. And she made the red wine, and she made the white wine -- "marsala."

PS: Now where would she get the grapes from?

MT: From the market. I remember them coming in, in September -- oh, crates and crates of different grapes, because that's what made the different wine -- the zinfandel grape, and the muscatel grape, for the white wine. That's as much as I remember about that.

PS: And how long did she do this for?

MT: As long as I can remember.

PS: So as long as she was alive, you
remember her making --

MT: Yes -- making the wine. Because then I
guess it became legal.

PS: Tell me about your brother's name.

MT: My brother's name is Thomas Luongo.
His nickname is Tippy. I would say 90% of people call him
Tippy (I don't think anyone calls him Tommy), and there
are a few who call him "Brother." I call him "Brother,"
and my children, my girls call him Uncle Brother. Now
the one who named him Tippy was a black man who used to
come into my grandmother's store. He used to go to
different places, and there were toys in these stores
they didn't want. He used to bring them to us, my brother
and myself. With me he would -- now this is really --
maybe I was three, but I remember him. I remember his

face. He would always hold me and sing to me, "Sweet Marie, I love thee." And my brother, he said, "I'm calling you Tippy." And that's the way he got his name.

PS: Nickname.

MT: Now years ago -- we weren't prejudiced at all. I mean, he was a pretty big black man, and my mother allowed him to hold me. It was like nothing, and that's how it should be in this world.

PS: Do you remember -- in the store, were there a lot of African-American customers? Or is he the only one who stands out?

MT: No. No, the black people were on First Street.

PS: Okay. Just like the Italians were in the back.

MT: We were on Jackson. They were on Jackson, maybe, too, but all the way down. All the way down. They kept to themselves, and they didn't bother us.

But with the lots across the street, we -- like I told you before, the playground, we thought -- I remember two bums. I remember their names, because we knew them. They didn't bother us. One was Freddie the Bum.

PS: Freddie the Bum. That's what he was called.

MT: Yeah. And the other one was George, but I don't know -- and I remember, years later, Freddie -- when we saw Freddie, Freddie used to like to drink -- he had one arm. Because it was severed on the tracks -- the train. I don't think he felt it because he was always so drunk. That came to me, so I thought I'd tell you that.

As far as the trains, I loved the sound. It didn't bother us at all. I loved that klack and the whistle blowing --

PS: Now were the trains were the
[unclear]?

MT: Yes!!

PS: Nothing in the back, like the "light rail," now.

MT: Oh, no. Not the "light rail."

PS: But you're talking about the ones that came through Jersey City out to the ferry terminal. The trains you're talking about; they were the ones going to the terminal?

MT: I don't know, really, where they were going. They were freight trains.

PS: Could you see them from where you lived?

MT: Of course! See them! We had that open space. From Fifth to Sixth Street was all open.

PS: Between Jackson and --

MT: Yes, we had that. No. It started at Fifth, then it went down to, I think, where Hoboken Auto-

body, where all the [wrecked] cars [were] -- remember that?

PS: Yes.

MT: Well, it went as far as that. Because on Seventh Street is where the dumps were, where they dumped all the garbage. Years and years ago the garbage was drawn by horses.

PS: So you remember horses drawing garbage down to --

MT: It's very, very, very vague -- very vague -- because I mostly remember the garbage *trucks*. But I know there were horses, because my brother told me, he says the boys used to hook up -- when it snowed, they'd hook up their sleighs onto the garbage truck, and the horses used to take them for a ride! Yeah!

PS: In the summer, could you smell the garbage from where you lived?

MT: Yeah!

PS: Was that annoying?

MT: We got used to it.

PS: And what was the garbage dump? Seventh
to what?

MT: It wasn't that -- it was maybe Seventh
Street -- maybe they dumped half a block, maybe, of
garbage? We thought we were in the country. We were in
the dumps!

PS: You were in the dumps! Yeah.

MT: But it was really, really wonderful.
Honestly.

PS: Okay. So we were talking about your
brother.

MT: My brother. I told you about his three
discharges, from the Army, Navy, and Marines. But I
didn't tell you that when he was younger, he played the

bugle in the St. Ann's band. And as a teenager, he played clarinet and saxophone. When he went into the Marines, I believe -- or was it the Army? -- he played the bugle again, and he played reveille and taps. I thought I would like to add that. They'll pick up what was young, what was old, how I'm going all over.

Getting back to the goats. The boys used to play cowboys and Indians -- cowboys. My brother, he lassoed a goat. He was little. He was maybe about nine years old, or ten, and the goat was too big for him so it knocked him down. Now the goat is running back to where -- we didn't have that many goats at that time. That was my grandfather's time. But there was this woman who had goats, and she would milk them. I don't know what she did -- if she sold the milk, or whatever. That woman came out, screaming, when she saw the rope around the goat's neck. She said, "Oh, somebody is trying to milk my goat!" But I thought that was pretty funny. And [the boys] used to ride the goats.

The neighbors in the neighborhood used to build shacks in this lot. In fact, my father used to leave all his pipes out there. That [lot] was storage for people. Nobody ever took anything, and the boys built clubhouses. Even us girls tried to build a girls' house,

for us. So it really was our playground. It was really nice for us -- building the shacks, and doing all those things. My dad even made a "bocce" alley, in the lots across the street. And the men, that was their recreation there.

I guess that's about it, about the lots.

PS: Did you dad belong to any social clubs, like those Italian [unclear] clubs?

MT: I believe he belonged to "Unico," and he belonged to, I think, the St. Ann's bowling team. But my dad was a worker. I told you that before. That was his passion -- helping, helping, helping. He was a plumber, and I remember like 3:00 in the morning -- he was a doctor, really. Three in the morning I remember this woman coming, "Tommy, Tommy, please, please. The pipes are all broken." He dressed right away, like a doctor would, and he'd go take care of -- he was really a remarkable, remarkable man.

The lots -- when it snowed, that lot was so picturesque. Dumps or whatever, it was just a blanket of white with the hill as a backdrop. That was Jersey

City. Then we had the Hundred Steps. You've heard of them.

PS: I've heard of the Hundred Steps.

MT: The Hundred Steps -- you would go to Union City [interruption] -- Did I tell you about the Hundred Steps?

PS: You said something about going to Union City.

MT: Oh, yes. You'd go to Union City and Jersey City. I remember [walking up] those steps with my mother, and we would go to the monastery. We'd go to a novena there, and I remember walking all that way. People, they'd go shopping. They'd go to Central Avenue; they'd use the Hundred Steps. When we wanted to go to Journal Square, we'd take the trestle.

PS: I have some pictures of it.

MT: We'd take the trestle, and we'd go to the movies there. That's when I was older, like when I

was with my girlfriends. But with my mother, I used to take that trestle, too, and we'd go to Journal Square. That's where I used to buy my clothes and shoes. We used to shop there.

PS: Did you shop in Jersey City more than you shopped in Hoboken?

MT: For clothes? Yes. Uh huh. We rarely shopped in New York. When I was younger, we shopped on 14th Street.

PS: In New York.

MT: In New York. Ohrbach's or -- what was the other store? Macy's.

PS: Alexander's.

MT: No. We never went there. When I got older, I remember going to Saks and Bloomingdale's, and those higher [end] shops. But going to high school, I used to shop here. The dress shop was Mary Oliver, and I

used to shop there. My mother used to buy [me] lots of dresses.

PS: That's here in Hoboken?

MT: Yes. That was on Third Street.

PS: Mary Oliver?

MT: Yeah. Mary Oliver.

PS: Why would your mother go all the way up to Union City for a novena? Why not one of the churches in Hoboken?

MT: Because they had a novena to St. Gabriel, and he was her patron saint. And it was a beautiful church. But I made the novenas here, St. Anthony's novena. We'll get to that later.

PS: Okay. You mentioned to me on the phone that the peddlers in your area -- they weren't allowed to go up --

MT: Yes. That's what I'm going to talk about now.

PS: Number #8 School.

MT: Number #8 School. Then it was called Sadie Leinkauf -- I don't know if I'm pronouncing it correctly -- which is now the Citadel, on Seventh -- it's on Seventh Street between Jefferson and Adams Street. That's where the school --

PS: Second or Seventh?

MT: Seventh. Seventh.

PS: Seventh, between Jefferson and Adams.

MT: Yeah. It's no longer a school, like you know. It's a condo, and it's called the Citadel.

I told you how I didn't want to go to school. We did that.

PS: Yes. We did that.

MT: I went to the sixth grade, No. #8 School up to the sixth grade, at Joseph F. Brandt. We did that.

PS: Right. And that was Joseph F. Brandt, after --

MT: -- after Sadie.

PS: -- from sixth grade to --

MT: -- ninth. No, from the seventh to the ninth. You graduated the sixth grade. So then you went into the seventh to the ninth grade. Then I went to Demarest, and then I was -- do you want to take this now, about --?

PS: Yes.

MT: All right. And then we'll go back again.

Well, I was fashion editor of the school paper. I was also in our school play (*Dear Ruth*). I played the mother, and it was a great hit.

PS: What year was that? You were there from ten through twelve. So do you remember what year?

MT: Wait -- 1948, I [graduated.]

PS: So what year would that be in school?

MT: [Nineteen-forty-five to] forty-eight!

PS: No, no, I mean the school year -- junior year, senior year -- ?

MT: Oh, senior. Senior year. Senior year was the senior play.

PS: Oh. It was the senior play.

MT: It figures, being the mother -- because my sun sign is Cancer. And when you're a Cancer, it's all family -- very nurturing and creative, decorative. I like to decorate, and I do have feelings. Like I can pick up on someone's feelings, when they're not feeling too great. I really could talk to them, and

try to help them. It worked [unclear]. I was also selected best-dresser.

That's about it. What else did I do?

[Interruption]

PS: But you were always interested in fashion, because you were fashion editor.

MT: Always. Yes. Always interested in fashion, and in show business. We'll see, as we go further on, where that would lead to -- because I portrayed Mae West.

PS: Oh, right -- in that program you showed me. Yes, you showed me the pictures. Yes, we'll get to that. Okay. [Interruption]

Living downtown.

MT: Yes. The advantages of living downtown were, we were allowed to have the peddlers -- you know, with the fruits and vegetables. We had a tripe man.

PS: Now were they in carriages, with horses? Were they in trucks?

MT: The peddlers, I remember -- his name was Frank. He started with horses, then later on, I believe, he had a truck, not just the wagon. I remember him. Then there was another peddler, Sam. He had the finer fruits and vegetables. He's the one who had the bananas. You remember that story.

PS: Right. With your mother always eating them.

MT: Yes. That's it. So we had the tripe man -- Zazzarini. He's the one who sold the tripe and cabazella.

PS: What is that, in English?

MT: Cabazella is a goat's head. We didn't buy that. My mother bought the tripe. He would have like the intestines of animals, but all my mother bought was the tripe -- which was very good. Cabazella. I think it was the head of a goat. It would be cut in half --

PS: Right down the skull --

MT: -- and then the brains. Ich! Never.
Never, never, never.

PS: Did that smell, the tripe?

MT: Barbaric?

PS: Did it smell?

MT: I don't remember. We never bought it.
Oh, no.

PS: But his cart, when he came around --
was there -- ?

MT: No, there was no smell. Because
everything was on ice. Everything was on ice. He would
just come, and we would -- everything was yelling. Nobody
came ringing bells. So you hear the peddlers.

PS: So he's screaming.

MT: He's screaming.

PS: What's he saying?

MT: [Italian]

PS: Okay.

MT: And then the people would come out,
and go to his truck, and buy.

PS: And could you see into the truck? Or
would you just say, "I want tripe," and he'd go and get
it.

MT: Oh, it was open. The back was open. My
mother used to go down. You'd see everything on ice --
the liver, the kidneys, whatever. I don't know. Ich! I
did like the tripe -- but not my mother, though. She
bought that for my father. He loved it.

PS: Now the word that you used before --
cabazella. I'm gathering you were saying, "Attention,
attention," or something.

MT: What the tripe?

PS: Spell that for me, the Italian version.

MT: Atripa. I don't know if it's correct. I don't know if it's slang. I don't know if it's dialect. It will always be a dialect; it's never going to be the perfect Italian, because who spoke that perfect Italian language? No one. No one on our block, I know. They murdered the language.

PS: Why? Because it was from a district?

MT: Yes! From the town they came from.

PS: Right. My grandmother spoke Sicilian, not Italian.

MT: Oh, Sicilian, you'll never -- you couldn't understand that at all. When my mother's aunt used to come to visit us -- oh! My mother, it was so hard for her to understand her. She'd understand the other dialect better. The other dialect was the San Giacomo,

and that was really slang, too. No, there was no perfect Italian.

Now the other man that used to come -- we had the apple-on-a-stick man, now called jelly-apples. He'd come around. We'd have Charlotte Russe. Oh, that was delicious. Do you know what a Charlotte Russe is?

PS: No, I really don't.

MT: It's a small piece of yellow cake. Then you have about that much whipped cream --

PS: -- and "that much" whipped cream looks like about three inches.

MT: Yes -- and it's in a cup that's shaped like a crown. It was like a crown. The cake's set in, the whipped cream on top, that high - [three inches high] -- and oh, was that delicious.

PS: And was that considered a snack, or would you get that for dessert for the evening, when you bought it?

MT: When the man came around and we wanted it, we'd call our mothers and she'd give us --

PS: So it was kind of like the ice-cream truck coming by.

MT: Yes -- two cents, or whatever it was. You know, everything was --

PS: -- different prices.

MT: -- not like now. We also had John, the hot-dog man. He would have orangeade, fresh orangeade. Nothing else. Oh. So pure. Everything. So pure, and he was so clean. That's what my mother always looked for, because some of them weren't.

PS: And you said that they were only allowed in the "back of town?"

MT: Yes. You didn't have these people uptown --

Charlotte Russe, the apple-on-a-stick. No.

PS: Do you know, by any chance, where they were allowed?

MT: Well, uptown, as far as I know -- uptown was after Willow Avenue.

PS: Okay. So Willow was kind of a dividing --

MT: Yes. That was the dividing -- as far as I know.

What else did we have downtown? Oh. The man who used to come and sharpen our scissors and knives. We had that, too. Let me see. Oh, another man -- a Jewish man. He came from New York, and he used to come with two bundles called "dry goods." Do you know what dry goods are?"

PS: I forget. Why don't you tell me what dry goods are?

MT: Dry goods are sheets, towels -- what else? Dish towels, scarves that they used to use on the mantel pieces or the dining-room table -- wherever. I

think he even had underwear, like men's underwear. Now he came, on his shoulders, two huge bundles -- all these dry goods, wrapped in brown paper with cord. In every home he went he would open that up, and after opening maybe nobody bought. And if they did buy, you would pay him maybe fifty cents a week. I don't think they gave him a dollar a week. But that's what he did.

PS: Like an installment plan.

MT: Yes. Yes. And we had our dry-goods man come too. Say someone was getting married -- their mom would buy them their trousseau, like all the sheets. When the girls got married, your mother brought you enough sheets to last you until your fiftieth anniversary.

PS: No, it's true. I remember my mother [unclear] wedding.

MT: Oh, I still [had] the sheets, but they were flat and I wanted fitted sheets later on. So you get rid of them. But I know so many of my friends, with all of the sheets -- why? What did they think? And the towels!

PS: When you were a kid, the sheets weren't fitted?

MT: No!

PS: How did you keep them secure to the mattress?

MT: You'd do the square -- you know how they put on a sheet in the hospital?

PS: No. So there's a technique to it?

MT: There's a technique to it, yes. I mean, we did it. Then you'd put your top sheet on, and you wouldn't tuck that one. You'd just tuck the bottom sheet, tuck that all in; then your other sheet you would just maybe tuck the bottom, at the foot of the bed, then turn over the top part of the sheet, and that's how we did it.

PS: Okay. Got it.

MT: Now I could tell you about the special stores, if you want me to.

PS: Okay.

MT: We went to Zorn's. We went to Zorn's for coffee. You see --

PS: Where is Zorn's?

MT: First Street.

PS: First and Jackson?

MT: First Street and -- it was a little up further. You see, we had all the stores on First Street. We had many stores on First Street.

PS: Okay. So you had Zorn's.

MT: Zorn's. Where we [bought] our butter? Everything was in a different store. It's not like now, where we go to Shoprite and we buy everything. No. Our coffee, I remember, was Zorn's. Then the butter was in a

huge tub. You would ask for two pounds, a pound, half a pound, and they would cut it right out of this -- it was in this huge, sort of like a barrel.

PS: And the barrel was like horizontal?

MT: This way.

PS: So it was horizontal, and you could see into it.

MT: You would face right into it. And you'd see all the cuts. And you'd buy your butter that way. Your bread, we'd go to Scarpulla's. Scarpulla's. They had the Sicilian bread, so we used that quite a bit -- mostly. The other bread store was Gustozo's. It's "zo" or "so." I'm not sure, honey. This is on Fifth Street. They were both on Fifth Street.

PS: And what does this make?

MT: Bread.

PS: This was regular bread.

MT: No, the Italian. All Italian. This was Italian, and this was Italian.

PS: So Scarpulla's and Garbozo's were both bread stores.

MT: Yes. Then for your meat you would have special places. Everyone had their own -- wherever they wanted to go, their own butcher -- but we used to go to John's.

PS: Where was John's?

MT: John's Meat Market was on Madison Street, maybe Third and Madison, I think. Our cold cuts were from Fiore's. Fiore's is still where Fiore's is, on Adams Street. Cold cuts and mozzarella. The other one, on First Street, was Cilento's. Cilento's First Street. I don't know exactly where, maybe Willow, Clinton -- I don't know.

PS: And what did they sell?

MT: Same thing. Cold cuts and Italian delicacies, both places. Your Italian delicacies.

What else did we have? And if we didn't like what the peddler had, we'd go get our fruit and vegetables at Rosie's. She was on Fifth Street.

PS: Now did your mother do all of her shopping in one day?

MT: No. Maybe one day she would go for her butter and coffee on Third Street, and whatever was on Third Street. Bread, we went everyday. Everyday, bread. Because at mealtime, we always had our bread.

PS: Would she go in the morning, to pick it up?

MT: No, we would do that, my brother and myself. She'd say, "Marie," or "Brother, go to Scarpulla's. Go get the round loaf. Go get the long loaf." Whatever. No, we used to do that. We used to do that. But as far as the other stores, no. Maybe I'd go to the vegetable store, if she needed, maybe -- She'd say,

"Go get me onions, or celery," but she did the main shopping. Now your chickens --

PS: Is this the guy up on Washington Street?

MT: First Street, all the way down -- Joe's Poultry Market. This was a real trip. Now you go into the store, it would smell like hell, there would be all the chickens in the coops. Now what kind of a chicken do you want? Do you want a soup chicken? Do you want an oven? Do you want a capon? And you would select. So my mother would select whichever she wanted --

PS: A live chicken, in the coops.

MT: Oh! Yes!

PS: I've heard this. My dad talked about the one up on Washington Street.

MT: Oh, I don't know about the one on Washington Street.

PS: Same idea. I know where you're going with this. It's really fascinating.

MT: She would select the chicken, he'd send it in the back. They'd usually snap the head, or cut off the head. I don't know what they did, but it was like barbaric! Then, when I used to eat it, I used to think [of] the chicken.

PS: Would you go with your mother?

MT: Yeah, I used to go. She used to take me. When you're a kid, your mother says go, you go.

PS: So you would think of the nice little chicken that was happy and alive, before you got there.

MT: Yes! And then you did the same thing for your turkey -- and that was bigger!

PS: Did he have turkeys at this market?

MT: Yes! They did the same thing! Oh! Oh, my god. Because the first supermarket I can remember was

the A&P on Sixth and Washington Street. Then there was Singer's. That was between Second and Third on Washington Street. The Singer brothers owned it, and, I believe, sold it to the Inserra brothers -- the family, maybe, the Inserra family -- who now owns Shoprite.

PS: Oh. The big one, in the back?

MT: I know it's the Inserras. They own many of them.

Okay. That was the stores. Oh, and then we had --

PS: You talked about meats and Italian delicacies, but would your mother make a pot roast or something like that? And would she go to one of these meat stores?

MT: The butcher. The butcher. That's the butcher -- John!

PS: John the butcher.

MT: That's where she bought her steak, she bought her chopped meat, sausage -- everything. All meat. Veal cutlets.

PS: So John was the butcher; then Fiore's and Cilento's were for delicacies.

MT: Yeah. Italian delicacies. They didn't call it Italian delicacies then -- but to explain it.

PS: Got it.

MT: And on snow days -- you know how we learned there was no school?

PS: No. How did you learn there was no school?

MT: Loudspeakers, throughout the city.

PS: Really? What time would they start broadcasting?

MT: Well, that would be -- what time did we go to school? That would be, maybe, about 8:00 in the morning, 7:30.

PS: So you would wake up, they were predicting snow the day before --

MT: -- and you're hoping, like crazy.

PS: Now what happens? Now it's morning.

MT: Now it's morning, and you're waiting to hear. Then you'll hear, "No school!" Oh, boy! Everybody got dressed and ran out and played in that snow! No, they couldn't go to school. And *then* your snow was like knee-high.

PS: Knee-high to an adult, or knee-high to a child?

MT: Well, I can remember, later -- later, like when I was maybe twelve or thirteen, we still had those snow days. They were knee-deep.

PS: Now if they did have school, and they had school -- would they announce schools in session? Or would they only announce if -- ?

MT: No, only if -- no, if you didn't hear that loudspeaker, honey, your mother's getting you ready, and you're going. Oh, yeah.

And then there was Biggie's.

PS: I've heard of it. Biggie's Clam?

MT: Yes. He would have clams and watermelon slices on a cart, outside on Madison Street, before he had the store. And not everyone had phones, telephones.

PS: That doesn't surprise me.

MT: We didn't have phones. So when someone would call us -- my friends, her parents had a phone. Her father was in business, and I guess -- I don't know -- they needed the phone. So when, say, my family -- my mother would get a call, maybe from her family in New York or whatever -- they would open a window and they

would call out. They called your name. "Fannie! Telephone!" She would go out and go answer the phone, and that was the way to communicate.

PS: How many people was this family taking phone calls for? The neighborhood?

MT: Yes. But who was getting phone calls?

PS: So it was a rare event, when your mother got called.

MT: Yes! It's not like now -- you keep getting calls, calls. Once in a while you'd get a phone call. That was it. This was our way to communicate -- from our windows. If my mother wanted her neighbor -- right? She would open the window and use the broomstick, to bang on *her* window -- because our houses were connected. And her neighbor would do the same thing if she wanted my mother. They'd get the broomstick, and then you'd talk. Yeah. And then what they would used to do was hang out, like look out the window. My mother used to put a pillow on the window sill, and they'd look out the window.

PS: Like for hours, or -- ?

MT: No, just look out the window. I know they looked out the window when they wanted to call us. That was the way -- you would hear names, all different names.

PS: You talked about you were going to go back to that. So how did they call you to come home?

MT: How?

PS: She would just go open the window?

MT: Open the window. All the mothers would open the window. "Come up and eat!"

PS: That reminds me of that commercial from the [unclear].

MT: That's it! Exactly! Exactly! Oh, yeah. And then everybody, all the kids -- we'd just go. We'd be out playing. So when our mothers would call, you didn't

say, "Not now," or, "No." You went. You went. Because dinner, at my house, was at 5:00. Five o'clock was dinner, and we always ate together.

PS: I want to jump ahead to one thing. How old were you when your family got a telephone?

MT: Ah, let's see. I think I was still -- well I was still on Jackson Street, I know. Could it be like twelve, thirteen?

PS: And was this like a big thing in the building?

MT: Oh, of course. To have a telephone? We all started to have telephones on the block.

PS: So your dad gets the phone. Did he get it for business?

MT: Yes.

PS: So you're like, "Oh, woo, woo, we have a phone in the house."

MT: Yes.

PS: So are we like calling people? Or we just have it in the house.

MT: We have it in the house. No. It wasn't the way we are now, with the phone and everything. We were still calling out the window. We were still calling out the window.

Let's see what else we have here.

[Interruption]

-- listen to, on the radio, with my dad.
It was *The Shadow* --

PS: Oh, yes -- "The Shadow knows."

MT: *Gangbusters*. And then we used to listen to *Baby Snooks*.

PS: I've heard of that, yes.

MT: And my mother would always listen to music. She always had, like during the day -- I remember,

I think it used to go on at 11:30 on WNEW, with Martin Block. She'd be humming and singing. That's what I say, it was like -- starting from (and we'll get to it later), how we were all into the music.

Oh, that was a great station. He would play all the swing music, like Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Les Brown, Spike Jones -- all the greats. Benny Goodman, Harry James, Frank Sinatra. Yeah. We used to go to New York to see all the shows.

PS: You talk about what it was like, as a kid, in the winter. What about the summer? My mom grew up in Jersey City, and talks about my grandmother taking --
[Interruption]

MT: Summer in the city? Pretty rough -- because we didn't have any air-conditioning. Some of the people used to even sleep on their fire escapes. Some of the summers used to be brutal. Brutal. The kids opened the fire hydrants. They opened the fire hydrants, and that's how we cooled off. But then we had a friend who had a home in Iselin, Iselin, New Jersey. In the back was a big barrack, like an army barrack, and all along the perimeter of this barrack were all sleeping cots. In the

middle was a huge, huge table -- I never saw a table so long -- with benches, and chairs on the side, and these people were so great, to share this with -- well, with their family and their special friends, like us and a few other. We were like cumas. Do you know what cumas are?

PS: No.

MT: Cumas -- you never heard that expression?

PS: Cumba?

MT: Cuma.

PS: Yeah. And I've heard paisan.

MT: No. Not paisan. It means cumada. You ever heard cumada? But we used to say "cuma" -- c-u-m-a. Now you would become a "cuma," if you baptized my child; or I would, say; sponsor your child; I was your maid-of-honor; he was my best-man -- cuma and a cumpa. Now we had a load of them, and when we went to Iselin, it was Cuma Sarah and Cumpa Nick's summer home. They owned this

barrack. Now in between the barrack was the well, the pump, for water, and over that was all the grape -- what would you call it, an arbor?

PS: Yes, an arbor -- with grape leaves coming out of it.

MT: Yes. Then in front of that was a little house. Now it maybe had two bedrooms in it. This is where all the women and girls slept.

PS: In the house.

MT: In the house. In the barracks were all the men and the boys, and their sons, brothers, whoever. Now Cuma Sarah had a big family. There were I don't know how many -- three girls, four boys, something like that. Then there was my family, so we were four. Then there was Cuma Rosie's family. They were four. Then there was Cuma Annie's family, and they were four.

PS: That's a lot of people.

MT: Now these were the cumas. Now Cuma Sarah had her own -- she had her brother and his wife and their children, and somebody else in there. Oh! I tell you, we had to be -- how many could it be? Thirty, forty maybe -- thirty people. Breakfast on Sunday, the buns -- the buns they bought -- you know the large trays that you see the buns? Oh, I can't tell you how many, all down the line. I was little when we started to go there. We kept going there. I was four, maybe five at the most.

PS: Would you go on weekends, or would you go for the whole summer?

MT: No, we'd go weekends. Not every weekend, because they had so many. They were so great, to share this with us, really. I bless them.

What was I saying?

PS: That you'd go out on certain weekends.

MT: Yes. We'd go on weekends.

I wanted to tell you the breakfast. Can you imagine how many pounds of macaroni they made for dinner?

PS: No, I can't.

MT: And meatballs, and sausage --

PS: In a normal-sized kitchen.

MT: That they cooked in the barracks. The barracks had (I call it a barracks) -- they had a huge sink and stove, and all the mothers, all the women, would chip in and make meatballs. [Interruption] The mothers. Everybody. They'd make the salad. That's what you had. That was it. That was enough. But I'm saying, the macaroni (which we call pasta now) -- then they'd have to make -- I don't know how big the pot was -- or pots -- for the gravy (which I still call gravy. Sorry. I don't call it sauce).

PS: That's okay. I think it's a sign of a true Italian.

MT: I don't call it sauce. I can't. I'm making gravy. Like tomorrow, I'm making gravy. Sunday gravy, but I'm making it on Thursday.

But that was Iselin, and the fun we had there! This place -- you'd walk, and there would be a brook or brooks. There were cows. The cows -- I think they used to get the milk from the cows. I always wanted to see the cows, so one of the Lisa girls -- she must have been maybe thirteen -- I said, "Take me to see the cows." (This is a little girl. "I like the cows." So she said, "All right, Cuma." Now my mother's cuma, too. She said, "Fannie, I'll take Marie."

So we go. We go see the cows. Now coming back, I lost my shoe. I wouldn't walk home without a shoe. Now this girl had to carry me (and I was never really lightweight; I was never petite), she had to carry me from -- I don't know how many blocks it was -- and she's carrying me, and she's puffing like crazy. Now we get under the grape arbor, and she says, "Cuma Fannie, here's Marie." She put me down, and she fainted.

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MT: We'd stay there and vacation for a week. Like Cuma Sarah would go home, and her family, and she would allow us to stay. And it would be with Cuma Rosie and Cuma Annie. Rosie and Annie were sisters, and it was my mother and my family. We used to stay there for

the week, which was fine. Like I said, they were so great to do this for anybody. Like anybody could have went and stayed in this place.

PS: And Cuma Sarah, was she from Hoboken?

MT: Yes. That's where I was born, in her house -- 313 Jackson Street. And my mother, when she was giving birth to me, she almost broke Cuma Sarah's neck when she was in labor. She almost broke her neck.

PS: Now why were you born at Cuma Sarah's house?

MT: Gee, I don't know. That's where we lived, first.

PS: Okay. I thought maybe she was visiting, and went into labor when she was --

MT: Oh, no. No. I was only there three months; then I moved to 523, my grandmother's house. That's how. And her daughter -- Cuma Sarah's daughter --

is Mary, Cuma Mary, who is my godmother -- the one who got the bananas for my mother! We got that settled.

And that was Iselin.

PS: How many years did you go down there?

MT: Well, after that -- let me see. How old was I when we went to Keansburg? Yeah. Another year we went to Keansburg. I would say I was maybe ten, when we went to Keansburg. Nine, ten, something like that.

PS: Did you stay with family?

MT: In Keansburg -- Cuma Rosie would go to Keansburg. Cuma Rosie would go first, she would go in the boarding house and she would book it. I think it was \$6.00 a week.

PS: For how many people, by the way?

MT: It was only supposed to be for her and her two daughters.

PS: Okay. So she's booking a room for her and her two daughters, for \$6.00 a week. Okay.

MT: Now she calls my mother and her sister (her sister had two boys, she had two girls, my mother had a boy and a girl), and we'd go down.

PS: And you're all in the one room.

MT: All in one room, all the kids sleeping with their mother --

PS: -- in their mother's bed.

MT: -- in the mother's bed. There were three beds, there was a cot -- I don't remember -- a cot and two beds or whatever. But we were fine.

PS: And nobody said anything about there being too many people in the room?

MT: No. And there we were. That was Keansburg. We did that for a few years. We did that a few years. We always did go *somewhere*.

PS: Now when you went somewhere, did you go by train?

MT: Yes. By train. That I remember. We'd go by train. Keansburg was by train.

PS: What do you remember about the trains when you were a kid? You talked about the sound of them.

MT: That was the freight trains.

PS: What about the passenger trains? What do you remember about them?

MT: They were fine.

PS: Anything drastically different from today?

MT: I don't think so. No. The trains were the trains. It was the freight trains that were different. That was different -- when the coal fell off,

and you went to scoop it off, my grandmother and my father. But no, that was Keansburg.

After Keansburg, where did I go? Then we went to the mountains.

PS: Okay. Whereabouts in the mountains?

MT: Haines Falls.

PS: Is that New Jersey or New York? Or Pennsylvania?

MT: I think it's New York -- the [Catskill Mountains.] We went there. I think I was about fifteen when we went to the mountains -- and that's when my brother was drafted into the army. Because then he was eighteen. So he was home with my father. He didn't come, because my father said, "Well, now, no vacation. You're going to have to work in the plumbing business." Then he got drafted, and my father saw my brother was so sad that he wasn't with us, my father put him on the train and he came there, too.

After that, there were no childhood vacations. Because then I went to Long Branch, and then it was Toms River.

PS: Now getting back to your brother -- you wanted to talk a little bit about the war years. You just alluded to him being drafted. Is now a good time to talk about the war years? [Interruption] World War II, now.

MT: Yes. My uncle was in the army -- the uncle I spoke about that my father adopted.

PS: What was his name?

MT: Murphy. That was his nickname, Murphy. Now Uncle Murphy went to war in 1941, Pearl Harbor. He fought in Africa, Italy, all over. On Jackson Street, we used to have -- well, not only on Jackson Street. I guess uptown, too -- they had little banners with a star. If you had one person in the family, you would have, in your window, one star. If you had two, three, however or how many you had in the family, you would have that. In the middle of the street there would be a huge banner, that

my father initiated. They collected money from all the people on our block, and they had all the names of the boys who were in service. That hung in the middle of the street.

PS: Like over someone's house?

MT: No, it would go from, say, my house across --

PS: Oh. Like across the road.

MT: My house, then, I guess, the pole, across the street, and this big banner would be there. The boys, when they came home -- we had a big party for them, a real big party. Everybody chipped in, everybody cooked, and did so much. But that was World War II, that I remember.

PS: Do you remember rationing?

MT: Yes.

PS: What do you remember about that?

MT: We had the ration books. That was for the meat and, I believe, coffee. Well, I was young. I was eleven. Stockings, nylons or something. Well, I wasn't wearing them then. I was eleven years old. That's what I remember.

PS: So you don't necessarily remember it affecting you? You just remember that your mom would have to take it out of the book.

MT: Oh, yeah. You had to be careful. You couldn't overdo it. You couldn't over do it. But it would be in the book, you would go to the store. And what was it for?

PS: How old were you when the war broke out?

MT: Eleven.

PS: As war breaks out, you're eleven years old. What do you think about it?

MT: I was frightened.

PS: You were frightened. What frightened you about it?

MT: That they were going to come and bomb us, like they did at Pearl Harbor. Then I'd worry about my uncle -- that he had to go and fight. And as the years went -- and it was over in 1945 --

PS: So as the years go on, do you become more comfortable with the concept of being at war?

MT: Sure. It's like everything else. You get used to it. You have to get accustomed to it. What can you do? I mean, my mother -- she was always worried sick, praying, the novenas and -- you know. All that. Because this was a little brother; he was like my father's son. So they felt it. Then my uncle was married during -- he married during the war, when he came home.

PS: When he came home.

MT: No, in between.

PS: During the war.

MT: During the war he'd come home on furlough or whatever. They got married. Then there was a little girl. A baby was born, and my mother and father really took care of her. They took care of her. I remember my father making her a "sleigh" -- because, I don't know, you couldn't get them, or what, during the war.

PS: Do you remember the day Pearl Harbor was bombed?

MT: Yes.

PS: What do you remember about that day?

MT: I was with my mother [and father], and we were at a movie. When we came out, they said, "War broke out. War." I remember my aunt being there -- Uncle Murphy's wife -- and I remember everybody crying and screaming. That's what I remember about it.

PS: When you heard Pearl Harbor --

MT: I didn't know Pearl Harbor from
Chattanooga. I didn't know *Pearl Harbor*.

PS: So did you ask your parents? Did you
look at the book? What did you do?

MT: Yeah! "Where's Pearl Harbor?" But then
the radio, and they would explain. But still, I didn't
know.

PS: Tell me about the day that the war in
Europe ended.

MT: That was -- what year was that?

PS: Forty-five, wasn't it -- '46? VE-Day.

MT: Forty-five it was all over.

PS: Okay. So then it would have been '45.

MT: It was '45 when it was all over.

That's when all the parties -- oh, yeah! Everybody was oh, so happy. So happy. The Japanese. Oh, I was afraid of the Japanese -- like if I ever saw them, I was afraid. But that's about it, with the war. Like I said, I was young. I was young. [Interruption]

PS: Industry?

MT: Yes. All of the sewing factories -- Tootsie Roll, and U.S. Testing, Hostess Cake, Wonder Bread, Ferguson Propeller, the pencil factory.

PS: Now did you get any freebies out of this?

MT: Freebies? No. From who?

PS: From them. From the plant -- if you went by the plant or something.

MT: No. Ferguson? What, a propeller?

PS: Well, no. I was thinking of Tootsie Roll.

MT: Oh, the Tootsie Rolls. No, people used to go in there and buy.

PS: Oh, you can buy in there, like a company store?

MT: Or anybody who worked there used to buy it. They were able to buy it. But you couldn't go in there and buy.

PS: Did they get it at a discount?

MT: Yes.

PS: So you could ask your friends to buy it.

MT: Yes. They would get it at a discount, and then you'd have your Tootsie Rolls. Then, like I said, the pencil factory, Universal paper, we had our

five-and-ten stores, like Grant's, Woolworth's -- Maxwell House. Well, that's only gone recently. Hudson Tea.

PS: Right. The tea. Lipton Tea.

MT: The Fabian, the Rivoli, the US --

PS: Wait. The Fabian -- that's a theatre, correct?

MT: Yes.

PS: What was the next one you mentioned?

MT: The Rivoli. That was called "the Scratch House." We never went there.

PS: Was this a movie theatre?

MT: Yes. The US.

PS: Also a movie theatre.

MT: A movie theatre. That's what I remember. I know there were others before me, like [Unclear].

PS: Yes, I know there were more. Did you have a favorite theatre?

MT: I liked the Fabian. The Fabian used to have the vaudeville. You'd see the movie and "the acts." We used to call them "the acts."

PS: Movie and a live show.

MT: Yes.

PS: Do you remember seeing anyone like --

MT: -- famous?

PS: Yeah. Like one of them on television or anything like that?

MT: No. No.

PS: What time would this movie be?

MT: That's what I wanted to tell you. This was at night. I remember night they were so long -- and as I talked about the mothers, with their heads out the window -- you should have seen all the heads that night! Because we got home like at midnight! Worried! I think I got a little slap that night.

PS: How old were you at this point, about?

MT: Teenage. Teenage. With all my girlfriends. We were like sisters, you know? In fact, one girl -- Lucille -- I still speak with. Still, after all these years.

PS: You still keep in touch.

MT: Oh, yes. I still keep in touch with Lucille.

What else? What other stores? Geismar's. Remember? Do you remember Geismar's, the men's store?

PS: I know the name.

MT: The old neighborhood is gone. It's now a cosmopolitan neighborhood.

PS: When did the lots give way to --

MT: -- to projects?

PS: Oh, so they became projects. That's where the projects -- so that was the '60s?

MT: That would be. Let me see. I would say '50s, maybe later '50s, when it started.

PS: So up until that point, were there still goats on that property?

MT: No. No more goats. The goats -- when I was a teenager, no more goats.

PS: No more goats when you were a teenager.

MT: The goats were when I was little. My brother is three years older than me, so he remembers the goats even more than I do. But I remember them. I remember the goats, going back and forth, running back and forth. All the goats.

PS: So in the early '40s, basically.

MT: No, late '30s. Late '30s was when there were all the goats, and the garbage drawn by horses. Oh, yeah. That was then. [Interruption]

PS: Your aunt in Carlstadt.

MT: Yes, that was a big thrill.

PS: Why was that a big thrill?

MT: Because we thought we were going to the country. We were going to Carlstadt, on a trip. We would go there, and it was really open spaces -- no garbage, just open space, gardens, flowers -- country. We used to go there -- it was like a trip, to Carlstadt.

PS: You'd get on a train --

MT: No! My father's pickup! The plumbing truck! The four of us --

PS: What year are we talking, at this point?

MT: We're talking '38, '39.

PS: Okay. So your dad's got the plumbing truck. You're mobile.

MT: Yeah. He has the truck, the business truck, and we're going to Aunt Minnie. There's four of us, though, in the cab. Four of us, with me sitting on my brother's lap, and my brother saying, "Mother, she's too heavy!" I said, "All right, Brother. The next time we go to Aunt Minnie, you can sit on my lap." And then he would sit on my lap, and then I'd say, "You're too bony!" I used to feel the bones. But that was kids, you know. But we loved it. That was a big thing, going to Carlstadt.

But we weren't really deprived, because, like I said --

PS: Now how would you get to Carlstadt?
I'm thinking of modern highways. What roads got you to
Carlstadt?

MT: I remember something like
"Moonhockey," or -- in my head now.

PS: And Secaucus and [Unclear] were just
farmland and "pastures?"

MT: No! It smelled! Oh, my god! You would
never, ever want to go through -- and you *knew* when you
went through Secaucus, with the pig smell, and the
slaughterhouses. Oh, it did smell! Whew! [Interruption]

PS: -- carnival?

MT: In the early '40s. There was a
carnival on Sixth and Madison Street with rides. I
remember a greasy pole, and a man would try to climb up
this pole. I remember that. I remember a long, long
ladder, where the man stayed on top -- there was a
platform on top -- and he would dive into a very small

area of water. That was thrilling! That was really thrilling. And rides, and all that.

PS: Was this an unusual thing, to have this carnival? Or was it every year?

MT: I don't know if it was every year. Then we also had fireworks in our lot. Fireworks. I don't know who really did these fireworks. I believe, though, it was the Madonna dei Martiri Feast. I'm not sure. Because they would have a display of fireworks like you never saw. I've never seen them anywhere. Never. They would have the outline. They would have the American flag. Then the fireworks would go into the Madonna.

PS: And the Madonna dei Martiri --

MT: I believe that had that display, the fireworks display, that was fantastic. That's what I remember about that. This is what we had, as kids.

[Interruption]

PS: Boots.

MT: The boots? The boys on our block, the young boys (this is like before teenage, or maybe they were just twelve or whatever), they would go to Miles' Shoe Store. That was on Second and Washington. That's where, I believe, Battaglia's is now. You know where I mean? That was Miles' Shoe Store. Now the boys would buy boots. The boots had a knife on the side of the boot.

PS: It came with a knife?

MT: It came with a knife, and it would be a flap-over and a snap, but it was on the side of the boot. So I recently asked my brother, I said, "Brother, could you -- " I told him about the chapbook, and I said, "I remember you wanting boots with a knife on the side, and Mother did not want you to get them. But you haunted her, and to shut you up -- you were telling her that all the boys had it, and you wanted it" -- so they went, and she bought him the boots. I said, "What did you boys do with the knife?" He said, "Really, nothing. It was a novelty. Maybe we'd take it out," and maybe they would cut some wood or something.

PS: And how old was he at this point?

MT: He had to be a kid. What? Eleven, twelve, [and older.] But this is what they wore. This is what they wore. Maybe it was thirteen, twelve -- I really don't know -- but young. The young boys on the block. They used to be playing kick-the-can; they played Johnny-on-a-pony.

It's not a game I want to play. I think they used to jump over each other. I don't know. Then they used to play kick-the-can; they used to play stickball; and marbles. And the girls -- we'd sit on the bench, my grandmother's bench that my father made, and we would sing. That was our entertainment. We'd sing, we'd dance, if it was a rainy day we'd go in my hall and get my mother's old curtains and play dress-up. Once I think I was a Ziegfeld girl. Then we would play like that. Or we'd roller skate. When we got older, we went to the dances, Joe's Dances, St. Lucy's. Oh, yeah. We had a lot of clean fun. We really did.

How did I get on this? The boots! The boots brought me to this. You know, how we entertained ourselves -- which was very good. Sometimes what we would do -- we would take a walk. Like from Jackson Street, we would go on the avenue --

PS: You mean Washington Street.

MT: Yeah. That's what I'm *saying*. Why we called it the "avenue" I'll never know, because it was Washington Street. Maybe we'd go into Kielman's for a soda. We had Kielman's, we had Umland's, which is now East L.A., and they're the same owners.

PS: The "Roberts" family?

MT: That's right. Oh, yeah.

What else was there? There was another ice-cream parlor called Jeannette's.

PS: That was ice cream?

MT: Yes. These were all ice-cream parlors.

PS: They were all ice cream?

MT: Yes. Did I say Abel's?

PS: No.

MT: There was Abel's. We would go up. But we always took the walks on the avenue. That's what the girls did.

PS: You talked about how a lot of times -- you definitely wouldn't go up to the river, because that was dangerous.

MT: How far did we go?

PS: And how often would you go up there?

MT: Washington Street? Oh, we'd go a couple or more times a week. We'd take a walk. We went from downtown to uptown, then.

PS: Now as a kid, what are your remembrances of Stevens Tech? Was it part of the fabric?

MT: Not to us, to the uptown people. We were downtown. You know what I mean? We didn't -- and Castle Point -- I went to Castle Point when I was in high school. That's when I saw Castle Point. I went sleigh-

riding there. That's how I remember Castle Point. That was another world to us. See, we kept downtown. We just did everything there. Then the men in the families that were downtown -- my father had a business. They became professional men. It wasn't that, because we were downtown, we weren't educated. Next door to us was Steve Mongiello, who was a lawyer. Mongiello was also a councilman in Hoboken. Do you remember that name? Steve Mongiello? It was the time, I believe, of DeSapio.

PS: See, my dad, whom I've talked to the most, he left in '60. My uncle stayed, but my dad left in '60. His history is kind of up to '60, and that's kind of my --

MT: No, Mongiello was before that, I believe.

PS: Yes, but Daddy didn't have much to do with him. I wouldn't have heard the name. I've heard DeSapio since I've moved back into town.

MT: Oh. Well, that's -- he took over then, from McFeeley. That was another -- but, yeah, the men. We had the lawyer --

PS: Did your father have to deal with any graft or payoffs or anything?

MT: He would *never*, *never ever* do it.

PS: He was asked.

MT: Oh, of course.

PS: What were they asking him for?

MT: I tell you, not him. He wanted nothing to do with it. His partner -- they would talk to his partner, and he would say to his partner, "Tom, don't you ever -- " My father was so [honest]. And he wouldn't even buy -- you know how people used to come around with "swag?" Do you know what "swag" is?

PS: No. What is "swag?"

MT: "Swag" is stolen goods. No matter how much of a buy it was --

PS: So he could operate legally in the town. He was still getting permits, and --

MT: He still got his permits, yes. He got the permits. He just wouldn't have anything to do with it.

PS: Your grandfather did. I know. But they'd close him.

PS: Right. So I was wondering, from your dad's perspective --

MT: No, he was pretty safe. I don't know if his partner -- but he wouldn't have known if his partner -- but no, my father -- that I know for a fact. Everything was no.

PS: Now you kind of made a face when you said "McFeeley."

MT: He was tough. I don't remember him, but I've heard.

PS: You've heard, but you don't have any recollection.

MT: I don't have any recollection of McFeeley, except that he was a tough man and kind of mean -- especially to the Italians. He was mean to them. They couldn't get anywhere. Like the Irish were okay, because they were all cops. I don't know how the guy in our neighborhood became a cop, because he was Italian. He was a cop. But no. Well, maybe he was a cop after McFeeley, when DeSapio came in. Then it was different. It was altogether different when DeSapio --

But with your grandfather, it was during McFeeley time that the graft -- right? What year was that?

PS: This was during the Depression, because they would --

MT: Oh, my father was small-time. He had his own business, alone. And then he was partners with

Tom Pascale, and they became Pascale & Luongo, and that was in 1938. So now he was almost -- well, no, he wasn't almost out, McFeeley. But they were so small that they didn't bother them.

PS: They were under the radar.

MT: No. They were, like, after the Union Club and -- of course, but not little guys like this. After they got established, if McFeeley was still around, they would probably have had to pay or not get any permit. [Interruption]

They were still professional men. My grandmother had --

PS: -- the candy store.

MT: She was a little barmaid too, then. A barmaid. She wasn't -- but she had the wine.

PS: She was running a little speak-easy.

MT: She was. She was a business woman. Maybe that's how I became --

PS: You got that gene?

MT: I must have got her gene. She was clever. She was really clever. [Interruption]

What would you call them? Not rag shops. They were -- you know, where you sell junk?

PS: Pawn shop?

MT: No, no, no. [Interruption]

PS: Scrap iron.

MT: We had three on our block.

PS: On your block alone.

MT: Yes. We had one on the corner of Fifth Street, which was the Ascolese. They owned that. Then on the corner of Sixth Street we had Damone's. That was my friend Lucille's family. Then directly across from that was another -- not as big as these two, but there was

another one -- and that was Mongiello, another Mongiello. It was the lawyer's cousin.

PS: Now were these operating at the bottom of the building, or was there a separate building just for this?

MT: No, they had a separate building. They had a separate building. The Damone's house was in the rear, and in the front was a building, and that's where they had all the rags and whatever. They were mostly rags.

PS: Now would your mom sell her rags, or were they collecting -- ?

MT: No, there was big stuff, yeah. They would be bundled, and I don't know what they did with it. The other was the scrap iron. But they had scrap iron, also, where you'd go and you had junk. Junk means like brass, and copper -- your metal. They'd weigh it, and you'd get your money. So those two were big there.

What else did we have? We had a barrel company, Mike's Barrel Company, on that block. There was

Damone's, the barrel company, my grandmother's store, Mongiello, and then the other on the block was the scrap iron. So on that little block there was quite a bit. So they did very well. They did very well. [Interruption]

PS: Did you have pigeon coops in your yard?

MT: Yes. We had pigeon coops. My uncles used to fly the pigeons, and they would race them. They would have races and whatever, and homing pigeons. I remember that name, my uncle used to use -- and they used to race them. In our yard they built coops, and that's where all the pigeons were.

PS: How many pigeons were in the yard?

MT: In the coops? Many.

PS: Did you have a big yard, small yard --

MT: Big. Big. We had a huge yard. Because my father, before he went into partnership, he built a shack where he had his little office, his supplies, and

then, like I said before, the huge pipes that didn't fit there went across the street in the lots. He would put them there. But I think that's about it. [Interruption]

PS: Your parents and your children.

MT: My children, now? That's another --

PS: Well, you were talking about your parents obviously adored the grandchildren.

MT: Oh, yes. Yes, they did. They had four grandchildren -- my brother's two boys, Tommy and Robert, and my two girls, Rosemarie and Francine. Rosemarie was named after my mother-in-law, and I just didn't like the name "Rose," so I added Marie, which is my name. Francine -- I wanted it after my mother, but I didn't want to call her Fannie, and I didn't want to call her Alfonsina. So what I did was I took -- "Fan" I made "Fran," and from Alfonsina I took the "sine," and called her Francine. My mother knew that she was her namesake. Naturally, my brother was Tommy.

What else? [Interruption]

My brother used to go to the saloon in the next block, with a pail, for beer.

PS: So he'd go get a pail of beer --

MT: -- a pail of beer, to bring home to my father. You'd send your kids to do that.

PS: Your underage children.

MT: Oh, yes. Your underage children -- you'd send your kids to go get --

PS: So if you wanted a beer at the end of the day --

MT: -- you'd send your kids, if you weren't going yourself. My father would say, "Brother, go get a pail of beer." We would have the pail, though, and my brother would go (not me, he wouldn't send his daughter, but his son) to get a pail of beer.

[Interruption]

I just saw that -- my dad's firm. They were partners -- Pascale & Luongo. Well, I was the secretary, so I was secretary for Tom Pascale --

PS: Not your father.

MT: -- not Tommy Luongo. Because he was out with the workers. I was in the office, so Tom and I took care of all the office work. My father had nothing to do with it. He wanted nothing to do with it -- like the contracts. No. No, he went out there. He was a crackerjack. He was the one who worked.

PS: Gotcha. [Interruption]

MT: I worked there for three years, until I became pregnant with my daughter. Then I stayed home. I stayed home and had my other daughter, Francine. When Francine went to school, I went back to work again. I worked for another nineteen years.

PS: That's I've got. [Interruption]

January 10, 1953 --

MT: -- I was married. Yes.

PS: At St. Ann's, right?

MT: Nineteen-fifty-three, at St. Ann's,
and I had my daughter, Rosemarie, November 17, 1953.
That's when I was heaven.

PS: Now you're not in heaven anymore.

MT: Now we had a little hell thrown into
the picture. I told you this. [Interruption]

PS: Yes. The "little hell thrown in"
refers to some issues with the marriage, which were
discussed in Tape 1. [Interruption]

Gam-a-non, which, I guess, is Gambler's
Anonymous.

MT: Yes. Gam-a-non is the place where the
family goes, to help understand what's going on. Well, it
didn't help. I was telling the truth in one room, and
Nicky was lying in the next. The only reason he consented
to go to GamAnon was to come back to me.

PS: But did you feel that going to this helped you to understand what a gambler goes through?

MT: I knew. It wasn't for me. I didn't learn anything. All I knew was I was bringing pastries there, and I was bringing pastries and they all just loved it. And Nicky would say, "Oh! Oh, look at him! He just lost his father's furrier business." He was always looking at people who were worse than him. I'd say, "How about looking at somebody who's *better*? Who's *taking care* of their family?" So it really didn't work. And, you know, I divorced him, December 3, 1975. I told you that.

PS: But you also mentioned something about his "medal." [Interruption]

MT: What? That I was very proud and honored, to organize the feast? The St. Ann's Feast? To keep our Italian tradition, and especially to honor St. Ann? When asked why I wanted to take on this big endeavor, I said, "I want everyone to know who St. Ann is." There are many people who never knew that her daughter was our Blessed Mary, and her grandson is Jesus.

Well, I accomplished this, because whenever an article is written in the newspaper, it is always included in their articles.

PS: What Italian traditions do you feel are kept alive through the Feast?

MT: [Devotion.] The people keep coming back, because of this Feast. They reunite, and it keeps the tradition of the saint. It will be a hundred years, in two years, this Feast.

PS: The tradition of the Feast, the tradition of the procession --

MT: Yes! The procession, the feast -- oh, yes. I wouldn't want that to go. [Interruption]

PS: The ex-husband, the love of her life.

MT: Nicky was a World War II veteran. He received the good-conduct medal (really didn't live up to it). He was an MP in the army, but he was really a fun-loving guy. He really was. [Interruption]

-- of the St. Ann's Feast, the celebration to honor St. Ann brings the community together in Hoboken. It's a great opportunity for people who have moved from Hoboken to come back, and reunite with family and friends. And for the people who are new to our city, to develop new friendships. It's just a wonderful, spiritual celebration for all. And don't forget, our famous zeppole, and our secret recipe.

PS: Hoboken's "favorite son," Mr. Sinatra.

MT: My all-time favorite?

PS: Yes, your all-time favorite.

[Interruption]

MT: I never let my business interfere with my life. In all my charities, my motto was, "I own the business, the business does not own me." And it worked for me.

PS: How were you able to juggle being in charge of the Auxiliary, or St. Ann's, while --

MT: I did it. Oh, yes. If there was a family party, I closed. Feast time, I closed -- one week before, one week after -- no. One week during, and one week after. My customers would say, "Marie, you don't even put a sign in your window." I would say, "Look. If you see the lights on, I'm back. If the lights are off, I'm not." You want to get out of your car, and look at a note?! I'm closed!" So I had a group of guys come every Thursday. They would go for dinner, downtown, walk through the park, and say, "Yea, the lights are on! Marie is there." They were like family to me. I had many extended families, and they were one of them. But my immediate family -- my daughters, my grandson and my granddaughter -- they're really my life. [Interruption]

MT: I was eleven years old when I fell in love with Frank Sinatra. My mother took me and my brother to the Paramount to see him. We waited six hours on line! I would want to go *wherever* he was. I went to see his first picture, *Higher and Higher*. I wanted to be a "big girl," and forced my mother to buy me Cuban heels, they called them then.

PS: Cuban heels. Okay. What was a Cuban heel?

MT: Two inches, maybe two and a half. I wanted to be a "big girl," because now the girls who were screaming for Sinatra were teenagers. I wasn't a teenager. So I went to see the movie, and what happened? The big girl with the heel went right down a flight of steps, broke her heel, and then "found" another heel. I said to the girl who was with us, I said, "Oh, 'Peggy,' you lost your heel, too." She said, "No, I didn't, Marie, it's your other shoe." Yeah. That's me, wanting to be a big girl.

I would just go see every movie. So now a friend of mine, John Pizza, he was a great fan of Sinatra's. [I bought my property, Le Jardin, from his family.] He wound up working for him. Really. He used to do some cooking, running around -- whatever. Also, my sister-in-law (that's my husband's sister) was Dolly [Sinatra's] companion-cook, she helped clean, and she always saw him. I never got the chance to go there, to really see him. But in my young years, I would go to the Paramount or wherever, and my mother would have to keep taking me there and taking me there, to see Sinatra. Then

I wrote a song when I was twelve. I wrote a song to the tune of "This Love of Mine." [Interruption]

PS: Did you send it to him?

MT: No. No, I wrote a song, but I didn't send it to him. Then, as I got older, and even married, I always went to see him -- at the Copa, wherever he was. Wherever he was, I would want to go. So now, this one time, John said, "Look, we'll go to Elaine's," which was in the Golden Nugget, in Atlantic City, "and I'll just try to introduce you." But you know how Sinatra was. You couldn't just -- so he was on his --

PS: I have one quick question. Was John still working for him at this point?

MT: Yes. So he was leaving, he was leaving to go into his limo, Sinatra, and John was next to him. He was sort of even a bodyguard (he was everything, an all-around guy), and he said to Sinatra -- he said to me, "Marie, you just stand there, when he's going out, as if [you're] security." So they come out, and John says, "Frank, say hello to Marie." I froze. His blue eyes went

right through my gray eyes -- blue eyes -- and we just connected our eyes, and that's my moment with Sinatra. So I couldn't say hello, I couldn't move, like a little kid! I thought I was still eleven years old.

PS: And how old were you?

MT: I was married! Married and had my [daughters.] And I just froze.

PS: Now did you ever send him one of your famous cheesecakes?

MT: Yes. Yes, I did.

PS: How did you do it?

MT: Through John. Through John. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, he got one. Listen, so many -- oh, my god! We'll get into that.

PS: Anything else about Sinatra?

MT: That's about it. But you see -- my daughters gave me a big doll of Sinatra. I have it in my living room. I have like a little shrine for him. Oh, yeah. They know.

PS: So how did you feel the day you heard he passed?

MT: *Ohhhh!* They *called* me. The reporters.

PS: The reporters called you?

MT: Yes! They wanted a quote from me. I couldn't. They said, "Come here --" I don't know where they were, at Leo's or somewhere. They said, "We want to talk to you." I said, "No, no." They called me at 5:00 in the morning."

PS: How did they know you were such a fan.

MT: I don't know. Somebody told them. And that was --

PS: -- your moment with Frankie.

MT: That was just a moment -- my eyes and his eyes. I tell you -- they were sooo blue, and *piercing*. And it was only a moment, because he looked at me, like we were so close, and he didn't talk and I didn't.

PS: I'm sure he'd gotten that once or twice before.

MT: Yeah. That's it. That's my Sinatra.

PS: All right.