

AL VELTRI  
Helper, Utah  
Tape No. I-7

An Interview By  
Kent Powell and Phil Notarianni  
December 18, 1971

American West Center  
University of Utah  
Utah Minorities Series

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biographical History.....1  
Ku Klux Klan Activities In Helper, Utah.....5  
Carbon County Strike.....7  
Union Feelings.....9  
Integration.....11  
Italian Foods.....11  
Social Activities.....12  
Superstitious Cures.....13  
Home Sick Remedies.....14  
Experiences In Religion.....19  
Columbus Celebration.....24  
Respect For The Vice Consul.....25  
Educational Experiences.....29  
Respect For The Law.....30

THE FOLLOWING IS AN INTERVIEW MADE WITH MR. AL VELTRI  
AT HELPER, UTAH IN DECEMBER 18, 1971. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE  
KENT POWELL AND PHIL NOTARIANNI.

PN: Mr. Veltri to begin with can you please tell me when and where  
you were born.

AV: Yeah. I was born in Sunnysdie in 1920. Sunnyside you know is  
a little coal camp. My father came from Starkville, Colorado.  
He was, in Starkville he was a deputy sherriff and he came to  
Sunnyside to work in the coal mines and he was employed as a  
night watchman on the coke ovens, at the coke ovens in Sunnyside.  
This was in 1920 when I was born.

PN: When did your father come over here, which date from Italy?

AV: I don't recall the date that my father came over. My mother  
came with Mrs. P.O. Silvagni from Italy and they moved to  
Colorado and they were in a boarding house one of the boarding  
house deals. My father was previously married and they had a  
flood in Pueblo or some town in Colorado, or Starkville or  
some place like that. How my father married my mother...The flood  
was coming or the flood was coming down the canyon and his former  
wife went to get something in a house and she was killed in the  
flood. My father remained with two sons and about I guess they were  
maybe ten months and fifteen months, they were small babies.  
My mother met my father and married him. Then they came to  
Sunnyside, but I don't know the exact date, proabably in the

VELTRI 2

1917, I think to Sunnyside, around in that area, I am not sure.

PN: Are you at all familiar with an organization that existed in Carbon County in 1919 who was called the Italian-Americanization Club? Did your father ever mention this to you?

AV: No. My mother they had an Italian organization in Sunnyside and I think they had an Italian lodge for women I remember as a boy going there for different celebration and they had several Italian weddings there. But I know...

PN: There was a lodge in Sunnyside called the Societa Minatori Italiani. Is that the one you are...

AV: Very likely, I don't know. All I know is that we went to this lodge on any celebration that we had, we went up there.

PN: Do you know where I could find any information concerning that particular lodge?

AV: Let's see who is from Sunnyside? Who can I tell you from Sunnyside. Possibly John Menatti might know that.

PN: Falsetti was the...

AV: Falsetti...

PN: ...president of that organization in 1930.

AV: That is my brother-in-law. When he comes here now I have a real close contact with him. He comes to see me two or three times a year. He comes to Salt Lake, he has

a brother there by the name of Ross Falsetti. My brother-in-law at the time was a notary republic, which was suppose to be some official title in those days. He use to write a lot of letters for people I remember. I remember he had a typewriter and an orange pen that was to me showed a lot of authority and a lot of official type business. He could tell you that and when he comes Phil, I will have him, you leave me your address.

PN: Okay. Thank you.

AV: He can clue on that, but that was my brother-in-law, J. Falsetti.

PN: Beautiful, thank you very much. What type of treatment did your father receive when he began working at Sunnyside? Did he ever relate to you any stories concerning the way that he was accepted here?

AV: I don't know, I think that there was quite a colony in Sunnyside and I notice that I didn't have any feeling of being picked on, or ,I thought we were part of the community, There were quite a few Italians there, maybe because we lived in an Italian community. I mean I know that there were a lot of Spanish speaking people, some Negros, some Austrians and I had a very enjoyable childhood. I noticed nothing, in highschool I think that I noticed a little bit in Price, not a lot. It wasn't discrimination, but it was sort of excepted that if you

VELTRI 4

were an Italian boy you couldn't date this girl. I had no problem and I really never ever notice anything like this.

PN: Was there a particular section of town that most of the Italians lived in, in Sunnyside?

AV: In Sunnyside? Well they had a lower town and an upper town and they had a Greek town, they never called it an Italian town. There were some bachelors that lived in some quarters that people called Greektown. I don't know, to me it seemed like most of the people in Sunnyside were Italians, I don't know maybe there were others, but it seems like they may have been the predominate race there.

PN: I see. Did they have different sections in Price that you know of?

AV: Scattered out and they intermingled with the community. I never noticed anything. I think as you get older you sort of, well at one time I remember my father was a janitor in his older ages. I was very proud of my father. He was a very proud man and he was very honest man and I loved him very much, but I think at time when a young boy is going to school you look back to say that I am of Italian heritage. That didn't bother me as much as my father in his retired age was doing some janitor work. This is foolish to say but sometimes, I would be with a girl and feel a little embarrassed I would to introduce this girl to my father until I realized one day that my father was one of the finest man in the world and though he worn over-

alls and was a janitor I was as proud of him as the judge who walked down the street with a little pin striped suit. I never had any second thoughts about it. One time I think that I felt a little uncomfortable because my father was a janitor, not because he was Italian, because a lot of friends that I took to my home weren't of Italian descent came to the home and they loved my mother and family very much. They ate dinner with us and enjoyed our hospitality and it was a very natural and normal and good thing because a lot of them use to see my mother and take my mother places, some of my firends. So I never noticed this type of thing at all.

PN: You were born in which year did you say?

AV: I was born in 1920 in Sunnyside. Then we moved to Helper.

PN: During the '20's it was somewhat of a critical period because for instance in 1924 and 1925 you had Klu Klux Klan active in Helper area. Do you recall any of this?

AVP The only thing that I recall, we were in Sunnyside and I remember as a child, or as a boy, I remember being on a railroad bridge going to Sunnyside there was a modern dairy hwere the modern dairy is now I use to see the signs KKK. At that time I didn't even know what they were. They said they were the Klu Klux Klan, and that these were hooded men that were harassing Italians and Catholics is what I thought it was, but to have any contact with it that I recall I don't, except that I have read, since then that there was a Problem awit with the Klu Klux Klan.

VELTRI 6

PN: Do you know any families that were hassled by this organization  
Italian families?

AV: No, I really don't.

PN: Would say then that perhaps this Ku Klux Klan activity was directed  
more against Catholics than than Italians. It just happens  
that the Italians...

AV: Were in the minority. I think, what I gather now, maybe my  
judgement is shadowed by what other things I have read. I  
think that it was probably directed towards minorities, but I  
don't know if it was Catholic. Maybe they all banded together  
because they were minorities, the Catholic, the Greeks and the  
Austrians, altogether rather than singling out any specific race  
or ethnic group.

PN: Were there any local individuals that belonged to the Ku Klux  
Klan?

AV: I don't know of any. I guess that I was too young, this happened  
in the '20s.

PN: Well in 1925 right, you were five years old.

AV: I wouldn't, except that I was aware that there was some a  
movement. It disappeared all of a sudden. It seemed like that  
it was and then when I looked around there was no more Ku  
Klux Klan.

PN: Where did your father work in the '20s?

AV: My father at the Sunnyside mine, in the coke ovens. He was  
a night watchman in the coal cabins.



VELTRI 7

PN: Did he relate to you any of his experiences concerning the 1922 strike in Carbon County here?

AV: No, not that I recall. I knew that there was a strike. The only thing that I remember about that was as a small boy they use to sent the pay, when the pay truck came up and it always excited me because on the back of this little truck there were two men with guns, and of course this fascinate me becuase of the guns. This I knew was pay day today because men would come in from Price two men sitting on the back of this truck with guns and take it up to the pay office. But the strike I don't have any real recollection of what happened during the strike because I was too young.

PN: How about hte mine explosion in 1924 in Castle Gate?

AV: That was I knew nothing about that, I am too young for that. You see I am 50 years old now and this is when I must have been four years old. I wouldn't have known that.

PN: When you were growing up in the '20s then you did not receive any discrimination?

AV: No, I don't ever recall receiving any discrimination. Maybe becuase my family made me feel that I was proud to be an Italian, but never noticed anything in school or out of school except ofr that one thing that I told you wheln I was in Price and I was getting a little older and how a child wishes that he was this and wihses that he was that, but that was very, I was embarrassed of thinking that later.

VELTRI 8

PN: Did your father relate to you any of his experiences of being discriminated against or mistreated? Or was he basically well accepted?

AV: I think that my father was basically well accepted. He was quite well known in town because of his job as janitor and he use to clean the theatre in Price and a lot of people knew him. He was around a lot of kids and a lot of people so I don't really recall of any.

PN: Maybe the discrimination then occurred around let's say anywhere from the 1870's to the 1900's and after that it might have dissipated.

AV: Possible there might have been some then as I have understand it. None that I can personally relate.

KP: I have been wondering about your father's attitude towards the coal company out there at Sunnyside. How was his reaction to them?

AV: My father was a very loyal type person. May I can tell you like this. My father took a great deal of pride in voting. An example, when Brackenlee was running for mayor of Price my dad would get dressed up and he would make a ceremony of taking my mother and all in my family that could go vote. He was very very proud to be able to cast a vote. He was very proud of being an American and my dad I remember once told me, he said the government was one of the best things in the country. He was very proud of the government, he said for instance, he said, "if you pay your income tax and you are short one penny, the government will send a million dollars to collect a penny and if they owe you five cents they will conversely spent a mil-

lion dollars to give you back the five cents they owe you." My dad thought this was one of the finest things and he was very proud. He made the biggest fuss I believe about elections. He was very proud to cast his vote and it was a ceremony in our home when they went down to vote. In a little city election he was very very proud.

PN: Was your father then sympathetic to the union activites?

AV: I think so. I think mostly my father was proud that he was here and that he could make a living for his family and he... The word for officials in Italian is un sindaco, the syndicate I guess is how they said it. My dad always talked about the syndicate the political entities, and always very favorable. He never seemed to complain that he was being abused by the mine officals or the union or anything like that. My dad was for labor, but I think that he was happy with his lot, that he could support his family as well as he did. I don't know, I think that his attitude was one of satisfaction, consequently I feel this in one reason possibly why I never felt and prejudice toward any other races. I was hever taught this. Colored boys like in Sunnyside when I was a boy, there was a family of Ernest Browns they were called. This little Ernest Brown was one of my best friends, a colored boy. He had dinner at my home, I had dinner at his home. Spanish boys, we all played together. In fact, we never knew that such a thing existed until I started in high school and found that there was some undesireable elements in certain ethnic, belong to a certain ethnic group.

VELTRI 10

PN: What would you contribute this phenomenon to as far as your experience is concerned?

AV: I think possibly that we mixed with all and my father never seemed to mention that this was a Mormon so and so or a Mexican os and so. They we always a Mr. Brown or Jose Salazaar, or Pete Demitric. There was never, in our home this was never said and I never though anything... I really noticed ,the first time that there was any prejudice was in the service. And this is where I got my touch that there of feeling that there was any prejudice because in Carbon County I never knew such a thing really existed. I mean, just a normal amount of prejudice that you might havein your own group. You might say that he is a dirst so and so, but pertaining to the fact not because he was Italian, or Spanish or Bohunk, he was dirty because he was an individual, or undesirable because of his own individual traits not because he was of any particalar race.

PN: When your father talked about the union did he by any chance mention to you anything about the union in the early 20's, when he arrived here or when you were born?

AV: No.

PN: Becuase in 1922, again getting back to that strike it another attempt to unionize the mines here and I was just trying to find out a little more insight into that particular period.

AV: I think possibly that I was born a little too late for my dad to relate to me on things like that, because I knew that there was a strike, I even knew that there was a depression, I heard that

there was a depression, but I didn't know that there was a depression because I had my stomach full all the time, there was plenty to eat, and there was plenty of affection and love in my family. I heard and read about the strike and depression because I never knew that such a thing existed.

PN: Did your father ever belong to any Italian organization, lodges, societies?

AV: My mother belonged to one I believe.

PN: The one at Sunnyside?

AV: Yes and then to in those in those days, it is like most ethnic groups you were always very close together. If a man killed pigs for instance, everyone went to help kill the pig. Everyone had a party and they had the wine and the sausage and as a child I use to enjoy thses things because we would all get to go and play with the other kids. Whether it was killing pigs or building a chicken coop, or building a house, or building an oven, it didn't matter. I didn't notice when I thing of it, they weren't all Italian. They weren't all Italians, whoever was in the neighborhood ate. An example of this. I remember Dr. Demman's family. He had a lot of young brothers. No matter where you were in the neighborhood you ate there. I remember going into Mrs. Demman's house and she put this great big bowl of food on the table and we all dived in and we all ate and we all shared what was there. I can also rememver in Lee Martines family when we went there, in fact his mother was in to see me and I missed her. She was in to see me she is from Albuquerque and she is some-

thing like 92 or 87 years old. She remembered me because when the boys when we lined up to get a tortillas and cold beans there was a pot of cold beans on the table and she would scoop them out and a our cold tortilla. No matter where we were we ate. It didn't make any difference, no matter where we were in the neighborhood we were, we ate.

PN: Is this basically the type of social activities that the Italians participated?

AV: I think so, I think...

PN: Were there any others that you can think of, for instance dances or weddings?

AV: Yes, dances, weddings. Oh I remember when so and so would have a baby we would all to go to the house to welcome the baby and there was always candy and the kids always played and there was always plenty of food. I told you the pig killing episode, whenever they killed pigs all the men helped and we use to have a party out of that. I remember distinctly coming home from school and someone would be baking bread in these big outdoor ovens and you be coming home and you would be kind of hungry and you would walk to the first person that you knew there and they would see you come into the yard and you could see the pigeons, I recall the pigeons playing in the yard, scratching in the yard, and this little lady how many of us, five six, seven, she would get one of this big ovens and take one of the loafs out and it use to frighten me to death because they had this big knife and I thought for sure that they were going to cut off half

of their breast the way they cut this bread. (laughter) They would give us this hot bread and plum jam. I hate plum jam because everybody had plum trees so they made jam out of the plums. But it didn't matter where you were you ate. This is why possibly I didn't feel that there was any prejudice because we did this whether it was in the swimming pool. We use to dam up the creek in Sunnyside, cut off our levis or go skinny dipping. We all went together. It didn't make who you were, I mean we didn't know there was any difference I guess. Wherever there was food to eat we ate.

KP: Do you think that was true of the other communities here in Carbon County or just out at Sunnyside?

AV: I hope that it was. I think that it was. I think it was, this is what I knew of it. Like I say that the only that I knew was when I found that there was any prejudice was when I went into the service. These were boys from Texas and other parts of the country, that made comments about it.

PN: When you were growing up did your mother have any beliefs or cures that she tried out, that she had brought over from Italy? I have been doing...

AV: Yes, they all had a few of those. Well I guess one of the most popular ones is chamonile. Every baby that is born in a European family the first thing that you get is a box of chamonile tea. Peculiarly enough when my daughter was born, my first daughter was born, my wife's Uncle Gus Boras came in the house and I will never forget, he brought us a pound of pure packed chamonile. Of course

my mother was passed away by that time. He said, "I want you kids to use this." And then I was in pharmacy school and I asked Dr. Swinward, our pharmacology professor. This was one of these, those things that you were talking about that my mother always used. Anytime that you had a stomach you always had some chamanile tea. So I asked Dr. Swinward, our pharmacology professor what is medical ingredient in chamanile. He kind of smiled at me and said, well it is not suppose to work. There is nothing in it that we know of that will work, but use it and sell it, but keep your mouth shut. We don't know why it does, but it does." (laughter) I relay that information to some of my customers today. We still sell chamanile. The Spanish people call it manganilla and it is very pleasant tasting. Probably you have had some.

PN: They still use it. My sister uses it.

AV: One day I was talking to me dad about pneumonia and when I was a kid when anyone was sick there was always chicken soup. I think most European families when anyone was sick you killed a chicken and brought them chicken soup. Chicken soup seemed to take care of most conditions. I was asking my dad what is the deal on pneumonia, what do you do when a person has pneumonia? He said, "well in those days, this was in Colorado I think he was telling me. When a person had pneumonia, there were a very few doctors so you always looked for some little lady or some little man who made the best mustard plaster or the best plaster that they could. Someone had special ingredients and the reputation grew Mrs. Cammari. So and so has



the best mustard plaster. So three o' clock in the morning you would go out in the snow and get Mrs. Commari so and so and bring her to the house and she would work all night and mix you a mustard plaster with flower and onions all her special ingredients. Then they would put this plaster on you. If you lived this plaster was good and if you died you were going to die. He said, "really son what can I tell you." He said, "everybody tried this and they tried that," but he said that, "it was in the hands of God and the mustard plaster don't know, I guess. It saved some and a lot of them died. There weren't doctors so you did the best you could." Another one that I like particularly since we are on this. When you ever had a tooth ache, now my mother and father use to get grapes, our relatives would send us grapes from California or somewhere else. Nice big seedless grapes. My mother would put them in a bottle and put whisky in them(laughter) and of course she would serve them to company on a cold winter day when the people came. You had a couple of these grapes and with whisky and they warmed your tummy up. They did a hell of a job on a tooth ache. If you had a tooth ache by the time you got that whisky on your tooth and you swooled a little bit you went to sleep and the tooth ache disappeared. I still like this. I think the modern counter part is ba-ba-a rum and I guess cherries jubile, a type of cherries jubile.

PN: Cherries brandy?

AV: Cherries brany comes from this, but they used to have... Let's see what else. They made poultice, mustard plaster and of course rubs. I remember when I had a cold we would call them finnellas. The Greeks have them too. They use to knip knit little vest like things that you worn. As soon as October come along you put them on with your long winter underwear. Anytime that you had a cold, it was a green, I remember I had a green one and a purple one. The sleeves were cut off so you wouldn't show your shirt you got, but you put that on when the fall came and in the spring you got your BVD's with you can go swimming in the river, but you worn these little things all winter long, brothers and sister all alike. When you got a cold your mother use to run and get the vicks and they use to rub you from one end to the other with this vicks. They seemed to think by keeping the chest warm by rubbing it this would drive the cold out of you, and they do this today. Of course, doctors question the value of rubefaciants and vicks for...

PN: Did your mother ever put vicks inside of a pan of water and have the steam come up? They call it a sumento I believe.

AV: Yes, they use that as sort of a modern day vaporizer that we use today. We used to do that. Another thing they all had... everybody use to have their own famous cough medicine with lemon and honey, and a little brandy or a little whisky. That was good medication when you, even today. The honey and the things that they used were for expectorants to help you cough

it up and the alcohol was sort of a sedative and the warmth of it. Then they put a eggs in it and all sort of spices. It was I consider it pretty good medication in those times, for what they had.

PN: Are you familiar with what they call the malocchio? The belief in the evil eye.

AV: Yes I have heard that expression, but the one that I recall is, I think that they used to call it facinato.

PN: Facinato?

AV: Facinato. My wife is Greek and I give her an example of here we are suppose to be modern people, but I remember my daughter Vicky was a baby and everytime this lady would come in the house she would say, "Vicky doesn't look too good." Everytime she would leave my wife would say that Vicky would get a cold. This is a true story now. This happened in Salt Lake City about well, let's see, about twenty years ago. Everytime this lady come in and she was a relative of ours and she meant nothing by it I know. She would say, "Vicky doesn't look so good." Everytime she would go home she, my wife would say that she got a cold. That lady gave the hex or gave her the malocchio. This is the Greek version of it. So one day, I will never forget, this lady came up and Vicky must have wet her diaper and whether this lady or my family or somebody came up to. That diaper my family would stick a \$20 bill in whenever they would come to see the kids they would always put money in the baby's diaper and you

notice it after they left, that was a \$20 bill that they left, but htis particular day this lady came up and my wife put two little cloves of garlic. This lady said, "what is this garlic?" Oh she said, "I guess when I was cooking they must have fallen in the crib." (laughter) I found out later that my wife put the garlic in to hex the lady from, to counteract the hex because she was saying that Vicky looks kind of peaked today. (laughter) And imagine twenty years ago my wife believed this kind of thing.

PN: Did it work? (laughter)

AV: Yes, I don't know whether it worked, I don't pay much attention to it. My wife thought that it was important enought to put the garlic in the diaper to counteract the hex. Oh yeah, and I have told you another example that I think that I still do it too. I don't believe it but I do it. When you see a beautiful baby or a healthy baby and you wish somebody good you say, "that is a pretty baby," or "I am glad that you got a new car." And you know that you really are. If you don't, what I catch myself doing kind of spitting. You don't really spit on them, but you... This is to facina and if you do this you are not going to give the person bad luck, by saying this and then spitting you counter, I guess you are going to kill evil spirits from making this beautiful baby die or wrieking this beautiful car. When you wish somebody something real good and I even catch myself doing this, it is kind of silly, but I do it once in a while. When you say, like my son, for instance, my son got a new car or my son-in-

law or someone gets a new car I say, "that is a good looking car and I am glad for you." Well then you think that he might wreck a so you give it a little kings act a little counter act. We still do that.

PN: And that is all a carry-over from Italy.

AV: That is all it is.

PN: When we talked about superstitions I was wondering if you could relate to me what you felt the role of the Catholic Church was in this area as far as the Italians were concerned? Did they participate or were they or did they sort of shy away from it until for instance, I know in 1917 around there Monsignor Giovannoni came.

AV: Well I of course you know I think the Italians are the most anti-clerical people in the whole world and yet their religion is Catholicism. In my family it wasn't that way. My father in particular never went to church. My mother went everyday. She use to meet the priest at the door. I think the church sort of combines, sort of brought the people together. I remember Monsignor Giovannoni very very well. In fact, he used to frighten me to death. He used to come up and pinch me on the cheek and slap me and say, "Alberto come ti chiami," and he would slap me. I would remember him coming to into our home many times. He would poen up the pot and put a little salt in and my mother would always give him something to eat. My mother wasn't the only one I think he ate all over the county. I think that when he left every home he brought away peppers, peaches, he brought enough

but I think this is the way... but I think this brought the people together. Of course, Monsignor Giovannoni, of you know him, was a man I don't know how to describe him.

PN: Very stern.

AV: Very stern disciplinarian and he insisted the Italians come to church and give to their church, consequently they have quite a Catholic colony because of that.

PN: Do you think then that the Italians banded more closely together and affiliated more closely with the Catholic Church after with Giavannoni arrived here?

AV: No. I think that it was done while he was here. Now he made a lot of enemies. In fact I know people today that don't go to church because of Monsignor Giovannoni said they couldn't do this and they got mad at him. This is ridiculous they just wanted an excuse and they had an excuse. You still hear people today say, "I haven't been to church since Monsignor Giovannoni because he wouldn't do this or he wouldn't do this." I think that he sort of brought them together, what I think. Because he travelled all over and there are some fabulous stories about Monsignor Giovannoni. I am sure that you heard of him. He was a man who...

PN: Could you relate one or two?

AV: Yes. For example he was a man take possession of a room. You would have a whole room you full of people and Monsignor Giovannoni would come in the room and it was almost like someone said, "look." He would come in the room and all eyes would go to-

ward Monsignor Giovannoni. I noticed this and I like, I was frightened of Monsignor when I was a young boy, but as I grew older, I got very very fond of him. In fact, before he died he was in the Holy Cross Hospital and I went to see him a couple of times. When I went into the service he told me, I will never forget he told me a real nice story. Young Henry Ruggeri, Judge Ruggeri's son and I went to see him we were going into the service and we wanted to see him before we went in just to talk to him. He invited us into the living room and we were sitting down and this is the little story. An anecdote about the Monsignor. We were both at the university and I said, "Monsignor is it alright if I have a cigarette?" He said, "Oh why absolutely." He said, "Now I have to tell you something about people that smoke cigarettes." He said, "You know a person that smokes a cigarettes is..." Now how did he say this. "Is cynical." He said, "smoking to me, a person that smokes to me a cigarette is rather cynical. A man that smokes a cigar is philosophical, a man that smokes a pipe is domesticated. But he said, "I smoke a toscani," that is that little brown cigar. He says, "A man that smokes a toscani is diabolical." Now that is one of the stories that I remember. He was a very fine man and I enjoyed him very much.

PN: So, you think then that his being an Italian Catholic priest sort of brought the church a little closer to these Italians here?

AV: I think what he did because he was Italian he went into every home and he gave them hell and some he got them to church and some

he didn't. He sure in heck made them aware that there was a church. He made they aware of their obligation. So I would say that Monsignor was one of the predominating factors in this community as far as uniting the Italians together and getting them to church because he traveled. There are many stories that you can hear about the Monsignor.

PN: I have heard a few, but not too many.

AV: Well, I will relate this one. I think it was about Fred Basone. Fred Basone was an altar boy. I will tell you two that I know, maybe you will hear them again. When we had the little church in Helper up here on the hill, up by the cemenary. I think it was Eddy Howa and Stan Litizzette tells the story so possibly Stan was an altar boy with him. Anyhow it was time to pour the wine in the water and Monsignor said, "there is a fly in the wine, go throw it away." So if you knew Eddy Howa went out on the back porch and threw the and the whole thing away. And Monsignor said, "where is the wine?" He said, "you told me to throw it away." (laughter) That is one story. The other one was they were going up to Hiawatha to say mass. I think Fred Basone was one of his altar boys and somebody else. They say that he had an old 1920 Ford and he used to drive like a maniac. Someone said, "Monsignor are you going to kill us. You are going too fast." He said, "Oh no the Holy Ghost is right on my shoulder." He said, "well he might be on your shoulder, but he is not on ours and if drive like this and you are going to kill us all." You will



hear some more about Monsignor cause he told a lot of stories.

PN: Well, do you have any questions?

KP: No, I don't believe.

AV: I am sorry that I can't fill you in on what you need is some of the information up to the 20's.

PN: This material that you have given us is quite colorful and this is what we like. Another thing that I wanted to ask is do you think that Judge Ruggeri could give me some of his information that I wanted?

AV: Yes, Judge Ruggeri, let me think who else. Judge Ruggeri I think could give you and Doctor Charles Rugger's in Price nad Dr. Henry Ruggeri. I am trying to think. John Menotti in Sunnyside, let me think who else up there, old times up there. In Helper Pete Aiello could give you some information. They are old timers around here. Off hand that is all I can think of. I might be able to think of some more.

PN: Who do you think can give us some help in the labor?

AV: I think that Sam Farlaino in Helper. Sam Farlaino I mean in Columbia, Sam as lived there all his life. He was there when I was a baby and even before. He is an older, one of the older families. Sam could give you some real good information on the strike, on the union problems if they had any and he can give it to you from an adult, from a man right in it at the time. I think that he could help you.

PN: Another thing that just dawned on me, can you remember in your

in your childhood any of these Columbus day celebrations that they would have?

AV: No, I don't. I don't recall ever having a Columbus Day celebration.

PN: Well you see in 1919 Columbus Day was made a legal state holiday. And in 1919, 1920, and 1921 they made a big deal out of it.

In 1919, the Sunnyside band and a few of the lodges here in this area went to Salt Lake for a big parade. Then all of a sudden it just fades away. I was just wondering if you could recall any of the later celebration. Apparently they didn't have any.

AV: No, but I do remember the band. Because I remember as a kid they had the band in the lower town school and I think, I don't know what the director's name was. I think it was Mike Arselino or Anselmi I don't know which. I was fascinated. They had the band in this little bottom of the school. When they had funerals and parades I remember this band and of course, all the kids would follow this band. I used to sit there by the tuba player or the clarinet player in this little cement windows. We use to sit right in these cement windows and peek in and watch them play. I do recall the band. I wish that I remember more of it because they sure impressed me.

PN: Were they made up totally of Italians?

AV: No I don't think so. I think that there was anything total there. I think in those days you lived in Sunnyside you were part of the community.

VELTRI 25

PN: You were a mixture.

AV: That is how I felt. I don't think that is all Italian.

I think that maybe the maestro, the conductor was Italian, but I don't think the others were all Italian.

PN: During this period of time, from the 1920's on to the 60's Fortunato Anselmo was the consul, vice-consul in Salt Lake City. Do you recall the way any of the people here in this area felt about that? That man being vice-consul.

AV: Yeah, he was my God father. He also baptized me and also baptized in fact, my son was the last one he baptized which he said was number 74. Now I am not sure if it was 74 or 54. He baptized 74 children and he said when my son Steril was born he said, "I am coming out of retirement to baptize your son." When he came to our home he had the store in Columbia. Of course you know that my brother married his daughter Emma. My brother Louie married his daughter.

PN: I didn't know that.

AV: And of course we use to go to the store there. He used to come to the house and my mother made a big fuss because he was the consul. I think that he did a lot for the Italians. They all looked up to him. I think they all respected him. I think that he was quite a factor in the Italian colony here because I think he was a link between the old country and here. Of course he was had a little better education than most of the people. A lot of people went to him for procuras and possibly to borrow

money. I don't know. I know they looked toward him as a leader in the community.

PN: Was he an American citizen or an Italian citizen when he was council?

AV: Well I think if I remember he was an official of the Italian government. I think during the war he resigned his commission so he wouldn't be obligated to the ...I am not sure of this, but it seemed to me at the time the war broke out he couldn't be an American citizen because he was subject to the Italian government. I think at that time though he got his citizenship papers, or something, I don't really recall on that. Anyway, he made it very clear that his loyalties were with the Americans not the Italian government. That was mostly a title rather than anything else.

PN: Then he remained vice-consul after he gave up his commission?

AV: I think, but I don't know. You could find this out.

PN: I am sure that he did because he was...

AV: Still vice-consul.

PN: Up until his death.

AV: That is right. In fact they had a dinner for him here just before he died, what 25 years as a vice consul or something.

PN: He was vice consul in 1917. That is when he first came.

AV: They had some kind of testimonial dinner for him a few years ago I remember.

PN: So he was basically well respected?

AV: I think so. Of course he was in my family and I am giving probably a prejudice view point.

VELTRI 27

PN: What type of a store did he have in Columbia?

AV: He had a little...

PN: Was it just a grocery store?

AV: Grocery store yes. My brother louie managed it for years.

Then he had... I remember that he had two stores in Salt Lake.

First downtown on 2nd South and then on West Temple he had a little importing house.

PN: In some of your dealings here di you ever, do you know what the Padrone system was?

AC: I think that I know what it was.

PN: It existed, I would say, mostly prior to 1900. Have you heard any mention of that system as applying to the Italians in Carbon County?

AV: I don't think so. I never heard my dad say it.

PN: Now the Greeks had it L.G. Skliris around 1912. I have been trying to find out if this type of system existed here.

AV: Probably there could have been, but I don't think so. The Italians were, they weren't as united as the Greeks. I think they were more scattered and they were a little more independent maybe that is the wrong word. But I think the Greeks when they formed their organization this one particular man seemed to get them jobs. There may have been, I don't know. If there was I don't think it was for too long because I don't think they would stand for it too long.

PN: When you say they weren't united do you mean they had differences between the northern and southern Italians?

AV: Not so much differences between themselves. An Italian by his own nature, by our very nature are not the type that are going to sit and be told what to do.

PN: Capo tosta.

AV: Capo tosta, hard head. That is right. I don't think there is anything, I don't think they would do that.

PN: Were there any antagonisms in this area between northern Italians and southern Italians?

AV: Oh no, I don't think Italians. Like anything else. You are from the south or you are from the Texas and I am from Oklahoma or you are from Price and I am from Helper. There were little bits of distance. I don't think that there was any deep seeded... Well there is today, well not today, but I always say kid the piedmontene, I always say you guys don't even know how to speak English. I mean I speak Italian. There aren't even very many Calabrene in this area. Most of them are Piedmontene in Helper. When I first came here I said you guys can't even understand each other. You speak French, and Austrian. I still make fun of them. I say... What in the hell are you, how can you, two eggs fried in oil. What is Italian in that. Well I joke with them down the store about this.

PN: How about antagonisms between Italians of Carbon County and Italians of Salt Lake County?

AV: No, I don't think there was any there. There might be petty jealousies like there is between in everybody. I don't think there

was any bitterness this way.

PN: Very interesting. Did your father become a citizen?

AV: Oh yes. Dad was very proud. I don't know when bit how that happened, but my dad I think probably the thing that he was most proud of. The fact that he was a citizen.

PN: Most of them were. Most of them became citizens right after they got here too.

AV: Yes and my father, he wasn't educated, but he was very educated. I don't know how to this to you. I mean he didn't have a formal education. My father knew mathamatics. Here I was in school and my father could figure out in his head what it took me on a piece pf paper to do. When I was, one thing I can say is that my dad was very proud that he could vote that he was citizen, that he was an American, that he lived here, and he took pride in knowing about politics that was going on. He took pride in being able to speak to the mayor or the chief of police. In an Italian family its basically three things that you respect, the priest, a teacher and a political officer. And the law, you had a lot of respect for the law. A lot of respect for a teacher. A teacher is very important to my father's way of thinking. In fact, my father wanted me to be a teacher. I wish that I had been. Of course the priest and a doctor too. Priest, doctor, teacher, po-lice, any authority. They had a lot of respect for authority. I don't think they even questioned authority in those days. They didn't seemed to. My dad told me this. If I went to school and

got a little hassled and I would say something happened in school. His version of that was to beat the hell out of me and then say now what did you do. That is just for getting in trouble. You don't talk back to a teacher, she is never wrong. This is the impression I got with my dad and the same thing with the law. If you got in trouble with the law, I will tell you a story about the law to show how my dad felt about this. We were back, I will never forget. This was in Price. I was a boy. We came from Sunnyside and we went to Mrs. Silvagi house. My brother Frank was about 17 years old. He was a young buck and he liked to fight about one thing or another, and a bum...This was in the morning, we were having breakfast, and a bum or somebody come to door and asked my father and my brother who drove us down. Then there was Mrs. Silvagi and her daughter Olga were in the house at the time. This man came to the house and asked if he could have something to eat. There was some sort of a hassle I don't know. I remember that they this guy tried to come into the house and my brother hit him on the jaw and knocked him through the screen door and he hit the step and his head was bleeding. Well my mother was crying, I run to the door and my father says, "go get Sheriff Bliss your brother just killed a man." I was thinking what the hell kind of father have I got. Of course the man wasn't killed. My brother had hit him, but I had to go right through the alley where the court house is right now. I went and got the sheriff and it was just through the alley there because they lived there. The man



was hit. My dad was going to have my brother...The police checked my brother because he said he killed him. I mean it kind of shook me even. My father said go call your brother just killed a man.

PN: He had a lot of trust for the law.

AV: Yes. That is what I mean, that is just exactly what I'm trying to say.

PN: This respect that they had could that be applied to their employers? For instance did they have a lot of respect for the companies?

AV: Right.

PN: The coal companies?

AV: Because you always took care of the company employer. Now this wasn't...Yes this was in the early days. Now you might interpret this as a bribe possibly now, but my dad during not even it had to be special holidays they had little special things like sausage or so on. A little special bottle of wine they always brought to the supper. My mother used to bring it to her butcher, to her milkman, to her cammaris. I don't know I think that it is part of the way some Italians live. My mother everytime she went somewhere she had sacks full of things to bring to this lady cammari. Consequently when she came back she had twice as much as she bought. I never recall opening our frig or going down our basement when there wasn't practically anything that you wanted to eat. That is why I said that I never knew what hungry was. My mother use to bring her butcher a little bit of this and the mailman. And it is a thing we do today, I do today.

VELTRI 32

PN: Well I guess that we should wrap it up. Thank you very much

Mr. Veltri for your cooperation.

AV: Okay Phil thank you.