

INTERVIEW WITH RAY MARIUCCI

I: People are coming to the new country

RM: I was born in ? Italy that was in the central part of Italy. In the providence of umbrovia. You have to roll those R's you know when.

I: How did your family make a living?

RM: Well uh they when they lived there they had vineyards. But then there was a need to come over here to make a profitable living so my dad and some of my brothers came over here and worked in the mines. In Everet, Minnesota. Then eventually we came over.

I: Do you remember hearing any stories of how the trip was, the living conditions or anything?

RM: The trip that my father made. Oh I have no idea. They came over with the boats. Because they couldn't afford to fly but. So did I at the time. We landed in New York but I as a child, 6 year old child, I really didn't remember any events of the trip. All I know is coming to Iron Mountain and being placed in first grade without any knowledge of english or speaking english. We had to adjust.

I: you had to make a lot of language and cultural adjustments.

RM: Language primarily.

I: Did you always live on the north side or

RM: Yes

I: and that's where your family first settled over here on the north side

RM: They did settle here when I came over here but prior to that my parents were in Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri and Evert, Minnesota working in the mines to make a living. But then when my dad got a job here we came over. The three brothers and I and mother came over.

I: Did your family bring any favorite recipes over to pass on?

RM: Well you can ask D about that my wife. She learned a lot in regards to Italian cooking from my mother and occasional well quite often she reproduces the soups and the gravy, the spaghetti gravy, that she observed that my mother had.

I: Do you think these recipes are exact or has she changed them a little.

RM: Oh I would imagine but I remember the depression days okay.

When I came over the depression was starting you know the early thirties so my childhood was in a depression stage. Where we had to stand in line for food and for clothing etc. The soup bone was used quite often to make soup everyday. Repeated with the same bone was used. I notice in one of the questions you ask what did you learn from growing up with my parents. And I would say that I learned to save learned to appreciate things, like turning off lights when there not needed you know what I mean. I still habit you know I want to conserve. You know conserve energy conserve heat conserve electricity, conserve food. And I still have that trait. I don't regret it.

I: Are there any sports or entertainment activities that were practiced in your country that are practiced here today?

RM: Well of course again I was too young to be involved but you know but bachi ball was a popular game over iki Italy and you probably know that we have a very good program here in town and I am very active in bachi ball program we started about seven years ago and we have people playing it so that as far as sport recreation activity and music. I noted talents for music and I love music. See over there about 2500 albums. Music of the oldies of the goodies and lot of people have? then but the records are there.

I: About the bachi ball, how did that come about around here?

RM: It probably the time I came here the north side was an Italian settlement lot of Italians here. the taverns or the so-called saloons had ? in their backyards and that was an attraction for people to come and use that as a recreation and the loser would buy the winner a nickel beer. that was the price of beer in those days. we are going back to early 1930s o.k. And as a kid I used to hang around those boys and courts and play. I just grew up with it.

I: Do you think your family had more opportunities for education and success by coming here?

RM: Not really I think the only person that had any success is myself. I feel very fortunate that I was at an age where I didn't have to contribute to the economy of the family. My older brothers however had to and they worked to support the family. I feel fortunate that I was in a age where I could go to school. I finished high school and none of my brothers had the opportunity to get an education. Either High school or college because we were working class. That was a necessity in those days. So I am very grateful that I had the opportunity to get a degree from Michigan State and get involved in Education. Very Very fortunate. And then also of course I was at an age where I was involved in WWII with the United States Army. And as a result of that from the GI bill was able to get an education. Where as if I had stayed in Italy and also didn't have the GI Bill I don't think I would have been educated. The advance education so I feel very fortunate in that respect.

I: Do you think that your brothers feel fortunate at all about coming to the new country?

RM: Yea, I think so. My brothers, I have one brother still living here who has very fond memories of Italy. He often reminisces about what he did over there. He has been back there a couple of times. Incidentally I plan to go back there. I have been procrastinating all those years. So I'm planning on going back eventually. In the next year or two to visit my homeland to see where I was born.

I: What do you believe is the most important family tradition or belief that your family has passed on and kept from the old country?

RM: Well I think I mentioned that before. It's the, I think the economy not to waste things you know. To appreciate what you have. Work habits you know you have to work hard. My family were laborers, as I said they were not educated, they worked in various jobs as laborers. And they worked very hard. As a matter of fact employers were eager to have their services. Sometimes they got in trouble with the union because they worked too hard. They developed good work habits. I think that's one of the traits that my family had is that they were good workers.

I: Do you pass that along to your kids?
How do you feel about education with your kids?

RM: Well I have 6 children. They have all received some kind of education. They have all graduated from high school. And 3 of them have college degrees. The other have their trade. One of my sons has a hair styling shop this is what he wanted to do. And then I have 2, 3 girls that work with the medical profession. And of course Steve is the 49's head coach. And Bobby of course the baby has done very well also. He is out in Stockton now with Steve so they keep in touch. I am very proud of my kids.

I: You said that you were in WWII. Do you have any memories of that at all or what the times were like?

RM: Yea, I didn't see, I was not really involved in the drastic action. I was on my way to Hawaii to go to the Philippines. Before I got on the ship I was injured and we were on that ship for about a week with a broken elbow. There was no medical care at the time. So when we got to Hawaii I got some medical attention but it was too late the elbow is not operable. They couldn't fix it so as a result I can't, my elbow is stiff. I was sent back to the states. In various hospitals and eventually I got discharged at the end of the war ended I was discharged. I was with the so called tank destroy units and as I say we were on our way to the Philippines but because of the circumstances of where I was injured my arm was not usable so I was sent back to the states.

I: Were any of your brothers or father in any war that you know

of?

RM: No

I: How about any of your kids?

RM: No, the timing kept my kids out of any army service or military service.

I: How did you meet your wife?

RM: Ironically I don't believe in drinking and things like that but I met her at a bar. Let me explain. I was a chamber of commerce secretary and at that time I had to socialize with various people. That was the nature of the job. I was visiting this so called restaurant, bar whatever you want to call it. And she happened to be there so we got acquainted.

I: And what year was that in?

RM: We got married in '53.

I: I would like to thank you for answering all of my questions.

RM: That's all are you sure?