

Interview with Adorno "Babe" Salani
Marquette, MI
August 23, 2010

START OF INTERVIEW

MAGNAGHI, RUSSELL (RM): First could you tell us your birthday?

SALANI, ADORNO "BABE" (ABS): September 14, 1919

RM: Could you tell us a little bit about growing up, your family, how they came to the Copper Country, where they were from in Italy and so on before we focus on the Copper Country?

ABS: My father came from Collodi in Italy, and my mother was born in Italy in a little town called Lateria.

RM: What were their names, your mother and father?

ABS: Folana, my dad's name was Alipio Salani, they migrated to this country. My dad, I think, came over to this country in the middle 80's, no not the middle 80's I would say probably 1885 somewhere in there. My mother came over about the same time. When my dad came here he landed in New York and migrated to North Dakota, where there was mining and an Italian population, but for some reason...

RM: Was it North Dakota or South Dakota?

ABS: It was miners, North Dakota was mining, that's what I understood but maybe I'm wrong. So he went there and settled into ___ mine. He started working in the mine and he got hurt and in those days there was no hospitalization so he had to quit working. Consequently he bought this building and had a pool hall and the men would gather there and play cards. Then we became distributors of spirits. You know what I mean, I can say bootleggers okay? I'll say bootleggers and that's how we survived. During the depression I was not sure, we had everything we didn't want for anything, but there were so many that didn't have my school charms. We migrated from Franklin, we lived in Franklin, and in 1930 we moved to Hancock on Ethel Avenue. Growing up we went to the Catholic School through the 8th grade and then I went to the Hancock High School and graduated in 1937.

RM: When you moved down to Hancock did your father continue with the uhh...

ABS: No he moved downtown.

RM: But he had another pool hall?

ABS: Well he had several of them I was going to come to that. And again ___ my mother went to another Italian family and introduced the spirits, booze. My mother would buy all of the condiments and then it would be transferred down to our house in 25 gallon barrels. That's when I learned how to drive a car. We had a 1927 Dodge touring. My dad passed away in 1935. I used to go up through the allies with

the car and go over to the place where the merchant had produced booze; I should say whiskey though shouldn't I? I would take the empty barrels bring them down to the basement bring up the full ones four barrels at a time. Then I'd drive the car back down through the allies and park it right next to the house and go down into the basement and my mother had fixed up a room downstairs in the basement apart from the rest of the room. She had it built up, she had blocks and then two by fours they were spread far enough so that the barrels could roll, the belly of the barrel could roll, and so she would take the first one over here. And when she would color it, it wasn't brown when it came out, it was white. She would color it with kitchen ____, it doesn't separate. You'd take that bottle of whisky and look at it; you'd think it was the gold you know? We used to serve in the house; people would come in and buy a pint, a half pint, or even a gallon sometimes. A pint was 50 cents, a quart was a dollar, and a gallon was four dollars. I would come home from school and there would be one of the prominent people in Hancock sitting in the living room having his cocktail. I don't think I should mention names. He was the attorney, the county attorney, sitting down in there and then there'd be reporters, a couple reporters, one from the Gazette and on from The Mining Journal, sitting down having a drink, when I would come home from school. That's when my father had passed away.

RM: So your mother then earned money by dealing in...

ABS: In 1930 she and I and my cousin from Chicago, Maywood, we took a trip to Italy. We stayed over there for, oh maybe a month and a half; I think it was a month and a half or two months. We made our base in ____ where some of her people lived.

RM: Now what part of Italy is that?

ABS: That's in Tuscany. Went over by boat, landed in Genawa, took a train to Nuka, and there was an old friend that was living in Mathria that had lived up in Franklin that went back to Italy. He picked us up at the train station and brought us up to the ____, and when we wanted to go anywhere he would transport us where we wanted to go.

RM: Now did you, in your home, did you speak Italian?

ABS: I did a little bit, I did, but when I got married, it almost left me.

RM: But you were speaking it when you were growing up?

ABS: Oh yeah and when I went over to Italy I knew how much different it is with speaking over there with the words. You say one word over here and it was Americanized, you go over there it was the real Italian. And Tuscany is the national language.

RM: Then were you also probably speaking a dialect?

ABS: Uhh yes, it was umm...

RM: From the town your parents came from? And both parents were from Tuscany?

ABS: Yeah my father lived in Collodi which was maybe 20 miles from where my mother lived, but they didn't know each other at that time.

RM: So they met here?

ABS: They met over here. We visited Luka, Monte Catini, _____ Monte Catini Novo; I went to the Italian Riviera, what the heck is the name of that? We went to Pisa, saw the Leaning Tower of Pisa, I had to take a picture of it, a picture of me holding it up. Then in the meantime my father's family moved to _____, which is still in Tuscany. So we went there and they had a son. At the time that I went over there I was 10 years old, the son was 15. My mother went to Rome, she asked me if I wanted to go to Rome, I said no, I said, I'll stay here with the boy, I wasn't, at 10 years old, I wasn't interested in going to Rome and they went to Venice too and I missed that. I remember Florence, beautiful city, beautiful leatherwork; anyway we stayed over there for about a month and a half and then came back.

RM: This was in about what year?

ABS: 1932; somewhere in there.

RM: And your father passed away in 1935?

ABS: Yes, he wouldn't go. But when he was _____ he used to have what they call blind pigs and if he didn't, all the fines that he paid from being pinched, arrested, we could've been living pretty good, better than we were. The last time he was arrested, he skipped bond and went to Chicago for a year. At that time the time limit was gone so they couldn't hold him. How he was arrested for that time _____ an Italian and they were good friends. We had a little whip it with a rumble seat, dad put the booze in the rumble seat and was going to this road house and the county sheriff was up there with his deputies. He said 'hey Alipio we want to look in the car', he said 'sure go ahead and look,' he didn't think they were going to do it. They looked in the car and here's some booze in there so they arrested him, took the whip it, it was called a whip it, Willey's whip it, and they put it in the yard and he left for Chicago. He stayed down there with friends of his and maybe a block or so away was the Italian club and they played cards. So he stayed with them people for a year and he seemed better. In the meantime my mother and brother went over to the county court house and bought the car back. Then I went to high school....

RM: Your family didn't stop selling though?

ABS: Oh no, no, no.

RM: So this is just a little side remark, a little break?

ABS: Yeah and I went to Hancock High School, played football _____ 1939. I had a pretty good voice; I used to sing once in a while with the Suomi College Choir. I didn't take the subjects good to go to Tech, I wasn't that smart really. I could've went if I had taken a liberal course or something whatever, but I chose not to, my dad was gone I had to support my mother some way so I went to work at _____ in 1937 when I graduated, that was a learning, I often said to myself why didn't I go to school, to college. Well anyway I was too late then. Then in 1943 the people at Vollwerth Sausage Company called my brother and said, "We're going to ask Babe if he wants to come and work for us," my brother said, "Sure call him." So I interviewed with one of the brothers of Vollwerth's, I'll have to tell you why. He interviewed me on the porch at his house, hot summer day just before the fourth of July. So for the end of June I worked for _____ and after the fourth of July I went to work for Vollwerth's. I was a driver and a warehouse person. I worked myself up to a salesman and I made more money in Michigan. They told me that you're not going to make more money than your doing in _____, but you will be in six months. At the

time at ____ I was making about 50 or 70 dollars a week which in those years was a lot of money. So I worked my way to a salesman and in 1956 they bought out an old sausage factory in Marquette here. It was the Marquette Meats, ____ brand, anyways in 56 they said Babe your going down to Marquette, you don't have a choice, you're going, and they were good people. The guys that worked up at Hancock were good, good people. So I came down here to a busted down sausage factory as a sales manager. Jerry Stafford was the production manager, he worked for Marquette meats, and he and I got to be very, very close friends that worked well together. He took care of the production and the buying of the raw materials and I took care of the sales. I did a lot of the promotional work, besides handling the salesmen and collections and all that stuff. So in 19...and I always said when I be 62 I'm going to retire regardless. So in 1981 I retired in September, in February of '82 I had cardiac arrest. Bingo, so I enjoyed myself from '82 until I had bypass surgery in '95. Since then I've had several other things ____, but I enjoyed the work with Vollwerth's, I enjoyed being with people, I enjoyed presenting our products to the people, and we put on seminars or whatever. I went all over the UP, and we tried to go to Wisconsin, but that didn't go well. I tried to get into central distribution, like a chain store, and they said no we've got enough; you take care of what you're up to in the U.P. Especially down in Wisconsin, they told me, Babe you've got good sausage, but Wisconsin we've got lots of sausage factories and lots of them made their own. So that went kaplook (?) We tried to go down to Lower Michigan and that was really eye opening. We thought maybe if we could a central distributor, there were a lot of people who moved into the Detroit and Flint area, and Lansing area, during the war to work in the factories and they stayed down there.

RM: From the U.P.?

ABS: Yeah, from the UP they went down. Regressing back, every Sunday morning I would go to the plant, and there was a ____ hauler up there, that went down to Detroit to pick up carts and bring them back up here. I would go down and we would load 2000 pounds of sausage on the cart carrier, those big cart carriers, it was Sunday morning and I'd have to go down there and load them by the barrels. He would drop them off, there were four stores that he dropped off, and in one day everything was done. That's how many _____. So we were trying to get a central distributor, but it didn't work out, it just didn't work out. Well I went back, I tried to go up to Minnesota same way, Duluth, Superior, I had a meeting with ____ and first of all I told them, I said thank you for the ____ for two and a half years, and he said what do you mean? I said, I've traveled more places now trying to sell Vollwerth's Sausage, so I said there's some reasons why we can't _____ to you, first of all we don't have the money, we don't have the finances, we don't have enough finances to put on the large coupons, which was the raise in them days, like it is now. Thirdly we couldn't get a central distributor, so I said it's just impossible we can't. So that went through and then we start talking about... they'd call me back every so often, wondering how we're doing down here, I told them good, they built a new building, where Mersidotes is, beautiful compared to the one we had. What's your first name?

RM: Russ.

ABS: Russ, do you mind if I call you Russ?

RM: That's fine.

ABS: Otherwise I'd call you professor. You should've seen the building, there's these little stores ____, the product the _____ sausage, and everybody made the best Italian sausage, you know how the Italians are, I make the best. So I moved down here and had, I think it was a good thing that I had that

heart attack, you know home. After that we done a lot of traveling downstate, we had relatives down in Lansing, we had relatives in Chicago, we had relatives in Green Bay, so we traveled after that. Two years after I left the company went out of business.

RM: Here in Marquette?

ABS: Yes. Well anyway, beside the point, I can't say anything on here, but uh since then I would, and then I went, and I wanted to do something. So I went to the hospital and was looking for the volunteer director, Norm Hefty's wife, I forget her first name. She says oh sure we can use volunteers. So through my talk, which you know, I was a people person. So what did she do? She put me in a warehouse for the hospital where they store all the products that they use. I said no, no this is done for me, I said, I want to be around people. So then she put me in the mail room, which was just as bad. In the meantime, they had finished the '84 building. She said I've got just the place for you; we'll put you at the desk at the 84 building, because there was no other building living, standing. So I said fine. I sat at the desk there with a lady, she was Mrs. I can't remember the name now, she was a nice lady, her husband was killed at the prison, stabbed in a riot. Anyway way we both sat there, and she was a real nice innocent lady, and I'm not [laughs]... I can't stop doing things, that maybe sometimes I shouldn't say or do. So I tell her a little whiskey joke and she would get red face. We watched the '86 building built over there, and when they were putting the steel frame up we could see it from the desk. We'd see these iron workers walking across the beams in the winter time, and whoa whoa whoa she'd be at the desk. The building was built and they transferred me and her over to the '86 building, the Nellburg Building.

RM: Okay which is the modern building...?

ABS: Right across the street on the north side _____. Well in the meantime we decided to _____ the front desk which then became, the entrance, they built the ramp and, Mrs. Hefty, I can't think of her name now. Anyway she says babe how would you like to set up serving and greet the people as they come in, I said that's just what I need. So they set up a desk I got the _____ everyday and then the sheet with what was going on in meetings and greeting people. In the summertime it was beautiful, in the wintertime I would leave my boots on and I'm not making big stories up. Uh I would wear a jacket, a winter jacket, and gloves and a thick hat, honestly, and I told them I'm freezing up here. So, I said enough of it, one day I came back and they had piece of _____ which is about this high and extended all over the desk, which was a big improvement, but that air would come right over it, they didn't have any, they just had one entrance, one set of doors and the ramp, and when they opened up, whew. So I talked one more and I said finally I went on vacation and came back and here was a full _____ from the floor to the ceiling, and that was a big improvement whoa. Well anyway it got busier and busier and I enjoyed it there. I met so many people from all around the U.P., I used to travel all over the UP, and they'd show up and say Babe, oh it's a long time, do you remember me? No I don't. Then we went down and we were down at the Soo for a while for about 10 years, 12 years. People from the Soo would come up and they'd say this is what you're doing, how you're doing? I'm doing fine, yeah. So I'm still at the same desk at the entrance, I've been there I don't know how many years 20, a little over 20 years at the hospital. So in the meantime all this building is going on, meeting the people and I loved it, I still do, I'm still at the _____, they've got a computerized system now which I didn't care to do, I really didn't. I say at 87 or 88 years old I don't care to learn how to run a computer. I was honest with them; they said well that's alright. So some people who sit at the desk know how to do it. I don't have a computer at home. So I get along with the _____ pages. Some of them use the computer, but I think it's almost as fast turning pages and the names are right there. That's about what I have done over the hospital, I remember St. Mary's when they had the big building. You know that _____. And uh all my kids are, I think that my kids were born over there, my

two girls. In fact one of my daughters was one of your students way back in, she took geography or history. She said she loved him, she loved history, she said I love the guy the professor that was there. Her name is Pat Blankmar. She's the head of the tourist bureau in Marquette. My other daughter graduated from there and she worked for the city down at the power plant. She was the office manager for a while, and jeeze she got tired of taking, too many bosses, too many supervisors, so she retired. They're doing quite well; she married a young man from North Marquette, Northern Rudyard. By the way my two daughters graduated from Northern, so that's when I ____ the hospital. St. Mary's, I think my daughters, yeah my daughters were born over there. I don't remember too much of it, I really don't, because I didn't have any opportunity. I was never in a hospital when St. Mary's was _____, never. But the um Marquette General, between the hospital was there, which was the ____ building, that was the JCM building and then a children's clinic, the doctor who lived up on... right across the street from the, the high rise up there. Cooper, Dr. Cooper _____. Then, there was another building; I can't remember what that was. And then they had a tunnel over to the original St. Luke's. Then, I came down here when I was called to go to the _____ service. We started in the JCM building, went over too Cooperstock Building, and then those other buildings, I forget what the name of it is. Then, we went to the original Marquette General Building, at that time, what was it called at that time?

RM: Was it Couzens Memorial?

ABS: Couzens?

RM: Yeah, James Couzens Memorial.

ABS: So, anyway, came down all set to go to the service and they started at the top. It was four stories, is it? Yeah, four stories. I got down to the bottom, helped the guy working for Cohodas, 23 years old, strong as a bull. Went down to the end, big red marks ____, I said "could you tell me why those are ____." He says, "Yeah, it says that you are excitable but you are not able to be in the service."

RM: Because you were excited?

ABS: Nervous, they didn't want nervous and excitable people. So anyway, here I am 23 years old; strong as a bull, going back and they were taking people out of the mines! Families! Oh, I was a miserable person to be living with... live with. My wife almost divorced me _____. Yeah, oh I was.... Not mean but just....

RM: Yeah.

ABS: Well anyway, and I had to go back to the hospital...

RM: Now, just to kind of get some of that background. When you started they didn't have volunteers connected, working with the hospital?

ABS: Well, I was one of them and I don't know how many others

RM: Were you one of the first or?

ABS: See, I don't know that. It seemed to bother, I went to _____ and Mrs. Demars was there. She was a volunteer, and the only building that we were... that I actually remember being volunteered in. You

know, when I first started for him, we used to escort everybody. And there was only one building to escort, just to the hospital.

RM: Do you mean patients coming in or anyone that came in?

ABS: Yeah, anybody; visitors especially, or even patients that didn't know how to get to wherever they had to go. So, we would take them and meet them. The first floor you go in now in the '82 building _____. The '81 is a tower, that's right. They'd come to the desk and they'd wanna go up to the tower. We take them up to whatever floor their going or if they were having a procedure done we'd take them to where there procedure was. So, that's what.... And Margaret Demars and myself only had one day a week as a volunteer. So, I would say there were at least five volunteers, at least five, from Monday through Friday at that desk. That was the only desk that was the only desk that was there besides the waiting room. That part of the operation hasn't changed. The main room is still there, the waiting room is still there. The cafeteria that they had was down the hallway as you go to have an MRI. Somewhere in there was this little cafeteria. It wasn't much wider then this, and as it went down it went into a point and there weren't too many people that they could fit. And the kitchen was there, the laundry was. The mercy room was different then what it is now. The mercy room then, you'd come in from college avenue. And they had kind of a driveway to back the ambulance up. And that was where you went in the emergency room there. And that's where all the patients, if you look from across the street all the windows near the ____, __ Couzens building. All those ____ on the bottom there, that used to be the intensive care and where the patients went after surgery. That was their service. That was where you would come from surgery, and then when you were ____ they'd send you upstairs, you know. But I had my heart attack and that's where I was, my cardiac arrest. And let's see, what else has changed over there. Oh, there are lots of changes but the mercy room is still there but _____, I don't know what down there. You can come in from the emergency, the old emergency entrance. If you think about it or if it's opened, I don't know if it's opened. And I was in there so many times, thinking about _____.

RM: So, is that sort of how you got kind of involved in the hospital? Through the heart attack you had to go there...

ABS: And give something back, that's how I got started. And I have several friends that are there to my ____, but I give them a hint every once in a while. Do you know Joe Gurgurich?

RM: No.

ABS: He sits at the '84 building there, at the desk, which is right across from the desk where the cancer patients sign in and he goes there on Wednesday's. Good friend of mine, we became real, very good friends. He sang in a choir with me.

RM: So, you just go once a week now?

ABS: Just once a week. And I should've been going a lot more often but when I retired, my wife and I wanted... you know, we were kind of tied down. So, we did a little bit of traveling. We had good friends in Marquette here, they moved to Lansing. We were able to go on a couple nice vacations over to Hawaii a couple of times, down south a couple of times. And the ____, he was transferred from the prison system up here, down to Lansing. And she was a nurse, so she... they moved to St. John's. And then we used to visit _____. Anyway, you know, we did a lot of traveling when, went to New York a couple of time with my good friend. I became, I joined a Kiwanis and became president. And I was fortunate to

go to an International convention in Houston. Came back and I became a Knight of Columbus but I'm not active in it at all. I've been an Elk; an Elk since 1942.

RM: Oh! You go way back.

ABS: I'm a JC, third degree. I've been there enough. Shortly after I moved from Hancock, maybe around '60, I became _____. But ask me some questions...? My mind will...

RM: Let's go back to the Copper Country. Then up on Quincy Hill, up there (shuffling noise) _____ Italians.

ABS: Oh yes, the little town of Limerick. There was Franklin, the street cars were running and _____. If you went this way coming toward Hancock it was Limerick, _____, Frenchtown and all those. Limerick was predominately Italian. No that was _____, Limerick was English. Frenchtown was a lot of French and others. But Franklin Mine, where I lived, there were a lot of Italians, where Jim and _____ were from. That was a big Italian colony, even Irishmen. The house where I lived, across the street were Italian people, they go by the name P _____ino's. Just going south, _____, there were people by the name of Mu _____'s, the good football player. And the next _____, that was a McCarthy. They had some _____, Frank, Francis, and two daughters. _____ the street, were people by the name of _____'s. They had two daughters and one son. And the son became a catholic priest. In high school, he was crazier then the _____. Then on the side of the street where I lived, it was our house, then it was Hall's, they had two daughters and one son. Next one was...Irish people. Anyway, then next to them were people by the name of Hale (sp?) too. They were well-to-do people, big home. There was a _____, then across the road there was a gas station where you pumped the gas. The gas would come down. _____ would be west out, where the old Lumber Six mine is. To tell you how the mine was... you know where the lookout is up where you go on 41, there used to be a mine there. My dad got hurt there and right across the street was a big building, it was a dispenser. At that time, there was you know, like I said you got hurt _____. And just up the road, the mine shaft that's in the picture right here. And down up the road again, there was a mine in between these too. There was nothing there, the building was gone. Then there was a big, big mine, mine shaft. It was _____. The sides from the ground floor gave out like this here. And I don't know how many, but it was written up that is was one of the only _____ mine shafts in the country. And then there was maybe, a half mile from there, there was a mine shaft. The grade school that I went too, Franklin school... that's gone, they tore it down. Then the mine shaft in Menart, that is gone. Then if you get the street car, now the street car tracks went from Houghton, Hancock, and all the little towns I mentioned that go the hill. Then they went out too _____, not _____...

RM: Boston?

ABS: The Boston would be... there was one little town there. _____ up to Boston, Electric Park, and then Osceola, and _____ it went down and up Pine Street, not Fifth Street, but Pine Street. Went down the street car, went there. Then it followed the highway and went down to... what was the name of that street... Anyway, they followed this road and it connected to 41 and it followed the road all the way down, it went too all the little towns, all the way down to _____. And we'd come back down, went to Copper City and down to Gay. And then they came back and when they come to railroad tracks, they had big trestles, they'd _____ the trestles. I came back and done the same route and went over to Houghton. You know where the stoplights are at Tech there when you're on 41?

RM: Yeah.

ABS: There used to be a little grocery store, Vivian's Grocery. That was there.

RM: Okay, on the campus... that was there for... yeah I remember.

ABS: On the campus there, oh for years. And it... put the wires _____, the arm up to the wires and this side, put this one down. So, back they go and they went right up in front of our house. I remember the night they closed the last route, the last ride. That was in 1934. They were hanging out from the windows, they were on the roof, and right up the street there was a big garage where they were repaired and stored, so...

RM: So, you used them... the people used the street...

ABS: Oh, yeah! That was the only _____ in the wintertime. From the month of October to the month of April, you couldn't go by car between Hancock and Calumet. You'd have to go by street car or by train. We had two trains in the morning and two trains in the late afternoon. _____ St. Paul _____. They went by the house just 500 feet from the house. Your familiar with the Hancock I'm sure? Okay, you know when you come up to 41, you go through Hancock and then you make a turn _____, Gino's is across the street, you go up the highway and you make _____, there's a store there. If you went straight, we were the second house on _____.

RM: Oh, okay. You lived at that end, kind of west of _____. And so you were just up the street from Cohodas?

ABS: The old hall, _____ then they went and bought where the UP Power Company down on the lakefront. Right next to _____ Stadium. That used to be _____.

SIDE B

ABS: ... big grocery warehouse, Cohodas _____. Cohodas and _____, it was ___ and ___ in Hancock that had a small food company. And the Cohodas brothers had a big, big warehouse in Houghton. Up on the top there was an ice house, a big house. Oh my gosh. The ice house was probably a block around and they were right down on the lakefront. And that burnt down, so they bought this building and then...

RM: Oh the Hancock...?

ABS: No, no in Houghton where the U.P. power company is now.

RM: Oh, okay.

ABS: They bought that big building and they got together and they said, "Why are we fighting each other with this ___?" So, well, I graduated from high school _____ and I worked there for 7 or 8 years. My brother was a supervisor; I don't even want to think about it. He worked the hell outta me. Oh! Oh! I used to do twice the work that the other guys did. Honestly, twice the work. But there was no other work.

RM: Now, how many people were in your family then?

ABS: My family, my brother, my older sister. One of my brothers passed away when oh... three or four years old. But my sister, she lived with us. She married the owner of the store that serviced the people of the streetcars, right across the street from us. His name was Frank _____. And during the depression, they went to Chicago. They thought, before the depression sorry, they thought maybe they could get some work out of Chicago. We had some relatives down there, so he did get a job. He got a job at a _____ Company and he worked there for quite a while. Then _____ Company quit, you know closed up. So, he got bartending and doing a lot of bartending, and then he died. They used to come back when there wasn't work in Chicago. They'd live with us; he bartended in some of the saloons up there at that time. So, it was a little bit hectic when they'd come. They had two kids, a boy and a girl. The boy got _____ in Italy when they _____. Near...

RM: Near Sicily?

ABS: Near Sicily. From Africa, he went to the _____; he went to the _____ evasion from Africa all the way down. And he was there when _____. Young lad, he went in the service and never came home again. Never came home _____. So that's...

RM: So now your sister's name was...

ABS: Mary. Mary Solani then she got married to a _____, Frank _____; with no relationship between my brother-in-law and Gino's _____. We couldn't find any.

RM: And then your brother's name was...

ABS: Louis. And he married a girl from Lawyer, Dorothy Hartman. And when they got married it was during the depression. _____, and I remember this clearly, they had a bed, which my mother gave them, an old table; they pick up an old table somewhere. And for chairs they had two orange boxes, wooden orange boxes. That was their seat. And they had two of everything for the kitchen and that's how they started out. And he got to work at the Cohodas Center, he became a supervisor there. And they had let's see, three boys and three girls. The oldest girl, the oldest boy Bob, he died. He was over in Korea, Bob Solani, he graduated from Superior State in Duluth... or it's in Wisconsin? Not Duluth. Lenny had Mary Lou. She married a graduate of Tech. He studied Geology and _____. And he worked for a limestone company. He retired fairly wealthy. Dorothy Jean married a Tech graduate and went into ROTC over there. And when he retired, let me see, how many generals was there, _____ general? If he had to retire he was gonna be a top general and he was in the Air Force. Very _____, very smart, VERY smart. He graduated from Tech. And then there was a Rick Solani, who was a graduate of Michigan State, he was their punter. Then there's oh... my gosh this terrible I can't remember his name. Tony Solani, he graduated from Tech and now he's a salesman for... he's got two kids, a boy and a girl. But one of Rick Solani's son's is an athletic director at the Suomi College, Finlandia. And the other one is over on the East Coast. And well, he didn't have any girls, only got two boys, that's it.

RM: Now these would be your...?

ABS: My nephews.

RM: Your nephews.

ABS: So you know, their all successful, the whole family is.

RM: Are many of the Solanis still up in Copper Country?

ABS: Yeah, Tony Solani has got two, a boy and a girl. Mary Lou has two boys but she adopted them, she wasn't able to have any kids. Dorothy Jean has a girl nurse in the Air Force. She's a captain, I think. And Bob or... ___ had two daughters and they both live in the Copper Country. So let me see now, did I miss anything? No. Oh, Bob had Rick, Ricky Solani. He had Tony. You know, all educated, all had pretty wealthy lives.

RM: Now, were there, in especially Hancock but also up in the Quincy Hill there, were a lot of the Italians in that area from Tuscany?

ABS: I would say most of them. I can't remember if anybody ___ in Italy.

RM: Well, the only other group that would be there in ___ are ___. And they were mostly up in Calumet, so they were all over but...

ABS: ___ some Tuscans up there. But I can't, I don't remember if there was any from Sicily or in that area, ___ Calabria. And up in the South Range area were all Tuscany, ___ was Tuscany. ___ I think were German, a lot of Germans in ___ and some Italians.

RM: Now, do you remember there was a woman up there, I can't think of her name now...but she was widowed? I did an interview with her daughter or something and she ran a macaroni factory?

ABS: Oh! They lived up the street from us. ___. That's the street they used to have the races with the kids on carts. I forget, yeah, she... they used to call her... she had a mustache. Nice lady. Nice, nice lady. I forget they had a name for her and it wasn't something bad.

RM: I think she would go and deliver. She'd make the pasta and then she'd deliver up to Calumet one day and then down to South Range ___ mine the other day or something.

ABS: See, that is where the car barn is, where they stored the street cars. ___, the house here, the store here, and then her next door. And that was called Sun Street and ___ Street, ___.

RM: This is where she had her... ___ a house.

ABS: Yes, a pastaria.

RM: And there was another thing that came up, that I never been able to get any information on. Were there any Italians up there that were into puppets? Carving puppets and then putting on puppet shows? Did you ever hear of that? Somebody mentioned that to me one time. They said "Yeah, up in the Hancock area there was someone that was doing puppets." But that's all they had heard.

ABS: I can't remember. I can't remember of anyone doing that. Maybe up in the Calumet area, could be. I don't know. But you know, Calumet area was divided into ethnic groups. And the old ___ Church, you know where that was. When you're coming off 41 you make that curve, you went straight you go into ___, huge. Then St. Anne's Church in Calumet, beautiful little church. Then, there was the Italian church, two big steeples, the oldest church, down the street from Sixth Street, off of Sixth Street.

RM: Then, you have the Croatian Church and John's...

ABS: St. John's.

RM: Now, were there any special... how did you celebrate holidays? Were there any special holidays like Easter or Christmas? Did you celebrate them with special foods?

ABS: Oh yeah. In our family, raviolis were the thing. My mother would make a hundred, at least a hundred for Easter, Christmas and any other time like birthdays or anniversary. Her and my sister would sit down make a hundred, at least a hundred, when we sat at the table my sister, my brother-in-law Frank; no not Frank, Tony and my niece's girl Eda. Then there was my brother and his wife and at that time he had two kids, Bob and Myrtle. Then there was my mother, my dad and myself. And nobody helped her; she made a hundred ravioli, big roast, lots of potatoes and whatever, lots of wine, crusty bread. And we'd sit there from dinner time; sit down _____, until supertime we'd just start all over again. It was a big picnic. I remember all those things. We try to keep, I try to keep, that when we moved down here not even up in Hancock. But down here when the two girls were married, they had the kids and I tried to keep up the tradition out here. And we did. I married a girl from ____ that was a mixed breed. Her mother was Northern Italian _____. And she married a coal miner from England, from Cornwall. And he had the dialect, oh my god; I used to love to hear him talk.

RM: Oh, so he was one of the guys that spoke with a Cornish dialect?

ABS: Oh! I used to love to hear him. And they had tough times too. They went out deer hunting... or rabbit hunting and he got shot in the eye with a bullet, blinded during the depression. And he got a job as a watchman, at that time and it's still there, the electric company had a big substation up there and he was a guard there. And she had two daughter's, the first one was Dorothy and the other daughter was named Eleanor. My wife died ten years ago in 2000, and I was living on Pine Street, a nice home, a _____ home, a nice home, right across from the playgrounds.

RM: Oh yeah.

ABS: The _____, right directly across. Anyway that's almost the story of my life

RM: Yeah, now um, let me ask about the uh... During the depression, but even before, did a lot of the Italians up in the Hancock area there make wine?

ABS: Yes, my dad made it. Sometimes you wouldn't know if you had good wine coming out or vinegar. You know during the summer, if you didn't take care of your barrels right, they wouldn't get what they wanted and it came out vinegary, then you'd have two barrels, 50 gallon barrels, you had a lot of vinegar, then we'd throw it away. If you didn't take care of your barrels, and during the time of fermentation, if you didn't stir it and mix it up. I remember him going down, and I used to go down once in a while I was a little kid, but I used to stir it with him. Yeah one side was the wine along the foundation wall and the other side of the room was the booze.

RM: So then a lot of the Italians in Hancock and that area all made it, it was just the common thing to do?

ABS: Oh, you go up the streets and you could smell it, you really could. Up in Calumet, you go down the street you smell it. That's the only way the people were able to at least live. They were proud people; they would never go to welfare, never. My dad would kill himself before he asked someone to help him for food.

RM: Now did a lot of the, well not a lot, but some of the Italians, some of the other people had stills and were making, making alcohol?

ABS: Yeah, this lady had, had the stills. My mother would buy the product to go into making whiskey.

RM: Oh she would buy the sugar and what-not?

ABS: No my mother would buy the sugar and whatever else that needed to make.

RM: she needed, and then the women would make the alcohol.

ABS: And it was clean, clean as the diggens, the basement was clean, they were clean. We knew them very well; they came from the same part of the country in Italy. ____ was the name, the married name, so yeah ____ very clear, like _____. ____ take it out of the, put the top down ____ 50 inch barrels, from here to there was our basement. I used to haul it down, little young kid 15 years old, 16 years old, sure. Put them in the little rooms so my mother could...

RM: And then she would refill the bottles?

ABS: Oh yeah. The barrels and she then ____ what was what. It was a room maybe half this size.

RM: About 10 by 10.

ABS: Yeah about that. What she done, she built a rack, she had ____ wood, or rock, built it up and then she had two big long two by fours, just wide enough so that when you put the barrel up, the belly of the barrel went in between the two by fours. So she started here and went around like ____, ____, old enough to start coloring, and she used to color it with kitchen bouquet and you'd think it was, you know you see this nice colored booze, you'd think it was bourbon or blind whiskey. I drank it you know, that's how I learned to drink.

RM: Now did uh, I heard one story that the liquor that they made in Rambletown, they would sell down in Chicago at premium prices.

ABS: I would believe that.

RM: Were they known for making...

ABS: Yeah, that was a big whiskey producing part of Houghton County.

RM: Rambletown?

ABS: Oh yeah, Rambletown, ____, _____, Copper City, uh, Wolverine on the highway, you know. There was a lot of production up there, lots of production.

RM: And they were probably producing more than they could actually use.

ABS: Oh yeah, yeah, oh yeah, they'd make 50 gallons of booze take you 17 years to drink it. I always think of the, two, two newspaper persons, and the...

RM: County prosecutor?

ABS: The county prosecutor.

RM: Well you knew you were in good hands, they weren't going to advertise in the paper and you weren't going to have trouble in court.

ABS: Come home from school and look, one was called Shorty; he was a little short guy, reporter for the Mining Journal. The other reporter worked for the Mining Gazette, which is still in business up there. They would come over for their afternoon cocktails. I don't know what my mother charged them though, 25 cents a shot or whatever, but they'd spend two or three hours there.

RM: Well that was a whole, and something that's been mentioned, I don't think too much has been written about it, but it was the widows who survived the depression so long, selling liquor.

ABS: My mother, my dad died in 1935, 35. He died in December and then the following February and March then we would have been able to get his first social security check, but he didn't care, he didn't, he loved life, he really did. He drank, he was diabetic, he drank, he had a cool room, we had a cool room, and I would go down and help him. We had a little counter sell the ice cream and stuff like that, make sandwiches for the people who would play cards in the back room. We had pool tables there. He would go across the street, Franklin. We used to go downtown, at that time I might've been about 12 or 13 years old, somewhere in there. Remember those little Gladstone bags that the doctors used to have? _____. Two gallons of whiskey would sit in there one gladstone bag very nicely. So they'd fill two Gladstone bags a piece. They'd jump on the street car, go downtown and bring them to the different restaurants, and the saloons. Nobody ever thought that they were, you know. So they peddled those too. But my dad, going back to my dad, he had this cool room, he'd go across the street climb up two flights of stairs, in them days the doctors were always on the second floor of the building. Climbed up there, go in there, he was a diabetic. At that time I remember it was, remember how gum used to be packed inside the package individually with the wax paper? Well the medication at that time, he was taking, were in little envelopes like that. He'd go upstairs and get two envelopes, or whatever it was, from the doctor, put it in a glass of water and drink it down. Then, he'd come across the street and have a glass of booze or you know, he didn't, he didn't take care of himself. He'd get up in the morning, when these people would come and get, buy booze from my mother, she always had a little, remember those little um like milk, little milk jars? You'd get them at the _____ if you want something. Okay there was one there for my dad and one there for the people coming in buying the booze and every morning my dad would com down to get the coffee and sometimes he would put too much booze in the coffee, when he added the milk, the milk got curdled. But he didn't take care of himself, so consequently he ended up with uh oh I forget what the heck he called it...

RM: Cirrhosis?

ABS: Yeah, cirrhosis. I remember the Sunday the doctor came up and he drained him with a tube in his belly.

RM: In the house?

ABS: In the house. He got up and he was going to be fine. For one week he got up, walked around the house, up and down the stairs, then the following Sunday, my mother said, "Babe you go in the other room." I could hear all this commotion. The doctor came and he died. He died at the house there. So _____ was a big man, he was called Curly, tough, strong, he was the champion of the small people, people that didn't have anything, or if they were in small in stature. If somebody bigger than them started picking on them, he'd go over to them, and tap them on the shoulder and say maybe you shouldn't do that he's too much smaller than you, none of the guys would pay attention, BOOM like an 'ole Italian and down they'd go. Now do you understand? You know. He was a happy-go-lucky man, when he was drinking, he was never, he was never crabby, never, he never put a hand on me. My older brother knows a little bit more than I do, but not that much more, because I retained what they used to talk about. And uh, I'd go riding with him when we'd peddle the booze. Going back, did I tell you about the _____ when the feds were coming in?

RM: No.

ABS: Oh, the bars, at the end of the bar were all equipped, where you could put your booze, all the booze in there. And uh...

RM: Now this would be a lunch counter?

ABS: No, no, no, this was a saloon, _____, where you weren't supposed to _____.

RM: Oh okay.

ABS: They used to have a man at the door if you didn't know him, they wouldn't let him in. But anyways going back to the bar he had a... so say the bar was just here, at the end there was oh maybe something like this, to hold the booze bottles or wine bottles. So if you needed a drink you'd take it out of there and pour it and put it back in. _____ the sheriffs and feds were coming around, they had, what do you call it...

RM: ___of some sort?

ABS: No, no, when one saloon would call the other one. The feds are in town. So when they would come to the door, my dad would step on a little peddle open up and the booze would fall down into the basement in the sewer.

RM: Oh, oh in the sewer. Oh so there'd be no evidence.

ABS: No evidence.

RM: Except for a bunch of busted bottles.

ABS: Yeah. [laughs]

RM: So he also ran a blank ____.

ABS: Yeah.

RM: Did he have a number of them or just one?

ABS: No, well he did. Are you familiar with Hancock ____? Okay you know, its been a long time since I've been up there, where the old bank building in Hancock as you're going west on Quincy street?

RM: Yeah.

ABS: Go around the corner, well go west across the street, at that time there was uh, a drug store, and then there was the cleaner, then my dad had a blank pig there and next to him was the newsstand and then next to him was another bar, across the street.

RM: Now these were what? These were what?

ABS: ____.

RM: Yeah, but there was nothing... there was a door, but nothing else?

ABS: Inside there was a bar. Up the street, he had one when he was partners with a fella by the name of _____. Last name was _____.

RM: This is your dad? So they had another one up the street? I see.

ABS: My dad and this other fellow. So, he passed away and then...

RM: So he had two? Two that he...

ABS: Oh yeah, yeah. _____ on how many times. Oh my god.

RM: Now when he ran the... he also had the pool hall?

ABS: I was down... as you come up the street and you're going onto Quincy Street, he had a pool hall right there.

RM: Okay, but the pool hall then was legit during prohibition. It was selling sandwiches...

ABS: Yes, sandwiches and I think he had booze there too.

RM: But was it quiet?

ABS: It was more quiet, though. So, if we had all the money that he spent in fives, we'd have _____. But he was happy-go-lucky.

RM: But he stayed out of jail.

ABS: As little as I know about him, I love the man. He was happy-go-lucky. When he'd come home sometimes and he had a little bit too many, he'd come up singing "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean," with an Italian dialect. I can remember that. I had a hell of a good... ___ Copper Country... life. From the time I can remember and I can remember from at least 5 years old, it's been a good life. The guy upstairs has taken care of me. I never thought I was going to reach 70, little did I think I was going to reach 90 but I've never known poverty or even tough times. When I was going to high school, I would have 25 or 50 cents in my pocket and in them days that was a lot of money. So, about transportation cars, I've always dressed very decent. I got married... I could've went to Suomi College I could've went to Tech. Tech was 90 dollars a semester, see. The Professor of music at Suomi College, at that time, was more known as a theological school. And a good business school for ladies, typewriting, and shorthand. But they had a good music department ____. I can remember he had a head of hair like this... white. And he had a choral group in there. And he heard me sing somewhere and he asked me to sing with the chorus. So, I sang several seasons with him, in the spring they'd go on. Mostly to some of the big cities in the U.P., but they go to these Finnish rural places. So, when I graduated he said "Adorno, I would like to have you come to Suomi. And you can come there free of charge if you study music voice. Being what 16, 17 years old I wasn't interested in my voice, I was interested in chasing girls. I'll be honest. ___ chase girls. So, I've had a good life all the way through and I thank the guy upstairs.

RM: Now, how did you get the nickname "Babe"?

ABS: Well, I've got some pulmonary problems, that's why I'm puffin', that's why my voice is like this. I always tell people, I was the last one in the family and I was born and my mother would say "Oh, what a bambino!" They called me babe from the time I was young. ___ that story now, which I don't know how I got ___.

RM: But you were the youngest?

ABS: I'm the youngest. In fact, there were a lot of Italian kids in ___ boys and girls up there. As a nickname. My right now is Adorno Amato Salani. How much more Italian can you get?

RM: What's the middle name?

ABS: Amato. A-M-A-T-O. Where that came from... I don't know. I don't have the slightest idea.

RM: Well, that means...

ABS: Crazy. Mato means crazy, put an A in front of it.

RM: It's lover of God.

ABS: Amato? Is that what it is?

RM: Yeah, Amadeus Mozart was lover _____ of God.

ABS: Oh, first time I knew that. Love of God.

RM: Yeah.

ABS: Wait until I tell my friends! Oh my gosh.

RM: Yeah, amo you know what that meant.

ABS: Well, now I learned something new. It took me 90 years.

RM: Okay, is there anything I missed... something you want to add that...?

ABS: Well whatever, the hospital, you know, I don't know much about the old hospital. The only thing I know about the old hospital is the J.C. Couzens building, the Cooperstock Building and then the original...

RM: Hospital on the east end.

ABS: On the corner of College and Hubbard _____. And the only reason I was in there is we went to get inducted to the service. But other than that, and I don't know too much about _____.

RM: It was mostly your involvement with the volunteer program.

ABS: Yeah, and I'd been a volunteer for at least...

RM: And you're still doing it?

ABS: Oh yeah, every Wednesday morning I'm at the desk there.

RM: You're still _____?

ABS: Yeah.

RM: I came over one day and I thought maybe I'd catch you like at 1:00 or something. I said he's probably finished.

ABS: And they give us a four dollar coupon to downstairs for whatever you want. So, you know, I don't do it for that coupon because I don't go lunch anyways. I have coupons like that for when I want to take my wife to dinner. "I'll take ya out to dinner, dear." Like four or five coupons, you know. But I love people, I really do. I'm not antagonistic against people and to be... how would I say it... ethnic groups. I'm not... I respect all them, even the black people, as much as they're talked about. I don't... that's not my nature. I want to be happy. When I was working with the public, when I would take the plate I'd use a lady _____. I'd take a ___ sausage, whatever it was, put it in a plate and go around to the isles. And have a package in my hand and give them a taste. "Oh, that's pretty good." "Here have this one." You know I did stand there and say nothing and they asked you how it's made or where it's made. I knew, I knew _____, I knew how it was produced. But now, I don't see the stores doing it very much anymore. You haven't seen many demonstrators. Like Wal-Mart doesn't do it and Econo used to do it quite often and now there are no other big stores.

RM: Econo used too, but I haven't seen it recently.

ABS: I know they don't do it. It gets too expensive. And they finally found out the demonstrators don't talk, ____.

RM: Oh, that you started ____?

ABS: There was a Pillsbury salesman out there and this is back in 19 whatever it was, '43. And he used to sell flour and pancake flour. One day, I see him in the store demonstrating something, I said "____, how about if the two of us got together and make a little _____. _____ pork sausage. I went through the process and they were so well known they didn't. They didn't have to go out and fight for business. So I _____. "Yeah maybe we should do it!" So we started up there, never done it before. Then when I came down here, in this strange town, I started down here. _____ we'd get together, put on a big demonstration and _____. Put it on after the IGA in Negaunee, up in Ishpeming, have it out side ya know? I got pictures. My life has been very good. _____.

RM: Okay, what about making skis?

ABS: Every mine had a motor that used to lift the _____ up and bring them over and put them on the _____. So, they had an outlet outside of hot water and it had a big, oh a big trough like this here. We'd put our like thin boards bind them somewhere, put them in the hot water let them soak for a while, then take them out and bend them. That's how we _____, we had an old rubber tool, nail it on the side of the skis, and that was our skis. They talked about these snowboards; we had snowboards when I was growing up. We used to call them scows.

RM: Scows?

ABS: Scows. We got the barrels, there like this here aren't they, okay, we put a couple two together, maybe two or three, nail the top bent, we bent them, put a hole in the center, the center board, and tie a rope on it put a knot on the other side. Then we had a board where skis came out, the boards came down and bent like this, put a board across there, put a board in the middle, and put a board on the end. So we had a foot on the board up here and back there, and then we'd get an old tree or an old piece of wood, hold on to the piece of rope and steer ourselves with that was the snowboards.

RM: _____ snowboards.

ABS: We used to make bobsleds. Where did you grow up in?

RM: San Francisco.

ABS: Oh you did, well the bobsleds were, and we'd take tools_____. Put a big board on each sleigh and pull the rod down connect it to the sleigh so you could steer it, and nail this one in the back very good so it wouldn't fall apart you know. We'd make it so that six or eight people could ride it, and we'd ride down the hill with it. Kids nowadays don't you know if I tell things like that they don't believe me. They _____. They look at me. Bobsleds they used to call them. Fun, lots of fun, and I had a lot of fun. And this has been very, very delightful.

RM: Great, great, I've enjoyed it.

ABS: I hope you have.

RM: Oh I always do because I learn whenever I do these interviews, I learn all sorts of things and it's just wonderful.

ABS: I uh, I saw you look, when I first saw you, you were very, very serious looking and I think that was because you were taking care of your mother. When I saw you in the hotel you were still serious looking and when I came down here, I looked around, I say, "I don't see him yet, is he hiding on me." Were you over in the...

RM: [chuckles] I was upstairs yeah and I wasn't watching the time.

ABS: Oh I didn't care I sat in that seat there where you saw me, so if you did come in the front door I could see you.

RM: Oh yeah, I apologize for that.

ABS: Don't apologize; you're busier than I am. But uh, it's been very enjoyable.

RM: Yeah, well thank you.

ABS: Anytime you, if you think you I... [Tape cuts off]

END OF INTERVIEW