

Italian Market Gardeners' Oral History Project

Interview OH872/24 with Anna Santin nee Mattiazzo

(Also present is an old friend, Assunta Giovannini nee Tonellato)

Interview deposited in the JD Somerville Oral History, State Library of South Australia

recorded by Madeleine Regan at Kidman Park, South Australia

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Oral Historian (OH): Thank you very much, Anna, for agreeing to the interview.

Anna Santin (AS): That's alright.

OH: Anna, we'll start with some biographical information, and I'd like to begin by asking you for your full name.

AS: Anna Santin.

OH: And before you married, what was your family name?

AS: Mattiazzo.

OH: When were you born?

AS: I was born in Italy, Bigolino, Provincia Treviso.

OH: And the date?

AS: And the date is 11/7/27.

OH: Can you tell me about your parents, what were their names?

AS: My Dad was named Emilio, and my mother was named Livia Mattiazzo.

OH: Where were your parents born?

AS: They were born in Italy, I don't remember what town. I think the town that I was born.

OH: What work did your parents do?

AS: My Dad was a butcher when he came to Australia. In Italy he was, cattle, he used to buy cattle in the ... That's as far as I know.

OH: And your mother?

AS: She was just a housewife.

OH: Around the time that you were born, do you know what your parents were doing and where they were living?

AS: No, I don't remember.

OH: Did you have sisters and brothers?

AS: Yeah, I had a sister named Augusta, she was two years older than myself. We were, my sister and I, were born in Italy. Then when we came to Australia

Mum had another daughter named Rita, and a son named David. They were born in Australia, after we came here.

OH: Right! And we'll get to talk about coming to Australia in a moment, but what do you remember about growing up in Bigolino?

AS: I don't know, I was about two years old when I came away from Bigolino. I lived with my Mum's Dad and his family. Mum was ... Dad had come from, to Australia in 1928, and Mum was left in Italy with my sister and I. She was a house servant to somebody there in Montebelluna, I think somewhere, and the sister and I would live, went to live with my Mum's grand, my Mum's, oh, my Mum's husband.

OH: Mother?

Assunta Giovannini (AG): Mother.

AS: Yeah, my Mum's mother, that's right, and her family – Treviso somewhere, I don't remember what they, you know, because I was ...

OH: A little girl.

AS: Yeah.

OH: What do you remember about your grandparents?

AS: No, I don't remember hardly anything.

OH: So how old were you when you left Italy with your mother and sister?

AS: I was eight years old.

OH: So the year was?

AS: 1936.

OH: So your father had been here ...?

AS: Here in Australia since 1928.

OH: When your father arrived in Adelaide, do you know what he did?

AS: No, I don't know. Well he ... anything he could pick up, because afterward he turned out to be a butcher, [he] bought, had a butcher shop in Elizabeth Street.

OH: In the city?

AS: In the city, off Currie Street, and then from there, a couple of years after we arrived in 1936, we moved to the corner of Currie Street and North Street, a butcher shop again, and he lived, we lived there ever since.

OH: So the accommodation was part of the building where the butcher shop was?

AS: What do you mean?

OH: Like where you lived, it was part of that same building?

AS: Yes, yes, yes. Mum had boarders in there too.

OH: So it must have been quite a big place?

AS: It was a two-storey house, a big one.

OH: Where was your bedroom?

- AS: Upstairs, we had two, two bedrooms, Mum and Dad and my sister and I, and my two little ones they lived, they were in the same room as Mum and Dad I think. I can't remember.
- OH: And then what about the boarders, where were, where were they?
- AS: We had about four rooms upstairs, five rooms, plus then Dad had a butcher shop down below. We had a big kitchen. That's all I can remember.
- OH: Do you remember if you went to school when you arrived?
- AS: Yes, I did go to school for a while, I don't know, St Mary's, St Dominic, St Dominic. Was it in Franklin Street behind the church? Went there for two or three years. I wasn't very clever at school, so I left [laughs].
- OH: It must have been very difficult because you wouldn't have spoken English.
- AS: No, well but you soon pick it up once you get in, you know.
- OH: When you left school, do you remember how old you were?
- AS: I would have been about 16 I suppose, or even less. I don't know, I can't remember.
- OH: What was the first thing that you did in terms of work, after you left school?
- AS: Next door to that butcher shop there was a factory name Harmony. They used to pack jelly custard and that sort of stuff, and I worked there until about '47, and then I got a job at Holden to build the Australian car.
- OH: Where was Holden's at that time?
- AS: At Woodville, Port Road.
- OH: How would you have travelled to work?
- AS: I used to go down and catch the train, back down the railway station and catch a train to Woodville, and then back to Adelaide when I finished work.
- OH: You did something quite special when you were working there.
- AS: Yeah, we build the roof of the, what do you call the roof of the, the interior of the Holden car, the first car that came out.
- OH: You were a machinist?
- AS: Yeah, a sewing machine, yeah, we'd build, yeah.
- OH: So you sewed the upholstery?
- AS: That's right, the upholstery of the first Holdens.
- OH: Did you have a sense that there was something special about that?
- AS: Well, it was a big moment in Australia I think, once the Holden started off, yeah.
- OH: Were you selected to work on that first car?
- AS: No, well I was just lucky I suppose. I was on the machine, on the floor where all the machines were, and I was just lucky I think they'd pick me out to build, to sew the first Holden.
- OH: Do you remember what colour it was?
- AS: No, I don't.

[Laughter]

OH: And was there a ...?

AS: That was a long time ago.

[Laughter]

OH: 1940?

AS: '47, '46, '47, '47, '48.

OH: And Anna, what about your parents, like when you arrived with your mother in 1936, your father was fairly established by then?

AS: Yeah, he had a good, yeah, butcher shop.

OH: Do you remember what the butcher shop was like? Was it busy or ...?

AS: No. Well it was only a little place when we lived in Elizabeth Street. Then when we, when we moved to Currie Street it's a bigger shop, and he had the fridge and everything.

OH: Who would have been the people who came to the shop?

AS: All, yeah, all the Italian, the market gardeners from Lockleys and that. Well anybody.

OH: Did your mother also work with your father in the shop?

AS: No, she had boarders, she used to cook for them, yeah.

OH: So your father was just in the shop by himself?

AS: Yeah. He had another chap working with him when we were in Elizabeth Street, but then he was on his own.

OH: Do you know why your father decided to come to Australia?

AS: Well I don't think they, there was much future in Italy, so everybody I think those times they used to move to Australia. Other people from around the area where we lived, they all came over. He had two brothers over here, my Dad, and I suppose, I suppose they thought they had a better future here than what they would have had in Italy.

OH: Do you know what the brothers were doing here?

AS: No, I don't. Well one of them went to Mildura, well both of them. No, I can't ... I know one of them was in Mildura, and he used to work in the grapes, the vineyards and that. I don't know what the other one, I can't remember what the other one was doing.

OH: What about for your mother, like coming here? Were there other Italian people that she would have known when she arrived?

AS: No, not when she arrived, she didn't know anybody until, you know, there wasn't many Italian. You would get all friendly with, with them.

OH: We were talking before we started the interview about your area in the west of the City of Adelaide there.

AS: Yeah.

OH: And you were saying that there were a number of boarding houses run by Italian people.

- AS: Yeah, it was Ballestrin, Cescato, and Stocco ... they all had, they were in Waymouth Street, and Ballestrin and us, we were in Currie Street.
- OH: Do you remember if there were a lot of Italians who were living around that area?
- AS: Well there was a fair few, all different people there, wasn't there? Yeah.
- OH: Would your mother have made friends with people who were living close there?
- AS: Oh yes. We had Rossetto, they had a grocery shop in Hindley Street, and, oh I don't know, I can't remember all the names.
- OH: What would your parents have done for a social life?
- AS: Nothing much, only visiting different people. That's about all.
- OH: Your mother looked after boarders.
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: So were they ...?
- AS: All Italian, you know people here on their own, they never had a family and that.
- OH: Did they eat with your family?
- AS: Oh yeah, Mum used to cook for them.
- OH: Would they have worked around?
- AS: Around. Most of them were working down Port Adelaide on the boats and that, cleaning, I don't know what they used to do, but a whole lot of them, people around there, single men, they used to work down Port Adelaide somewhere.
- OH: Would they have stayed for a long time as boarders?
- AS: Oh, most of them, until they found somebody and got married. I can't remember that.
- OH: Do you remember going to weddings as a young girl?
- AS: No, not really. After, when you got a bit older ... after I was married I think we went to more weddings. All the Italians used to, there wasn't many of us, we were all invited.
- OH: Do you remember where the weddings would have been held, the receptions?
- AS: Mostly in the houses or in the sheds. No, there was no halls.
- OH: What about when your younger sister and brother had their first Communion and things like that, would your family have had a party?
- AS: No, I don't remember much. We couldn't afford to have parties, I don't think, but I don't know, I can't remember. [laughs]
- OH: When you were a working girl at Harmony and also at Holden's, do you remember what you did socially, like would you have gone out very much?
- AS: No, not very much. We used to go to the pictures most of the time.
- OH: Where would you have gone to the pictures?

- AS: In Hindley Street. It wasn't like it was now. Well all the theatres were in Rundle Street and Hindley Street, most of them. We used to go to the pictures once or twice a week and that.
- OH: Do you remember where you'd go, like the theatres, what they were, what they were called?
- AS: The West [West's Theatre], and what was the other one across the road from the West?
- AG: Metro.
- AS: The Metro [Theatre].
- AG: Yeah.
- AS: There was a whole lot in, in Rundle Street, there was a lot of theatre. There was the Rex [Theatre] and the ...
- AG: Regent.
- AS: Regent [Theatre] and, oh, the Mayfair [Theatre]. Oh, I can't remember them all.
- OH: And they would have been in walking distance?
- AS: Oh yeah, we used to walk everywhere, though Dad did have a car later on in his life.
- OH: Where would your mother have shopped? She would have been okay for meat.
- AS: Yeah, well we used to go and buy mostly from Crotti and Rossetto.
- OH: Can you tell me where Crotti was?
- AS: Crotti was in the next corner of Gray Street and Currie Street, and Rossetto was in Hindley Street.
- OH: Was there a difference between the two?
- AS: Oh, I don't know, I can't, you know, I was young then, I didn't know much about it.
- OH: Were they big shops?
- AS: Oh yeah, they were fairly big shops, big, all grocery.
- OH: What about vegetables and fruit, what would have happened for that?
- AS: I think they used to buy when they went in the grocery shop and that, when they used to buy the other stuff.
- OH: You mentioned earlier about the people who were your Dad's customers, the Italians from Lockleys.
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: What did you know about them?
- AS: Oh, I knew we had, they had market gardens and they used to take the vegetables to the East End Market, in the end of Grenfell Street. There was the East End Market, and when they used to come back from the market they'd stop and buy the meat.
- OH: That was handy.

[Laughter]

- OH: Just a couple of other questions about the city, like you said you walked everywhere. What other things would you have done in the city?
- AS: I had a bike, I used to ride a lot of the bike, a non-motorbike, a pushbike, yeah, always had a pushbike, used to go here and there with the pushbike.
- OH: Would you have done things like go to the river? Did you ever go to the river?
- AS: No.
- OH: What about things like clothes shopping?
- AS: We used to ... in Rundle Street and that ... we used to do most or all our shopping. There wasn't any shops like now, every corner there's a fashion shop. No, we used to do all our shopping in town somewhere.
- OH: Do you remember the shops that you would have gone to then?
- AS: Well John Martin for one, and I can't remember any others.
- AG: Myer's.
- AS: Myer's, Coles. The Coles there was a, I don't know if it was in Rundle Street, a Coles store, there was nothing under 2/6, over 2/6, not under, over 2/6.
- OH: And did that include clothing?
- AS: Clothing, shoes, everything. It was cheap those days.
- OH: Anna, you arrived in 1936.
- AS: Yeah, the beginning.
- OH: As an eight-year-old ... and then the War began in 1939 ... so do you remember anything about the war years?
- AS: No, not really. You were always frightened because they interned a few people around, and Dad was always frightened they were going to pick him up, but he was never questioned or anything, so we just lived it out 'til the end of the War, it was the same thing.
- OH: Did your family know anyone who was interned?
- AS: Yeah. Well there was a fair few people interned. They were only sent out in the country to, to work. That's about all I can remember.
- OH: So in terms of the people who were friends with your parents, do you remember the names of any of those people?
- AS: There was Crotti, I remember Bailetti, and who else, I can't remember, around the town and that. There was other people.
- AG: Battaglia.
- AS: Battaglia was interned too, was he? I don't know, I can't remember.
- OH: But the people that your parents mixed with, who knew well, you know the names?
- AS: No, no, not really. It was only, as I said, two or three around the place that we knew, though a lot of people came from Queensland and that.
- OH: To live in Adelaide?
- AS: They were sent, interned in Adelaide, out in the country. They sent them, I don't know what to do.

- OH: Did your family know some of those people?
- AS: No, I don't remember, I don't know.
- OH: So you had a sense that, like there was a bit of fear?
- AS: Oh yeah, it was always frightening, it was always somebody around to be frightened of, calling *dirty Dago* and all that, though my Dad never had any trouble with anybody.
- OH: That was fortunate that ...
- AS: Yes, that was really fortunate.
- OH: Your other relatives in Australia were two uncles.
- AS: Yeah, one ... Oh, they went, that's right, they went up to Alice, to the Mica mine in Harts Range, the two uncles for a while, and then one of them went back to Italy and got married, and one of them was already married I think, in Italy. Their wives came over, and one of them went to live in Mildura, and the other one afterwards, when the wife and son come over, they went to live in Melbourne somewhere.
- OH: Did your Mum have relatives here?
- AS: No, Mum never had anybody here. She had friends but not relatives. She had one brother in New Zealand, he lived there. He migrated from Italy years before, and he had his family in New Zealand.
- OH: Did your Mum ever meet up with him?
- AS: Yes. They came over, after so many years, I can't remember how many years. They had four children, two girls and, three girls and two boys, and they decided to go back and live in Italy. That's when they met up in Adelaide somewhere, they'd come through with the boat, but two of their children remained in New Zealand because they'd married there, and the other two younger ones went back to Italy with them.
- OH: Did your parents keep in touch with family in Italy?
- AS: Oh yeah, Mum did. She had two sisters and about four brothers in Italy. She came back with us in 1968 to Italy, to see her family.
- OH: And that was the first time for her?
- AS: Yeah, the only time she went back. Dad never went back.
- OH: That's interesting. Do you remember anything about your neighbours in either Elizabeth Street or Currie Street?
- AS: No. Well there was Del Tedesco. They had a boarding house about three doors from us in Currie Street. That's right, they had a boarding house, and one of the sons, Del Tedesco, married my sister.
- OH: Was that your older sister?
- AS: My older sister, yeah.
- OH: And when would she have married?
- AS: She married about [pause] 19.. She was, oh no, she was only 19 when she married [pause], about '45, '46. I don't know, I can't ...
- OH: Nineteen is pretty young.

- AS: Yeah.
- OH: And where did they live when they married?
- AS: Well they lived there in Currie Street, then they went to the ... for a few years they went up to the Mica mine in the Harts Range out of Alice Springs. Then they came back and they moved to Campbelltown.
- OH: What about your story of getting married?
- AS: Oh, there's nothing, nothing much of a story.
- [Laughter]
- AS: How we met the Santin family. They used to come and buy the meat from us ... and Dad was friendly with everybody, the Tonellato, the Ballestrin, everyone ... and met up with Vito. We got engaged, went out for five years together, and then we decided to get married, 1949.
- OH: How old were you when you married?
- AS: I was 22.
- OH: So you had been going out since you were 17?
- AS: That's right.
- OH: How common would that have been at that time, for young girls?
- AS: I think they used to get married younger in those years than what they do now, because my sister, both of my sisters were married at 19. My brother was 21 I think when he married.
- OH: So you were really old at 22!!
- [Laughter]
- OH: What can you tell me about your wedding? Where did you get married?
- AS: Got married at St Patrick's in Grote Street.
- OH: Did you walk from your house?
- AS: No, no, we had taxis, yeah.
- OH: What time of year, what was the date?
- AS: 13 August 1949.
- OH: So what did you wear?
- AS: Oh, a long dress, a veil, and had two bridesmaids.
- OH: Who were the bridesmaids?
- AS: One was a friend of mine from Mildura, and the other one was my sister-in-law, Virginia.
- OH: Can you remember your dress?
- AS: Oh, it was a satin ... I don't know, I can't ... [laughs]
- OH: Did you have it made specially?
- AS: I can't remember if I had made or bought. I think I bought it. That was a long time ago.

- OH: And then what do you remember happened after the wedding, like did you have a reception?
- AS: Yeah, we had a reception at the Hindmarsh Town Hall, and then we came back in the shed – what’s the name of the street?
- AG: Valetta Road.
- AS: Valetta Road, in the shed there.
- OH: That belonged to the?
- AS: The Santin were living there. We moved in one of the bedrooms in the house there.
- OH: You know the idea of the reception first at Hindmarsh Town Hall ...?
- AS: You weren’t allowed to have alcohol in that in those years, so they all came back to the shed and had kegs of beer and sandwiches and that.
- OH: At the Hindmarsh Town Hall, what would have happened there, like was it sit-down?
- AS: Oh, dancing, oh, we used to have a band to dance. They only had drinks and cakes and things in those days, no lunch ... no lunch like they have now, big dinners and all that.
- OH: So the wedding, the people, the guests, moved back to Valetta Road?
- AS: That’s right.
- OH: And there were kegs and ...
- AS: Kegs and cool drinks and that.
- OH: And dancing there too?
- AS: Well I think so, I can’t remember.
- [Laughter]
- OH: So your parents would have known the Santin family?
- AS: Oh yeah, we knew one another.
- OH: How well would you have known them, like how well would you parents have known Mr and Mrs Santin?
- AS: Well they knew them for years, like we always used to come down, Dad used to come down in the car to Tonellato and Santin, especially Tonellato. He was very friendly with Rosalia and what’s his name?
- AG: Piovesan.
- AS: Piovesan, yeah.
- OH: Can you tell me what you remember about those families, what were they doing?
- AS: Well they were all market gardeners. We used to come down and have coffee and that, and talk. That’s about all.
- OH: Where did they live.
- AS: They lived around the Lockleys here ... in Findon Road mostly.
- AG: East.

- AS: Yeah, well off Findon Road.
- OH: What language would your parents have spoken with them?
- AS: Oh, mostly Italian, but Dad spoke well English, and Mum picked it up too.
- OH: When you say they spoke Italian, was that the Italian language or the dialect?
- AS: The dialect.
- OH: And the dialect from?
- AS: From round the towns, you know, where they'd all come from Riese, Bigolino, Caselle and all the, all people from around there mostly.
- OH: Do you think that it would have been important for your parents that you married to a family who was from the same kind of area?
- AS: No, I don't think so, no.
- OH: Your older sister married a Del Tedesco?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: And where was Del Tedesco family from?
- AS: They were, I don't know, they were around our towns, I think, in Italy, I can't remember.
- OH: So they would be from the Veneto?
- AS: Oh yeah, Furlani, he was a Furlan, that's right. That's around Treviso I think, somewhere around.
- OH: And what about your other sister and brother, did they marry people from the Veneto families?
- AS: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah, both of them, yeah. One was Trento, my older sister, and David married a Ballestrin. So I don't know where the Ballestrin come from.
- OH: I think there are some different families of Ballestrin, aren't they?
- AS: Yeah, that's right. They were from the other side of town, not this side, yeah.
- OH: That's interesting that all four married families ...
- AS: Yeah, we married, yeah, around there, or from up north any rate.
- OH: Do you remember coming to Findon Road, or River Road, and Frogmore Road, before you got married?
- AS: Oh yeah, I used to deliver some of the meat sometimes if people couldn't ... They used to ring Dad up, and I used to come down with the bike and deliver meat to them.
- OH: You came on a bike?
- AS: Oh yeah.
- OH: That's quite a distance.
- AS: Oh, it was nothing those days, that's all we had.
- OH: You would have been quite fit.
- AS: [laughs] Not like now [laughs].

- OH: So people would ring up and your Dad would ask you to get on the bike and deliver?
- AS: Yeah, yep.
- OH: How would you get from the city to this area?
- AS: Come down Henley Beach Road and on to Findon Road. It was Rowells Road not Findon Road.
- OH: When you were doing that, like on the bike, what would you have seen as you were riding along?
- AS: I can't remember [laughs].
- OH: But this area, what was it like?
- AS: Oh, there was nothing, it was all market gardens and that. No, there was no houses. Findon Road wasn't too bad; Frogmore Road there was no road those days.
- OH: Like no bitumen?
- AS: No, no.
- OH: What would have been on either side of the road at that time?
- AS: Oh, clear land, nothing much.
- OH: At that time would people have had glasshouses?
- AS: Yes.
- OH: When you arrived with the meat, would you have been asked for a coffee?
- AS: Oh yes, yes.
- OH: I'm glad that it was a bit social [laughs].
- AS: Oh yeah, coffee was the main thing all the time, or a glass of wine, but I never used to drink.
- [Laughter]
- OH: That's interesting. So the Santin family would have been living around this area when you met Vito?
- AS: I don't know whether they used to live in Flinders Park; they lived in different places, but when we first started going out together, they were in Berno's house in Valetta Road.
- OH: Can you tell me about the Berno house, what did it look like?
- AS: Oh God! A big old house, had about ten rooms. It was split in two parts, we lived in one part and the Berno lived, Antonietta and Peter, they lived in the other part of the house, and then we moved to Frogmore Road. We bought the land with the house on it in 1950, and we moved to Frogmore Road. We lived here.
- OH: When you got married you went to live with the Santin family on Valetta Road, in the big house?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: Who of the Santin family were living in the house at that time?

- AS: Well his mother and father-in-law, and then younger brother come from, he had gone to Italy and got married, and came back here, and with my brother-in-law and sister-in-law and us, husband and I, and then I had Dean.
- OH: Did you have a honeymoon?
- AS: No [laughs], there was no honeymoon those years.
- [Laughter]
- OH: So you got married and then you moved to the, to the big house?
- AS: Got married on the Saturday, on the Monday I went to cut celery [laughs].
- OH: Had you known how to do that?
- AS: Well you soon learn.
- [Laughter]
- OH: So this would have been August?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: And the celery was ready to ...?
- AS: Yeah, to cut and pack, and sent to Melbourne and Sydney.
- OH: How was it sent to Melbourne and Sydney?
- AS: By rail. They used to pack it in crates and take it down Mile End, put it on the train.
- OH: The set-up of the household, I'm trying to understand that. So a really big house, so there was your parents-in-law, you and Vito, Vito's brother whose name ...
- AS: And his wife.
- OH: Their names?
- AS: Romildo and Clara.
- OH: So you all had separate bedrooms?
- AS: Oh yeah, and one great big kitchen, and mother-in-law used to cook for all of us.
- OH: Including the Berno family?
- AS: No, not the Berno family, they had their, their own kitchen and that, and then the older brother, Lui, and Rosina, they built this old little asbestos home next to the big house.
- OH: So they had got ...?
- AS: We all used to work together, the three brothers and three sisters, sister-in-laws.
- OH: So by the time you married in 1949, were all the three brothers married?
- AS: Yes, no, yes. Lui and Rosina was married but Nugget was still in Italy, and he got married in Italy. He came over about halfway through 1950 I think it was.
- OH: And brought Clara with him?
- AS: Clara back with him.

- OH: So Romildo's nickname was Nugget?
- AS: Nugget, that's right.
- OH: How did he get that nickname?
- AS: I don't know, I think he's always had it. People used to know him more from Nugget than Romildo.
- OH: Can you tell me about the Santin family? Where had they come from and what had they been doing?
- AS: They'd come out the last, the father come out in about 1927 I think, and the mother and there's four children, come out in, they arrived in Adelaide in the last day of December 1935, and they settled here around Lockleys somewhere, I can't remember exactly where they were.
- OH: And of course there was the daughter.
- AS: Virginia, yeah.
- OH: And she married?
- AS: Oscar Mattiazzo.
- OH: So did she marry after you?
- AS: No, she married about a month before we'd married. She married in July sometime, I think, I don't know, can't remember.
- OH: And it was Virginia who was one of your bridesmaids?
- AS: Yes, and I was bridesmaid for her when she got married.
- OH: So you had a bit of practice.
- [Laughter]
- AS: I was bridesmaid about six times to different people.
- OH: Really?
- AS: Oh yeah, used to call ... Yeah, about five or six times I was bridesmaid for my sister, for my brother-in-law's sister, and I don't know, I can't remember them all, but I was ...
- AG: Mary.
- AS: Eh?
- AG: Mary.
- AS: Mary, yeah.
- OH: Mary Tonellato?
- AS: Yeah, Mary.
- OH: In those days, I'm trying to understand ... were there sort of rules for what happened as a bridesmaid, like did you pay for the dress, or did the bride?
- AS: No, the brides used to pay for the dresses. We used to have beautiful, big, long, to-the-floor dresses. Oh no, it was really nice. No, I think the bride and that used to pay for the dresses.
- AG: That's right, yes.
- OH: So everybody looked very beautiful I imagine?

- AS: Oh yeah, oh yes.
- OH: Would some of the girls have had people make their dresses?
- AS: Yes, most of them, yeah, most of them were made those days instead of bought.
- OH: Was it made by people they knew, family people?
- AS: Yeah, I don't know, I can't, can't remember.
- OH: So going back to Valetta Road and the big house, suddenly you are there cutting celery.
- [Laughter]
- AS: Yep!
- OH: Did you expect to do that?
- AS: No, I didn't, but you had to [laughs].
- OH: So you'd been working at Holden's up until?
- AS: 'Til I was married, yeah.
- OH: Was it possible to continue working at Holden's?
- AS: No, no.
- OH: Was it the policy at Holden's that women had to stop when they got married?
- AS: No, there was no policy that I can remember in those years. I just stopped before I was married, that was it.
- OH: What was it like, that experience of having to learn really quickly in the market gardens?
- AS: Oh well, you just picked it up. They gave you a knife in your hand, and go down with your backside up and cut celery.
- OH: Was that considered a woman's job, or did the men do that as well?
- AS: Oh no, we all did it, the men and that. Oh no, they [pause], they used to cut.
- OH: The celery season would have ...?
- AS: We had glasshouses with tomatoes and that, and then we used to grow cauliflower; we had cabbages, had a bit of everything.
- OH: What were the arrangements in the family in terms of the business?
- AS: Well, the older brother used to do the market. We had a truck and that, we used to load up three times a week I think it was, it was market garden up in town, the East End Market, used to take them up to the market. The celery we had to send away to Melbourne and Sydney. We used to pack them in crates and that, but the other stuff we took them all to the market.
- OH: Did you ever go to market?
- AS: No, no, that was Lui, the older brother, used to do all the marketing.
- OH: Did he also do the garden as well?
- AS: Oh yes, he helped. We all, the six of us, all, three brothers and three sister-in-law, all worked garden.
- OH: What would your days have been like, up early?

- AS: Nothing but work in the garden all day, mother-in-law used to do the cooking, and we used to help her afterwards, wash up and clean the house and that.
- OH: So when you got up in the morning it would have been very early, I imagine?
- AS: Yeah, yes, especially summertimes with the hot weather.
- OH: You'd have breakfast?
- AS: I don't ... my breakfast has always been a cup of coffee and two biscuits.
- [Laughter]
- OH: Very simple! And then what would happen for lunchtime? Would you go back to the house?
- AS: Oh yes, yes, we used to go back to the house. While we lived in ... after when we moved here in Frogmore Road we had our own kitchen, we all used to do our own cooking for the husband and the kids and that. And the mother-in-law and father-in-law lived with Nugget and his wife.
- OH: The time that you were on Valetta Road must have been quite busy with everybody living and sharing.
- AS: Oh yeah, well only from '49 to when we moved here in '52, we only lived a couple of years there.
- OH: During that time Dean was born?
- AS: Yeah, in 1950.
- OH: When you were out in the garden?
- AS: Mother-in-law used to look after the kids. We used to come in and feed them and that, lunchtime, and she'd look after them.
- OH: It sounds like it was a pretty good system.
- AS: I don't know about that [laughs].
- OH: How many days a week would you have worked?
- AS: Seven days a week. Celery, you used to have to cut it on a Saturday and a Sunday for the market on the Monday, oh yeah, it was pretty busy doing all different things.
- OH: Would you remember how much land was belonging to the Santin's then?
- AS: Here?
- OH: On Valetta Road.
- AS: Well it belonged to Berno, we were only renting, we didn't own the land there, that belonged to Berno.
- OH: So was the Santin family's garden quite separate from the Berno?
- AS: Yeah, well Berno used to, they had the garden in Grange Road, we used to work the land.
- OH: Oh, all of it?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: And there would have been quite a few acres there?
- AS: I don't know, about 10 or 12, around about that much.

- OH: And it went all the way down to the river?
- AS: To the river, yeah.
- OH: And what was the river like at that time?
- AS: Oh, you couldn't hardly see it, it was all overgrown, and then they cleaned it out. I don't know what year they went right through.
- OH: Do you recall that it every flooded in your time?
- AS: Not that I can remember, but it did flood I think. I don't know what year.
- AS: But not while, you know, that I can remember.
- OH: So ... a big change in 1952?
- AS: Yes.
- OH: What happened that meant that the three brothers and their wives came to Frogmore Road?
- AS: Well we bought the land here, before we was only renting. We bought the land and there was a big, old house in the land, and made two units. Nugget and, Nugget and us, we moved into half a house each.
- OH: And your parents-in-law lived with Nugget and Clara?
- AS: With Nugget, yeah, the same house as us, all one big house.
- OH: And where did Lui and Rosina ...?
- AS: They built a house on Frogmore Road after a year or so, I think.
- OH: Like close to ...?
- AS: Yeah, on our land.
- OH: How much land was here at Frogmore Road?
- AS: I don't know if it was 12 or 14 acres.
- OH: And so the brothers and their wives bought it equally, like between the three of them?
- AS: The three boys owned it, the three brothers were the owners.
- OH: What was on the land, like so there was a house, and what else was on it?
- AS: Nothing, all overgrown. We had to fix it all up.
- OH: What was overgrown, like what was there, like weeds or ...?
- AS: Well, when we first started off we never had a tractor, we used a horse and plough behind.
- OH: And what was it that was overgrown?
- AS: What do you mean?
- OH: Like you said it was all overgrown, like nothing.
- AS: Well, all grass and things. The road, there was no road then, it was all overgrown with box thorn, and had to clean it all out a bit at a time. Then they bought a couple of tractors.
- OH: That would have made it easier.
- AS: Oh yes.

- OH: What about the box thorn, how high would that have been?
- AS: Oh goodness, huge. They grew like mushrooms all over the place.
- OH: Why was the box thorn here?
- AS: I don't know why, just overgrown land I suppose, and then they thought about making a road. It was right up to, up ...
- AG: To Mary's place, yeah, one up.
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: Like Frogmore Road went ...?
- AS: No, from Grange Road to where Piovesan had the house, up to there was bituminised. But then from there on to Valetta Road was no road.
- OH: And I have heard that it had lots of holes in it.
- AS: Oh, terrible. You couldn't, you could hardly come through with a truck in between the holes and that.
- OH: The box thorn here, like it wasn't just as like fencing between one piece of land and another. Had it gone further?
- AS: No, we had a lot of it in our piece of land, we cleaned it out, but the other part where Piovesan was next door to us, they were fairly clean, but they never had any glasshouses, Piovesan, like I think here.
- AG: I think they did.
- AS: They did?
- AG: Yeah.
- AS: I can't remember.
- OH: So the three couples must have spent a lot of time preparing the land?
- AS: Oh yeah, we had to shift the glasshouses from Valetta Road to here. You had to take them all down and build them all up again.
- OH: And were you involved in that?
- AS: Oh yes, especially the hot weather, taking glass down, burnt your hands. Those years you had to change glasshouses, you know when you planted tomatoes for one year, otherwise you get disease and you had to shift the glass, certain glasshouses on different land until they started fumigating the soil. Then you could leave your glasshouse there.
- OH: Do you remember what time of year you would have moved here in 1952, like would it have been summer?
- AS: It was in April.
- OH: So it was after the tomatoes had finished over at Valetta Road?
- AS: No, I don't know, I don't know, I can't ... No, I think before, we shifted the glasshouse.
- OH: And erected them here?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: Would you have had many glasshouses?

- AS: Oh, we built a fair few more. We only had about eight or nine or ten little ones in Valetta Road, and then we built big, higher ones here. We built, I can't remember how many we had, but we used to work the glasshouses and the land. We used to grow cabbages, cauliflower, carrots, potatoes, a bit of everything.
- OH: And a lot of work.
- AS: A lot of back work.
- OH: I think that's a really good place to finish our first interview today, so thank you very much, Anna, for ...
- AS: That's alright, I hope ... I was alright.
- OH: It was wonderful, thank you.
- AG: Yeah, you went really well.
- OH: Thank you.

Second interview with Anna Santin

Also present is an old friend, Assunta Giovannini

recorded by Madeleine Regan at Kidman Park, South Australia

17 April 2013

Oral Historian (OH): Anna, thank you very much for agreeing to a second interview.

Anna Santin (AS):

OH: I'm following up a couple of questions from the last interview, and I wanted to ask you about the name Mattiazzo, because there's a number of Mattiazzo

families in Adelaide, and I was going to ask you whether you're related to any of them. So for example, Armida Mattiazzo?

AS: No.

OH: What about Oscar Mattiazzo?

AS: Yes, we are related, I don't know exactly where along the line.

OH: There was also another Mattiazzo that you told me about.

AS: Yeah, Piero (Mattiazzo).

OH: And you're related to Piero?

AS: Yeah, in a long link, a long line.

OH: And then of course you were related to Oscar Mattiazzo through your husband?

AS: Yeah, a son-in-law. What am I talking about? ... brother-in-law.

OH: Because Oscar married your ...?

AS: My husband's sister.

OH: Virginia.

AS: Virginia.

OH: Yeah! Talking about your marriage, here we've got this beautiful photo in front of us. I'll just briefly describe it. A photo of maybe 40 or so, mainly men and boys.

[Laughter]

OH: Can you tell me about that photo? When was it taken?

AS: It was taken in Valetta Road, the day after our marriage, and usually there was left-overs from the night before. They'd come to finish off the kegs of beer and whatever that was left, and have a talk I suppose.

OH: I think I can only see about two women and one little girl in that very large group. Where are the women?

AS: Oh, they're probably home [laughs]. The men didn't take the women with them very much, did they, Assunta?

OH: So this would have been a party the day after the wedding?

AS: Yeah, unless the women were in the kitchen drinking coffee.

[Laughter]

OH: So the keg would have been finished on that day if it hadn't been [before]?

AS: Oh yeah, yeah.

OH: And then what about food?

AS: Oh, there's always bread and cheese, and bread and salami and that generally in the house.

OH: It looks like ... I mean this photo is taken outside and you can see in the background some trucks. And over to the left I think I can see some bamboos, and probably the bamboos ...

AS: It's the glasshouses and that on Valetta Road, where we lived, yeah.

- OH: So it would have been after your first night on Valetta Road?
- AS: Yes.
- OH: It's a lovely photo.
- AS: Yes, it is.
- OH: And I understand that you know every person in it?
- AS: A lot of people are dead now.
- OH: Yes, yeah.
- AS: Half of them I would think, just about.
- OH: The man ...
- AS: That's my [pause] ...
- Assunta Giovannini (AG): Father-in-law.
- AS: Father-in-law.
- OH: And what was his name?
- AS: Giovanni.
- OH: Giovanni Santin.
- AS: That's right.
- OH: So he looks like he's the eldest one there.
- AS: Yeah, yeah, he probably was.
- OH: And about what age would he have been then?
- AS: Goodness knows, I've no idea; wouldn't have been that old.
- AG: No.
- AS: They used to look old in those days than what they do now.
- OH: But he certainly looks like the most senior person.
- AS: Well in his 60s ... 60s I would think.
- OH: Yeah, well thank you very much for talking about that. It's a lovely photo.
- AS: Yes.
- OH: Also talking about weddings, you talked last time about having two bridesmaids at your wedding, and one was your sister-in-law, Virginia.
- AS: Yes.
- OH: And the other one, can you tell me about the other bridesmaid?
- AS: She was a friend from Wentworth. Her parents were great friends with Mum and Dad, and she used to come down all the time to see us and that, Assunta Buffon was her name. I still keep in touch with her all the time, we always often see one another. She lives at Wagga Wagga now, and that's about all.
- OH: What were her parents doing in Wentworth?
- AS: They had a brickyard, making bricks in Wentworth, and they shifted. Oh, they were there for years at the beginning, and then they've gone, at the present moment their son's got a brickyard in Mildura.

- OH: The idea of bridesmaids, you told me last time that you had been a bridesmaid quite a few times [laughs].
- AS: Just a few.
- OH: And why was that?
- AS: I don't know, just used to ... I don't know exactly why, because there wasn't many Italian people, we all knew all the family of them, of the friends. Well, I was bridesmaid for my sister, for her sister-in-law, for my sister-in-law, Virginia. She was bridesmaid for me, and I was bridesmaid for (), her sister and her brother. You were called to be bridesmaid for anybody, the friends.
- OH: And when you were a bridesmaid, did you have the dress made for you?
- AS: Oh yes, the bride used to supply all the dresses, and long ones not short ones like they do now.
- OH: And colours, were they in different colours?
- AS: Oh yes, all different colours, yeah, no, they () nice, what you call ().
- OH: Just beautiful dresses?
- AS: Beautiful.
- OH: Materials and ...?
- AS: Beautiful big bouquets, they used to have of flowers.
- OH: Tell me about the bouquets.
- AS: Oh, they were marvellous, they were bigger than you just about.
- OH: [laughs] What kind of flowers do you remember were in them?
- AS: No, I don't remember what kind.
- OH: I think we talked last time about those, and Assunta, you remember.
- AG: Yes, all gladis, gladis and long bouquets, yeah, beautiful bouquets.
- AS: Yeah, beautiful big bouquets.
- AG: It used to be we touched to the floor, didn't they?
- AS: Yeah, yeah.
- AG: The bride, the bridesmaids' very beautiful flowers.
- OH: I was wondering, were there dressmakers in the Italian community at that time?
- AS: Yeah, mostly there was. I can't remember them, but they mostly were all made, weren't they, not bought, made?
- AG: Yes, yes.
- OH: If you were a bridesmaid at a wedding, how common would it be to have more than two?
- AS: Oh no, they used to have three or four bridesmaids those days, and the whole lot of them, flower girls and page boys.
- OH: So it was quite grand?
- AS: Oh yes, yes, very grand.

- OH: The people that you were, the women that you were bridesmaids for, were they all women from the Veneto community?
- AS: No, there were a lot of them from the South too, but mostly I was bridesmaid for being North.
- OH: Was there a kind of a favourite church where they got married?
- AS: There wasn't many. It was St Patrick's (Grote Street, City) or the Hindmarsh, or the Captain Cook, Flinders Park. No, I don't think Flinders Park used to do weddings, no, that's right.
- AG: No, no.
- AS: No, it was either Hindmarsh or St Patrick's.
- AG: That's right.
- AS: Now I come to think of it, yeah.
- OH: That's good to know. The other thing I wanted to follow up from last time is about naturalisation, and I wondered if you could tell me about your parents and their naturalisation.
- AS: Well my sister, Augusta, and Dad were naturalised in the same time, but Mum had to be naturalised by herself. I don't know, they wouldn't include her with Dad and us girls. So I don't know why, but we were all naturalised, I can't remember when, but I think it was before the War. What year was it?
- OH: The War began in 1939.
- AS: '39. I don't know whether ... it must have been before.
- OH: Do you think it would have been important to your parents to be naturalised?
- AS: Oh yes. Dad was a butcher, he had a business and that, so I suppose it was a good thing.
- OH: Thank you, Anna. We're going to move on to Frogmore Road, where we are actually at the moment. We started talking about this in the last interview, the three brothers bought the land here on Frogmore Road?
- AS: Yes, in 1950.
- OH: And for the next two years what happened?
- AS: There was an old house on the land, and we made it into two units like two ... We moved into one and Nugget moved in the other one. Well the units never had, only had one bathroom and toilet, so they built on for the two families. For the two families they built a bathroom, toilet, and laundry on each unit, and we moved into those, and they took the time to fix them up and that. We moved in the April in 1952.
- OH: How old was Dean at that time?
- AS: Dean was two years old, but in the meantime when we bought the land, my husband used to come and plough with the horse and the plough behind, tried to fix up a piece of the land so we could leave the glasshouses and that.
- OH: Did you do any planting in those two years, or was it mainly preparing?
- AS: No, mostly preparing I think, yeah, we didn't.

- OH: What about your parents-in-law, because they moved as well with you, didn't they?
- AS: Yes, they lived with Nugget, mostly with them, they moved in with them in the unit.
- OH: Were the same arrangements about cooking in place, like did your mother-in-law still cook for everyone?
- AS: Well until we moved here. She used to cook when we lived all together in ...
- OH: Valetta?
- AS: Valetta Road, she used to cook for us, but afterwards when we moved here we had our own kitchen. In the meantime, Lui and Rosina [Santin] build a house on Frogmore Road. They moved, I think, a couple, about a year after we moved in.
- OH: So they, they ...
- AS: They had their own kitchen, and they had their own house, and we all had our own kitchen at that time.
- OH: And the distance between the two houses, what would that have been?
- AS: Which ones?
- OH: Lui and Rosina were close to Frogmore Road?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: And then the house that you had divided was a fair distance back from the road?
- AS: Oh, no, not that ...
- AG: No, not really.
- AS: Not really.
- OH: But the land went back quite a long way?
- AS: Yes, yeah, we had, well from, well I don't know how ... We had a fair bit because we built ...
- AG: Eleven acres was it?
- AS: No, it was more than that - 12, 12 or 13 acres.
- AG: Twelve or 13 acres?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: And at the back of the land what was there?
- AS: Afterwards next door to us, the Housing Trust bought all the land, and that was all Housing Trust.
- OH: At the back of?
- AS: At the back of our land on Frogmore Road.
- OH: Someone told me that there had been sand hills there at one point.
- AS: Oh yes, they worked the tractors and they worked for a couple of years before they made it all level to build the Housing Trust homes.
- OH: So the sand hills disappeared?

- AS: Oh yes, it was all sand.
- OH: So in 1952 when you moved, there were already Housing Trust houses?
- AS: No, no, no, they were still working, they worked for years, or two or three years before they ... to level all the land behind us.
- OH: What was the soil like when you came here?
- AS: Oh, it was, nearer Frogmore Road was dark soil, and back was more sandy, and we used to grow potatoes and that. We had glasshouses, used to plant a few cucumbers and carrots, beetroots, and celery too, we had a fair bit of celery.
- OH: Did it depend what the soil was like on what you grew?
- AS: No, not really, they'd put fertiliser and that to get it all up to scratch.
- OH: Did the three couples have meetings to decide where things would be planted?
- AS: Well, just the three boys used to say where to plant and that. Well, we all pitched in.
- OH: Did you have to rotate crops?
- AS: The glasshouses, not the crops, because glasshouses those days, they used to, every year we used to move three or four of them because, because the land ... to grow tomatoes every year on one part was no good, so we had to shift them in a different piece of land.
- OH: That must have been one of the hardest things.
- AS: It was, it was very enduring. The crops used to finish around about December. January, February we used to, you had to take down all the glasses and put them in boxes so they could shift the posts in a different part, and the men used to, the men used to be inside with us women on the outside pushing the glasses up. Oh, it was very, very hot.
- OH: Did you wear gloves?
- AS: Oh, I don't know, I don't know if we could afford gloves ().
- [Laughter]
- OH: So that would have been one of the difficult ...?
- AS: Oh, it was very hot, you'd burn your hands just about, and it had to be done until after, a few years afterwards they used to inject the dirt in the glasshouses so they didn't have to be shifted anymore.
- OH: And when you say *injected*, like with?
- AS: With a little tractor, my husband () with a company, bought a, he bought a little tractor, he used to go in and out, and they used to get in the fumigation in the soil, and they'd say, *You won't have to shift the glasshouses anymore.*
- OH: You know when you finished the tomato crop, and then if you moved three or four of the glasshouses, what was the next thing that you would have planted?
- AS: Not too much, we only used to plant tomatoes in the glasshouses.
- OH: So how many crops in a year did you have of tomatoes?
- AS: Only one crop. They used to, they used to keep for later crop, but otherwise only tomatoes here on Frogmore Road. When we shifted to Bolivar, when we

sold the land afterwards we shifted to Bolivar, we used to grow cucumbers, beans, and capsicum in the glasshouses. But here on Frogmore Road, only tomatoes.

- OH: So when would you have planted them, what time, or what month of the year?
- AS: About April is it?
- AG: Mm, yeah, I think April.
- AS: Yeah, around about April.
- OH: And then you'd start picking at what time?
- AS: Oh, that used to take, what, three or four months before ...?
- AG: Yeah.
- AS: I think.
- OH: During winter there was a bit of a procedure for making sure that the frosts wouldn't get tomatoes?
- AS: Oh yes, they used to, gee, what'd they used to do, something inside?
- AG: Yes.
- AS: I can't remember what.
- AG: I remember that, they used to burn something to keep the glasses hot, didn't they?
- AS: Yeah, so it won't burn the tomatoes. It was our living once a year, you had to protect it.
- OH: The frosts could do a lot of damage?
- AS: Oh yes, it used to burn them.
- OH: I was going to ask you a question about watering. How did you water here on Frogmore Road?
- AS: We had a bore but mostly, yeah, tap watering, but we had a bore.
- OH: Was the bore already here when you came?
- AS: No, well you had to, we had to dig, dig one.
- OH: Did you get somebody to do that for you?
- AS: Yes, a special pump and you used to put the pipes down and ().
- OH: The bore would have operated for a long time here?
- AS: Well, you used to have to keep an eye on it then. If it got too salty you couldn't use it and so, oh no, we had to bore another one after a few years, a new one, and they used to have to keep an eye on it. Otherwise it would be too salty and burn all the plants.
- OH: So there was a lot of different things you had to be careful about?
- AS: Oh, that's for sure, especially those years, not like now. Well, there's not many people in glasshouses, I don't think, these days.
- OH: Did you know many other people apart from the Santin's, who were in glasshouses at that time?

- AS: Oh yes, there were all glasshouses here in Fulham, Fulham Gardens. They had a lot of Bulgarians mostly there. Now there's all houses, it's all gone, but at the time they all disappeared and moved out.
- OH: The people around here that you knew who had glasshouses?
- AS: Mr Tonellato, the Ballestrin's, the Zalunardo, Zampin. Who else?
- AG: Tropeano's.
- AS: Yeah, Berno's, that's about all around here wasn't it? That's what I said, further on it was all the Bulgarians.
- OH: Was there enough sales to go around?
- AS: What do you mean?
- OH: If there were lots of market gardeners in this area, everyone was able to make their money?
- AS: Oh yes. It all depends, one year it was good, one year it was bad.
- OH: What would happen in the bad years?
- AS: Well, you just had to carry on, plant again, and try your luck.
- OH: And I guess there was some luck involved?
- AS: Yes, in a way, I suppose. Well, you know, you make a bit of money. There was four families in our family that had to live with it.
- OH: The four?
- AS: Mm. Well the in-laws, and the three brothers.
- OH: So that was quite a group of people to have in the business.
- AS: That's right.
- OH: I was thinking one of the aspects of luck is the weather, of course.
- AS: Yeah. Well, between the glasshouses and a bit of this, well you'd plant outside, and it used to keep us going and that.
- OH: I'm going to ask you about social life as a contrast. How often would your families have got together to have fun, or get away from the working life?
- AS: Never had ... all you thought about was working, that's about all you used to do. [Laughs]
- OH: So what would be the occasions where you would get together?
- AS: Oh, people getting married, you get invited to all the weddings, those days, people that you knew and that, it used to be fun, good fun, but otherwise we used to go to the pictures sometimes. That's about all.
- OH: Where did you go to the pictures?
- AS: Lockleys mostly.
- OH: On Henley Beach Road?
- AS: That's right. It's still going.
- OH: What about the beach in summer?
- AS: We used to take the kids there – there was no air-conditioning in the house those days – we used to take the children when it was really hot, for the kids to

... otherwise, you know, they used to enjoy the beach. We used to go under the jetty ().

OH: At which beach?

AS: Oh, mostly Henley or Grange.

AG: Yes, Grange.

AS: Grange mostly.

OH: I understand that there was something special that used to happen on New Year's Day?

AS: Oh yes, we used to ... One of the family used to get the truck, and we used to put a tarpaulin on, on top, and we all used to get behind with a keg of beer, and something to eat and that, and go around St Kilda mostly it was.

AG: Yes, that's right.

AS: And get on the beach and have a good time.

OH: Who would have gone to that occasion?

AS: Oh, the Ballestrin, the Piovesan, all the families around here.

OH: And they would have been all from the Veneto?

AS: Oh yes, yeah.

OH: So was celebrating New Year's Day really important?

AS: I don't know important, it was just a day off, I think everybody used to take a day off [Laughs].

AG: That's right.

OH: I've seen photos, I think that the photos are from the 1940s.

AS: Yeah, we used to have truckloads, all getting behind, sit on the truck, and go off. Gee whiz, it made me think back in times.

OH: [Laughs] So they would have been happy kinds of occasions?

AS: Oh yes.

OH: Was there any fishing on those days?

AS: No. We used to go crabbing around about that time. I don't know if there's a time for crabs, well we used to go crabbing.

AG: Yeah! They used to go crabbing.

AS: Yeah.

OH: At St Kilda?

AG: Yes.

AS: Yes, and somewhere else, I can't remember where.

AG: Yeah, I can't remember where else.

OH: And did you cook the crabs?

AG: Yes.

OH: How do you cook them, or how would you have cooked them?

- AS: In the tub, a tub in the ... the copper that we used to boil our clothes when we washed.
- OH: So you'd boil up the water?
- AS: Yes, throw them in, and then just take them out and eat them.
- OH: Beautiful! Nice and fresh.
- AS: That's for sure.
- OH: What about going to the city when you were here on Frogmore Road? What would you have gone to the city for?
- AS: I used to go and see Mum and Dad while they were still on Currie Street. I used to go up every Friday with ... we had a motorbike, and we used to sit Dean on the tank in front. [Laughs] You couldn't do that nowadays, and that.
- OH: So you'd go up during the day?
- AS: No, at night time, in the night and that, yeah, used to go up.
- OH: Was Friday night a special night for your parents? Did other, you know your sisters, go there, or your brother?
- AS: My sister lived next door, she was married, and we used to get together and that.
- OH: What about buying clothes and things like that, where would you have bought them?
- AS: There used to be a man with a van used to come along for years.
- AG: Yes, I remember that, yes.
- AS: Yeah, when we lived on Valetta Road.
- AG: That's right.
- AS: I don't think, I don't think he came here after.
- AG: No, no.
- AS: We used to, we used to go in town and that, and buy off him mostly in those years.
- AG: Yes.
- OH: What was your store, the one that you went to?
- AS: Well, there was, what, Myer's, John Martin, Coles. I remember Coles those years, used to have nothing over 2/6.
- AG: Oh yes.
- AS: Used to buy a pair of shoes, a dress, and they were 2/6.
- OH: Pretty cheap!
- [Laughter]
- OH: What about church for occasions like Baptisms and First Communions, and funerals, what church would your family have gone to?
- AS: St Patrick's in town and, what's the church on Port Road?
- OH: The Hindmarsh?

- AS: The Hindmarsh, yeah.
- OH: And then later I think you told me that you went to some occasions closer?
- AS: No. Yeah, but very much later. They never used to have burials and that on Flinders Park for a few years.
- OH: Right! And the place where the Santins are buried, where is that?
- AS: We was married?
- OH: Buried, the cemetery.
- AS: Oh, Cheltenham (Cemetery), the Santins are all in there.
- OH: And I understand that quite a lot of people from this area are buried there?
- AS: Yes, there is a lot of Italian there.
- AG: That's right.
- AS: Yeah, a lot of them. I think they're mostly all, all buried there, aren't they?
- AG: Yes.
- AS: I don't think many in West Terrace (Cemetery).
- AG: No.
- AS: It was mostly the South Italians I think buried in West Terrace.
- OH: And so the Veneti are ...?
- AS: Mostly they're all here at Cheltenham.
- OH: I guess it was closer?
- AS: Yes, yeah.
- OH: When did Vito's parents die?
- AS: Oh, I've got them all down in the book, but I can't remember.
- OH: But it was well after you came to Frogmore Road?
- AS: Oh yes, yes, they all died on Frogmore Road, I think, Lui, Rosina, Mum and Dad, yeah, yep.
- AG: Yep.
- AS: Yeah, all on Frogmore Road, and buried all at Cheltenham.
- OH: Where are your parents buried?
- AS: My people are buried up Centennial Park [Cemetery], my Mum and Dad. I've got Mum and Dad, I've got a nephew up there, two brothers-in-law, my sister, they're all buried there. Well, they were from the other side of town, there was only Centennial Park I think then.
- OH: I understand that the Veneto Club was formed in the early-1970s?
- AS: Yeah.
- AG: ().
- OH: Around about that time. Was Vito, and were you members of the Vento Club?
- AS: The other two brothers were, my husband never liked the Veneto Club. We were members of the Italian Club in town.

- OH: And that was in?
- AS: Carrington Street.
- OH: Right!
- AS: No, all the, all the Santin members () Life Members.
- OH: Of the ...?
- AS: Of the Italian Club.
- OH: In those days, how big or how busy was the Italian Club?
- AS: Oh, I don't know, we never used to go much to the clubs and that.
- OH: So was it important to become a member for Vito?
- AS: The Italian Club, yes, they worked a few years, volunteer over there with the Ballestrin and that.
- AG: That's right, mm.
- OH: And what did they do when they volunteered?
- AS: You help out in cleaning up and looking after the place.
- OH: What was the club used for mainly?
- AS: Mostly weddings, weddings they had there, mostly weddings I think.
- OH: I understand that you and Vito built a house here that we're sitting in, on Frogmore Road, in 19...?
- AS: '72 we moved here, into the new house.
- OH: How did that come about?
- AS: Well, the three brothers decided to build a new house, so we built one after the other, all on Frogmore Road, and they're still here.
- OH: And you're all next door to each other?
- AS: Yes, next door to each other, yeah.
- OH: Did you each design the house?
- AS: Yes, we had our own design, oh yes.
- OH: What did you want for your new house?
- AS: Oh, I don't know.
- [Laughter]
- AS: Just picked out a plan, we liked it, and we build everybody to their own taste.
- OH: How much land did you have for the house? Did you have a block at the back, back garden?
- AS: What do you mean?
- OH: Did you have garden at the back of your house?
- AS: Oh no, we haven't got much room behind. We only, oh, I forget what, 60 x 100 I think they were, the blocks then.
- OH: And at that time did you – you spoke earlier about subdividing the land – did you subdivide it in 1972?

- AS: No, no, we did subdivide it about '86 I think when we sold the land.
- OH: So in 1972 you continued to work here on Frogmore Road, behind the houses?
- AS: Yes. I don't know what, I can't remember what year we bought the land. When we subdivided we had to move all the glasshouses and that, like to Port Wakefield Road, Bolivar. We bought a piece of land there, the three brothers again, all together.
- OH: How much land did you buy there? How much land was there at Bolivar?
- AS: It was about 15, 16 acres I think up there.
- OH: A bit bigger than what you had here?
- AS: Yeah. We planted all potatoes there, and glasshouses. You'd grow tomatoes and cucumbers, and capsicum and beans inside the glasshouses with the tomatoes.
- OH: What was the difference in the soil there?
- AS: I don't know. Well, we had to get out of here once we sold, and that's all they knew how to do, and they simply ... as I said, we bought a piece of land so we could work the glasshouses and that.
- OH: Did you work up at Bolivar too?
- AS: Yes, well I worked up at Bolivar, the three of us worked up at Bolivar.
- OH: The three sisters-in-law?
- AG: Yep.
- OH: So how early in the day did you leave for work?
- AS: Well, when it was hot (), it was still dark to get up there, with the, what you call, () afterwards. One of the brothers pulled out, Lui pulled out, because he was sick, and we took over, the sister, Nugget's wife, and myself, used to go up there and help and pick tomatoes and that, and then we used to ... I used to come back home with the car and that. Lucky I learnt to drive.
- OH: Yeah, when did you learn to drive?
- AS: When we were still living here on Frogmore Road, because the men those days, they never used to take you shopping and that like they do now, with the car. Going up Bolivar is a long way to go to Salisbury to do your shopping, so we thought, Rosina and I ... we learnt to drive so we could go and do our shopping and that, without the men, dragging them along.
- [Laughter]
- OH: Was that a good decision to learn to drive?
- AS: Oh yes, very handy.
- OH: Who taught you to drive?
- AS: I taught meself I think. When I first learnt to drive we drove, we drove up to Bolivar, and he let me loose in the ground and that [laughs], and changed the gears.
- [Laughter]
- OH: Had you driven any of the tractors or any of the equipment here?

- AS: No, no, no, not the tractor and that, no. Lucky I learnt to drive.
- [Laughter]
- OH: When you moved here in 1972, into the house, did Dean move with you?
- AS: Oh yes, oh yes. He got married from here in '70, '70 something, I can't remember properly, yeah.
- OH: What difference did it make to you to have the brand new house?
- AS: Oh gee. I think it was everybody's dream those days to buy, to build a house that you liked (). I remember we never took any of the old furniture from the old house, we bought everything new, so I was in my glory!
- OH: It must have been great.
- AS: Oh, beautiful.
- OH: Did your sisters-in-law do the same thing?
- AS: Yes, they did the same thing, yeah.
- OH: When you were all living here as next-door neighbours, because you were in the middle?
- AS: Yes.
- OH: And is that how the age went?
- AS: No. I don't know.
- OH: Who was the eldest one of the brothers? Was Lui the eldest?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: And was Vito the second?
- AS: Second, and Nugget was the third.
- OH: So that's the way the houses are. [Laughs]
- AS: Yeah, yes, yeah, and then my son built a couple of blocks from our house. He built a house after he was married, and then Denise built another one, yeah.
- OH: So it kept quite close in the family?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: You were telling me previously that in 1974 the Woodville Council had a proposition for the land here.
- AS: They took the reserve, because we tried to split up. See the land was in the three names, and you weren't supposed to have more than so much for yourself, I think. I don't, I don't know what it was all about actually, but we had a lot of trouble with the Woodville Council, and they took away about eight blocks, never got a penny for them.
- OH: The Council wanted the blocks, not for housing, but for?
- AS: As a reserve, because they said there wasn't enough reserve.
- OH: For people to play or relax in?
- AS: Yeah, yeah.
- OH: So at that time you were still using the land as market gardens?

- AS: Yeah, yeah.
- OH: And so it must have been a bit later than that, that the land was subdivided for housing?
- AS: I think in '86 we sold, and they ... We had, we had built, we had made a plan for all the houses and that, but the Woodville Council wouldn't accept it, they wanted ... We had a lot of trouble with Woodville.
- OH: That must have been difficult?
- AS: Oh, to lose all that land, and never got anything for it.
- OH: I was going to move on and ask you about your trip to Italy. Can you remember when that was?
- AS: '68.
- OH: Oh, okay, so you would have been living in the old ...?
- AS: Old house, yes.
- OH: You and Vito decided to go?
- AS: Well there was a whole mob from Lockleys going.
- OH: So who else went?
- AS: Well, the Tonellato, Mary and Albert, Ballestrin, (), there was a whole lot of them. They left before us, they went by ship. We flew over and then we come back all together in the boat. It was '68, well the same year, all come back with the boat. It took 36 days coming over. They went on strike, the sailors went on strike in two ports. Oh, then when we got to Durban in South Africa, we had a big, they had a big cyclone, so they were on strike, and we had to wait about three or four days in port before we could get out, with the big storm that was going on. As I said, they striked in two ports, the boat coming over.
- OH: How long were you away?
- AS: We were away six months.
- OH: What happened to the market gardens?
- AS: Oh, the two brothers, the other carried on because Lui and Rosina, the year before they went, and then they went in '67, we went in '68, so then they worked, they kept going, carry on.
- OH: What was it like for you to go back to Italy?
- AS: Well, I didn't know anything, I didn't remember where I was, you know, we went to see where I was born, the house and that. Oh no, we had a good time, we took a few trips. We went to France, Spain, Portugal, and we travelled around. We bought a car ... and travelled around. We used go with Mary now, but in the end we'd go for lunch somewhere.
- OH: Mary and Albert Tonellato?
- AS: Yeah, and we were great friends with them, yep.
- OH: Did you remember any relatives in Bigolino?

- AS: No, not really. Well, I met up with all my Mum's brothers and sister. Oh no, they never realised, even Vito never realised that he had so many relations. [Laughs] Oh, my goodness.
- OH: Because Vito had come from?
- AS: Caselle.
- OH: So he had quite a lot of relatives who were there?
- AS: Oh yes, he had a lot. Well there was two or three sisters, a couple still alive in Italy when we went and oh no, he had all his relations, his uncles and his seven nieces and a nephew.
- OH: It must have been a wonderful experience?
- AS: Oh yes. We lived with one of his, one of his cousins in the house. We had a bedroom and a kitchen, we had one for ourself, and as I said, we bought a car over there and we used to go around and see all the relations and the friends. They were all, around here they were all, we were all close together and we used to meet up. Castelfranco, what you call it, what's the other?
- OH: Treviso?
- AS: Yeah, I had a couple of uncles in Treviso, Mum's brothers.
- OH: What was it like meeting up with your relatives?
- AS: Oh, it was lovely to get to know all of, you know ... Dad had two sisters still alive in Bigolino, and as I said Vito, had ... because my Mum came with us that time, she come back to Italy the first time since she'd been, she's came back here, and it was lovely for her to meet up [with] all her brothers and sister.
- OH: Because it was a long time for her to be without seeing them.
- AS: Yeah. Well, since 1936, she never, Dad never ... Well, Dad had died by then. He died in 1965.
- OH: Had your father wanted to go back to Italy?
- AS: No, no, no, he never mentioned it, but ultimately Mum came because we were going.
- OH: How old would she have been at that time?
- AS: Well she died in 1972, and she was 70, so ...
- OH: She would have been 68?
- AS: 68, 69, yeah.
- OH: She didn't want to stay there, in Italy?
- AS: No, no, no. Well, she had all her family here.
- OH: Did you go again to Italy, Anna?
- AS: No, no, never went back anymore. That was the only time.
- OH: When did you stop working in the gardens?
- AS: Well, after Nugget and Vito retired from the garden, my son and Nugget's son took over the land until we sold the land there. We had trouble over there too.
- OH: At Bolivar?

- AS: At Bolivar, yeah. We had to get out of that, the Council took over again.
[Laughs]
- OH: That was unfortunate to have the same experience.
- AS: Oh yes.
- OH: I understand that quite a number of Italians had market gardens along Port Wakefield Road.
- AS: That's right, yes.
- OH: Why did they go there?
- AS: Well, I think they all had to shift out from here, there was all housing being built and that. Frankie Ballestrin was right next door to us, up at Bolivar. He used to, he never had glasshouses but he used to grow potatoes.
- OH: What was it like for you when you stopped working in the gardens?
- AS: Well, it was good. [Laughs] We had the house to look after, and we never had much more to do with the glasshouses and that.
- OH: Did you grow vegetables in your back garden?
- AS: No, not a thing.
- [Laughter]
- OH: You'd had enough?
- AS: Yep!
- OH: What have you enjoyed doing since you have been retired from the gardens?
- AS: Oh, nothing much, garden. Well, look after the house, and cook, and clean. I did a lot of tapestry, do knitting, that's about all; go out every now and then.
- OH: And you've also looked after some of your nieces' and nephews' children?
- AS: Oh, I had three grandchildren then.
- OH: And the grandchildren.
- AS: Three of them, they used to live a couple, a couple of houses ... They were always near, came into school sometime, pick them up and that, and we were all, just all families, we got together. We used to see one another all the time.
- OH: That beautiful girl on the fridge here, your great-niece?
- AS: Oh yes, yes. She's a life-saver that one, she's like a great-granddaughter to me, yeah. No, I broke my legs four years ago, and her Mum looked after us. Well she grew up with us, we were up at the old house together, and we always lived together just about. She helped me out a lot. They're all, they're all good kids, they all got on very well all together, all the family, and the nieces and nephews.
- OH: How many were cousins, like of the Santin's, how many, that next generation? So there was Dean?
- AS: Allan, there's only the two boys, then there's, Allan now has got a daughter, and he's got a son to carry on his name. I've got three grandchildren, two of them boys, so Lui and Rosina they had two boys actually, and both died, and they have got the nieces, Sandra Conci, and then Virginia. Well she's a Mattiazzo, (). Well, there's a whole lot of us, we get together [laughs].

- OH: It must be a lot of fun. So we're coming to the end of the interviews. I'm curious to know what do you think are some of the biggest changes that you've seen here on Frogmore Road since you first came.
- AS: New roads, new houses, new people. You don't know your neighbours now from, you know, they're not friends. They're not family any rate.
- OH: And that's different from how it was?
- AS: Oh yes. I'm the only one left of the old generation of the Santin, so when I go there's the next one, but they all ... one lives at West Lake, my son lives at Mount Barker, they're all split up, not together like we were years ago.
- OH: And when you think back to when you first came here to, well I guess Valetta Road and then to Frogmore Road, there would have been lots of families who knew each other.
- AS: Oh yes. We knew all one another then.
- OH: This is a question about your Italian heritage. Do you think of yourself as Italian, Australian, as a Veneta, or Trevignana? What do you think of yourself as?
- AS: Oh, I don't know, more or less always your Italian heritage is always on your mind. I think when you get older you think more ... back to your Italian heritage in what you do, not the Australian.
- OH: And if somebody asked you what your background was, what would you say?
- AS: Oh, I'd say I'm an Italian.
- OH: And is it important where you came from?
- AS: What?
- OH: Is it important to say where you came from in Italy?
- AS: Yeah.
- OH: What would you say?
- AS: Oh, I don't know much.
- OH: Some people, I understand, think it's very important to say that they were from the Veneto. Is it important for you to say that?
- AS: Yes. That's my son coming in.
- OH: Well, that's a good point at which to finish the interview, so thank you very much, Anna, for your interview, and also Assunta, for you today, thank you.
- AS: That's alright.