

**Italian market gardeners oral history project**  
**Interview OH872/710 with Lino Tonellato**  
**recorded by Madeleine Regan at Newton, South Australia**  
**on 16 July 2010**

---

**Lino, we're going to start with your background, and could you tell me your parents' names and their date of birth?**

Dad's name was Secondo, and my mother's name is Elizabeth [Elisabetta].

**And your Dad was born in?**

19...

**18 (*inaudible*) he would know (*inaudible*) 1893?**

189 ... 1893.

**And your mother was born?**

1895.

**And you were born in 19...?**

1926.

**Right! And ... your Dad had come to Australia in?**

1927 I think, yeah.

**And do you know why he had come to Australia?**

Well to have a better life I think. There wasn't much food there at all.

**And can you tell me where your parents came from in ...?**

Came from Provincia Treviso, Caselle.

**And Caselle would have been like a little town?**

Yeah, like a suburb out of ... Treviso was the main, what's a name, town, big town, and then this is a little town out, out of that.

**Right! And do you know what your Dad would have done before he came to Australia?**

Well, he ... after the war, the first World War, he, he was looking after, the gave him a job looking after the reservoir because there was all rivers, you know, watering, farms, little farms and that at a certain time of the year when they were planting stuff, and then that run out when things started to go bad, and well my sister ... well he must have left when I was pretty ... I can't remember him there, but that's when he came to Australia to have a better life. Then he found it was bad here too (laughs).

**And he told you, later, that it was bad here?**

Yeah.

**What did he say?**

Well, he said he was ... he saved up some money when he work up on the Mallee country and then he came down on the farm, and he saved up some money and he planted tomatoes, and he got us out here. That's how he got the, to pay the passage over, you know.

**And what was he doing in the Mallee country?**

Well, on roadwork.

**Right.**

In them days there was no machinery, all done by hand. He was smashing with the crowbars and sledgehammer, smashing the stones he used to put down, all by hand.

**And so he got enough money to come back to Adelaide?**

Yeah, yeah, he come to Adelaide and before that, when he finished there, they started a ... ones of the farms (*inaudible*) he said he was looking for work, and they started making coal. They dug a big trench, they put, from the farmer, cut the timber and put it in there and make coal out of it, and then when they're finished making them, like ... a few tons, so they come back to Adelaide, left everything there.

**And he came to Frogmore Road at Kidman Park?**

Yeah, that's right, that's where he come, to Frogmore Road.

**And do you know how he would have got to have some land there?**

Well they leased the land there. People were there and they, they leased the land from, I think it was Harris Scarfe used to own it, or was it Bush or Harris Scarfe, one of the two, I forget now, but they started off like that and they found this place, we lived there for quite a few years, and they had a big (*inaudible*) and that sort of killed the coal and the win. They planted tomatoes one year, outside tomatoes, and they got enough money for us to come over.

**And when you say *us*, that included your Mum and ...?**

Yeah, all the family.

**So there was you and how many other children?**

Well there was my older brother, Lui, and my sister, Rosina, and Albert, and then me and then Nano - or Orlando, that's what's his name.

**Yeah! And so when you arrived here with your Mum and brothers and sister, you were nine years old?**

Yeah, I forget now, I thought it was eight, but oh ...

**Eight or nine, yeah.**

Eight or nine.<sup>1</sup>

**And do you remember anything about coming?**

Now I'm not sure but I think we might have landed at Port Pirie because they didn't have any ... the ship didn't come here because they reckoned it wasn't ... they paid our passage over, to get us over from Port Pirie, because it was cheaper for them to do that than coming into port here in Adelaide only for the one family, and I remember looking at the ... when Dad was talking to mum he said "Oh, there would be plenty of oranges along the road", and we were looking for them you see (laughs). There wouldn't have been oranges up that way (laughs) from Port Pirie. But when we came down here and we seen where we were going to live, we thought we were Father Christmas (laughs).

**Because something special was waiting for you, wasn't it?**

Yeah.

**What was that? What was waiting for you when you arrived in ...?**

There was neighbour he was working, my Dad was working with, the Piovesan's were there, partnership you see, on the farm, on the market garden, they were working together in them days.

**And your father had done something special about accommodation, hadn't he?**

Yeah, King George (laughs) carriage it was.

**A train carriage?**

Yeah, train carriage.

**Do you remember what it looked like when you arrived?**

I still remember, it was all nice shiny and real polish, high polish, and it was not hot and not cold, always the same temperature in there, with no air-condition, it was always the same temperature because the wall was three layers of like cork, to get ... them days they didn't have ... all fill in with cork, and the roof was three, three, three layers of, for the roof.

**So like good insulation?**

Oh, insulation was beautiful, you know.

**And this carriage had been a royal carriage, hadn't it?**

It was a royal carriage because all the ... every window had hunting dogs and the dogs and the ...

**Hunters.**

... and the horses, you know, hunting and that. They used to have a lot of sport in them days

---

<sup>1</sup> In the editing process Lino stated: "I enjoyed the trip, especially the good that available."

**So that was etched onto the glass?**

Oh yeah, all carved in, all carved in the mirror.

**Wow!**

Oh, it was beautiful.

**And what colour was it inside?**

Well it was highly polished, not real dark but no lighter, darker, a bit darker than that or ...

**So like wood?**

Yeah, wood colour but ...

**Kind of black oak or something?**

Yeah, that's right, that's what it was, yeah, all done sort of special.

**Yeah.**

That's your wood.

**And were there bedrooms and ...?**

There were six bedrooms and two, one each end of the carriage big enough to put the tables and chairs and everything, you know.

**And was there a bathroom?**

Yeah, Dad put the bathroom and the kitchen there, he made one room for the kitchen and one room for the bathroom. Oh, he had everything. We had hot water in them days (laughs).

**And what about electricity, was there electricity when you arrived?**

*(inaudible)?*

**Electricity?**

It was all in there, they'd put it, this in, and everything, it was all in, all fitted, yeah.

**And how far, because you used to call it the *vagon*, is that right, the *vagon*?**

*Vagon*, yeah.

**How far was that from the glasshouses?**

Well it took 'em all day from early morning to night time, because they had to have the police and shift the electric poles. It was that long they couldn't get it around the corner in them days from Islington, all the way from Islington to down Lockleys, but they couldn't get around the corner on the Grange Road there. They were stuck there for about five hours trying to get the post out to get it across (laughs). Then they reckon they had to lift up wires and all on the way.

**How dramatic!**

Yeah. And they had a special trailer there he had to hire for it because it was over a chain long you see, it was pretty long I think, it was very long.

**Oh! We're looking at the photo of it on the wall there, yeah, yeah. And, um, was it very close to where the market gardens were, on the land?**

Yeah, we were right on it.

**Right on it?**

Yeah, working around (*inaudible*) had their ... they were leasing it, that's why we were (*inaudible*) you know. Yeah, it was ... oh, it was, oh, a lot more fun here than what it was over there, I can tell you that now (laughs).

**For you as a young boy?**

Yeah.

**So what, what did you do when you arrived? Did you go to school here?**

Yeah, we went to school down, what's it's name first, not far from Underdale, and then the priest came around after six months we were there, they paid all our, used to pay our fare, and they want us to shift to the Catholic school, and Dad reckon "I can't afford it". We used to walk down there you see, and then well he paid for the tram to go backwards and forwards. The Catholic school did that. It was only a penny there, a penny back, and then we still had to walk another two or three kilometres back (laughs), yep.

**And did you like school?**

Yeah, I liked school in the beginning. It didn't, it doesn't take long to speak English when you're young, you know, yeah, so you get used to it, but I mean we had to run back home after to work in the garden (*inaudible*) before morning and before school.

**And before school?**

Oh yeah.

**And what were your jobs in the garden?**

Well, hoeing, cleaning, picking, beans and that, you know. When we got here there was no glasshouses.

**So what was your Dad growing at that time?**

Oh, caulis and cabbages and potatoes, lettuce, things like that, you know, because everything ... they had no sprinklers in them days like they ... after we had them enough, not in the beginning, we had the water flat.

**So what did your Dad do about watering?**

We had, they had put a bore in, they did it themselves, they dug out a hole and put a bore in and they found the water and therefore we were using beautiful water, even better than the tap

water it was in them days, until the casing went broke, it was rusty, and then it was a bit salty, but before that it was beautiful water. We used to drink that water instead of the tap water.

**Because the bore would have been very important then?**

Oh yeah, it was only 108 feet deep, but it was beautiful water.

**And your Dad sunk that bore?**

Yeah, him and his ... Piovesan and the car pump.

**Right. And Piovesan had come at the same time as your father, hadn't he?**

I think, I'm not ... I think they were because, yeah, because he had 13... it was at the same time I think because I know that Nilo, he was born in the stable the day before, the day we arrived.

**Nilo Piovesan?**

Mm, Nilo, the oldest one.

**Oh.**

He was born. They all lived in the same stables, they were made up to live in (laughs).

**So you lived quite close to the Piovesan family?**

Oh, the two places were stuck together.

**So you grew up with those ...?**

We grew up together, yeah.

**Yeah, because there were three boys?**

Yeah. Dino, Nilo – Dino the second one and Bruno the last one – three boys.

**And the Piovesan's were also from the same area in Italy?**

I think they might have been around there, yeah, somewhere. They told me once but I forget now. It was another little town but around there anyhow.

**And what was it like growing up being the, you know, in a family where your Dad was a market gardener?**

We got to know a lot of people, you know, when you're kids you make friends with everybody, and it worked. The food was an important one (laughs).

**(Laughs) And what food did you enjoy?**

Anything, growing most of it but enjoyed everything. I remember going to school when the others stayed home from school, and I used to buy six pies, penny pies, and they were bigger than what you get now.

**Six?**

Six of them, for dinner.

**And you ate all of them?**

Oh yeah, and more too (laughs). I remember one Friday the nuns said “Oh, you can’t eat that”. I said “I couldn’t get any pasty, so I had to buy pies”. “Oh, yeah, that’s Good Friday, you can’t eat it”, and I put them in the bin and she came out with a plate of food and she just gave me that, I had them in a hurry. She said “You want another plate?” I said “Yes, another big plate”. It happened again after a few months (laughs). She said “You’d better eat them” (laughs). I was a big eater in them days, even though I was thin I used to eat a lot.

**And did you like going to school?**

Oh yeah. The only trouble was when you leave school you had to run back home and get into the garden and then books, we never used to see them, only when we were going to school.

**So you had quite a busy life ...**

Oh yeah.

**... with your family.**

It was nice, yeah, it was good.

**What sort of things did you do, um, to enjoy yourself like, you know, with friends or with your brothers or ...?**

Well I don’t know, we used to play a bit of football and cricket, and things like that, you know what you do when you’re kids, yeah. I played a bit of football years ago at school with a team and that, that was about it. I wasn’t much for sport. When we had the shed I used to work in the shed nearly all night (laughs).<sup>2</sup>

**As a youngster?**

Mechanic, yeah.

**Oh!**

I used to love doing that. I’m still doing it.

**Oh! Oh! Yeah! And at what age did you leave school?**

I think school holidays in September, and I had another two weeks to go after that, as far as I remember I didn’t go back – about thirteen and a half I think I was.

**And what did you do instead of going to school?**

Oh, in the garden all day.

**Oh!**

Helping Dad and things like that you know.

---

<sup>2</sup> Lino stated that he sorted vegetables for the market the following day

**Did your other brothers help your Dad too in the garden?**

Oh yeah, yeah. Albert, my older brother, he went to work because he was still in partnership. He went to work for Del Fabbro, concrete, cement, and footpath, and things like that, and that's ... when he became of age he kept going there and that. What did they do? Oh yeah, he was called up in the Army, he was only in there for six weeks, and then Del Fabbro said he had a big job for the Army and he said, he said "I've got a ... my man, you called him up in the Army", he said "I can't do it now". No worries, they got him out straightaway, they got him out and he worked for Del Fabbro for, I don't know, six months or so and then he worked for Onkaparinga factory, the Army put him there so he could work there.

**And where was the Onkaparinga factory?**

Up in the hills.

**Oh right. And when you went to work for your Dad after you left school, did he have the glasshouses at that time?**

That's when we grew up and then we saved, all of us saved a bit of money and we started buying half a dozen at a time, and we started building more and more.

**Where would you buy the glasshouses from?**

We bought them mostly second-hand, people had them, they sold out and, you know, the new ones were too dear, they couldn't afford to. Every time we shifted we used to make an extra one, you know, one or two extra.

**And how often did you shift them?**

Oh, every three, four years. See we had the heavy soil, we had to shift every second[?] year. The crop used to do better when you were there six/seven years, but the posts were rotting so you had to shift them otherwise they (laughs), yeah, they were only jarrah posts, you know.

**And do you remember the dimensions of the glasshouses?**

Yeah, oh yeah, we used to build them, redo them – about forty and a half feet by 120 feet long.

**And how high?**

The side was about ... you had to bend down like that and touch it with your hands about two, two (*inaudible*) glasshouses, of glass, there were sixteen so thirty-two inches, by the time you put the rail about three and a half feet, not even, no, about, yeah, bottom, yeah, about three feet high, and the top were about, about five, six feet, the middle of it, you know, (*inaudible*).

**And when you watered in the glasshouses how did you do that?**

Water by ... it had six rows of tomatoes, one each side, and six, and you watered six rows, you know, gutters, six rows at a time.

**So you'd get the hose from the bore?**

No, no, we used to water in rows, channels, you know, first you water them flat to plant them, and then we used to hoe them, make channels, and tomatoes up here and the channel here, water that. That's why you used to be filthy dirty all the time, you'd rub on each side of the tomato when they grow you see.

**And so you remember what kind of tomatoes your Dad grew?**

Well it was different altogether to the one you've got now. The Gross Lisse or something like what you get now but bigger tomatoes, and dwarf, they only used to come about that high.

**About three feet?**

Yeah, the Gross Lisse used to come right up here and they cut the heads off in the end because they were too high.

**And how did you support the Gross Lisse as they grew up?**

Tie a wire each row, from one end to the other, and say about ten/twenty feet had a wood instead of a steel (*inaudible*) where it holds the glass, the rafters. We had a wooden one heavy enough to hook up the wire otherwise they'd go like that, and you'd tie them up, six/seven, [counting] one, two, three – yeah, five, six rows, five rows – and then after a few years we made one more in the middle, double in the middle.

**And you also grew beans in there?**

Beans, yeah, inside the glasshouses, yeah, beans. After the tomatoes were going down, like in the ... because we used to plant tomatoes, the young ones, in June and July, because in them days housewives wouldn't buy tomatoes in winter, they wouldn't buy tomatoes, and we'd plant them in July, they used to come in July to pick, January we used to plant tomatoes in the glasshouse, and by June and July the tomatoes were ready to pick, some, you know, you couldn't sell them, they wouldn't buy them and they'd be getting (*inaudible*) tomato, "Oh no, no, no, no, it's not tomatoes". They only wanted them in the hot weather, yeah, (laughs) but now they sell them twelve months of the year, yeah.

**And who did your Dad sell to?**

Beg your pardon?

**Who did your Dad sell the tomatoes and beans and vegetables to?**

Oh he had a, he had a spot in Central Market and used to, with the horse they used to go in there, the trolley, and you had your spot, you'd pay so much, Dad used to pay so much a year, but someone used to go, when they used to go to the market they used to go in any spot with a ramp (*inaudible*), they knew the owner wasn't coming in, well then the market people used to come around and charge you for it. Oh yeah (laughs), yep.

**Did your Dad also sell at the East End Market?**

That's the one in Adelaide, uh?

**Yeah.**

Oh no, yeah.

**Yeah! Oh, that's what you, the one that you're talking about?**

Yeah.

**Oh right.**

Not the one ... Central Market they used to call it in them days.

**Oh right.**

Yeah.

**Right. And do you remember going to market with your Dad?**

Oh yeah, oh yeah, we went a few times when I was young you know.

**Yeah?**

After we were too busy working home and Dad was doing the marketing (laughs), we didn't want to go, have to get up too early (laughs).

**How early would you have had to have got up?**

Well them days, I never went when the horses were going. We had the truck, I went a few times with Dad. He'd get tired, you know, you've got to go to school so you didn't go much, but Albert used to go with the horse and trolley. He used to get up at 2 o'clock in the morning and then stop on the way back to school, going back, coming back from the Adelaide at 12 o'clock. He used to go off with the horses, stop there, and of course they used to go to market them days, Bruno Piovesan's father used to go to the market, they used to be in partnership, and the teacher, poor teacher, he was going to sleep from 3 o'clock in the morning (laughs), he was going to sleep at the table, and the what's name teacher never work him up, he used to leave him sleep (laughs).

**That was kind (laughs).**

Oh yeah, yep.

**And was it different kind of work if you think about winter and summer in the gardens?**

Well in winter, outside, you worked in the rain and you can't get in there because it's too wet, and in summer, that's alright, but then you need a lot of water, but (*inaudible*) there, and then in winter that's why you put the glasshouse, you buy glasshouses, because otherwise you're going to have to do it in winter, much vegetable and everything like that, so winter, the vegetable finish outside you got the glasshouse coming up so you've got twelve month of the year going all the time. That's why the idea of the glasshouses, and tomatoes were planted in January and through winter, and when you get these days of big frost we were up all night trying to keep them warm.

**What did you do?**

We used to light fires inside the glasshouse. First there was outside, we found out that didn't work and we lost all the tomatoes, and then we put sawdust, buckets, twenty four-litre buckets, put a pipe down there and a pipe this way, and then you pack them in, then you take the pipes out and you've got the funnel going through so the fire breathe and burn, otherwise it conks out, and that way you're saving, but you're save them from dying altogether, but the frost used to make them all empty inside, didn't make much tomatoes at all. Sometimes you'd lose them all, you know, they were even that big.

**They hadn't grown very much?**

Burn them off altogether, the frost, oh yeah (laughs), tomatoes don't like that cold, and there was that putting oil, oh yeah, we put oil, buckets with oils like that inside, but we didn't know the oil smoke killed all the tomatoes just the same, and so we had to put chimneys on them (laughs).

**A lot of work.**

Oh, all night, up all night.

**And how did you know that there were going to be frosts?**

Oh, we used to listen to the weather a lot, oh yeah, we all ... it used to start, sometimes the frost used to start in them days, the tomatoes were getting cold, you'd go around and make sure there's no frost in the glasshouses, outside first and then starts inside. When it starts inside well then that's when the tomatoes burn. It doesn't burn them from the cold really, it burns them ... when you get the frost inside, then it drips, and that cold water from the frost, ice, hit the plant, that's it, and it used to go right through from top to bottom inside.

**No wonder you were up all night because it would be very important ...**

Oh yeah.

**.... to keep that ...**

Oh yeah.

**... heat in the glasshouse.**

Yeah, we don't mind, see the frost, they'd say "God, what are they doing now (*inaudible*)?" and (laughs) and everything around in the cold.

**And then if you stayed up all night, what happened the next day, like just ...?**

You had to get up again and fill all them buckets up again, had a couple of hours sleep and that's it, fill all the buckets up with sawdust again.

**Hard work!**

We didn't mind it at all you know, enjoyed it.

**And the fact that you were working as a family ...**

Oh yeah, that's right.

**... must have made a difference?**

Yeah, it was hard work but, I don't know, that wasn't so bad when you look after the plant, it's the digging, you got to dig them all by hand.

**What was that like?**

After you finished tomato you got to put them with a fork about that long.

**How deep is that into the ground?**

Turn it over.

**Is that about two feet that you'd have to dig down?**

No, it was about a foot. That's why tomatoes are a lot better now because you rip them through deep you see, and (*inaudible*) you got different soil altogether. Oh now, wow, they make a lot of plant, a lot of tomatoes out of the glasshouses now, not them days, you'd get a hundred. The first early ones you used to get a hundred buckets, a hundred half-cases each glasshouse, we thought that was plenty, but now there's three/four hundred, it's different.

**How long would it take you, roughly, to dig over a glasshouse?**

To what?

**If you ...**

Did it?

**... dug over a glasshouse?**

Oh, myself and my brother, Orlando, we used to dig one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and it's hot outside (laughs), inside.

**So that's two of you digging and ...?**

Digging.

**And how many glasshouses would you estimate that your father and your ... you and your brothers had, you know, the most?**

For (*inaudible*) when they first come out, my older brother got married, he only had six glasshouses and he used to make a good living with six glasshouses, him and the ... there wasn't as much as tomatoes like they do it now but when you get ten/twenty pound a week, that's a good living, but when the – what would I say – when you start the digging now with the machines and then we invented a ... we bought an old tractor and we made the cable for it to pull a plough through. We were the first one to do that. About that deep we used to go.

**How deep is that?**

Oh, very close to two feet. Sometimes we used to move the plough (*inaudible*) too. It wasn't really a plough, it was just a what's name like that, and it used to push the ground up.

**Like blades?**

Yeah, like two blades together, push the soil right up and move it, and then we used to, we had a hand lawnmower, a rotary hoe, we used to do it with that.

**How would you use a hand rotary hoe, like ...?**

It was about, in them days the first one that come out was only about eight, twelve, eighteen inches wide, and two wheels and a motor in the front, and by hand.

**And you kind of walked along?**

Yeah, walk along with it. After the war that's when they come and they made it steel. Sometimes you used to lose it (laughs), had to dig it out because the wheel was only that wide, and it used to dig itself in.

**So the wheels were quite narrow?**

Yeah, and then the rubber tyres come out, you had to be careful, you know.

**And whose idea was it to have the cable?**

Oh, Albert was the first one. We worked together, that's why he thought ... we got the tractor (*inaudible*), and then we made some good money out of it, we used to do it for other people.

**So you'd go and dig?**

Dig glasshouses like that, yeah.

**Oh! It obviously was better than doing it by hand?**

Oh yeah, a lot better, you still had to do it near the post and that by hand, but it was a lot better.

**And if you think about Frogmore Road at that time, you know, that you had started working with your Dad, what did it look like, you know, the area around?**

It was all little, little market gardens, all done by hand, and you'd see people working an acre of land, it was all done by hand, and they still make a better living than what they would anywhere in the world I suppose, I don't know.

**And what did it look like, you know, were there fences or many houses or ...?**

We used to put up bamboo fences and that for windbreaks, for outside, they used to put in that. We used to put them up. They had bamboo, some places had a lot of boxthorn, you know, used to cut a boxthorn to keep them that wide.

**Keep them about what, two ...?**

About two feet wide, otherwise the wind would blow them over.

**Who would have planted the boxthorns to begin with?**

Oh, the birds. You only had to plant one because they made little marbles, red marbles, and the birds used to love them, but then the seed, the dropping, come up, and all the fences was all like that, all where the drops of the birds, up comes the thorn, boxthorn.

**Mm.**

They got them out from England, the boxthorn, the seed, for windbreak (laughs) but they didn't know the birds spread them out (laughs), yeah.

**And were there, you know, many other people in around where your family was who were working the land?**

Oh yeah, quite a few. The whole area was all market garden, you know. Well I suppose they had to get a living somewhere, you know. When they come here they couldn't understand much, speak much English, didn't know what to do, so they had to start off something because over there they only had little gardens too, and where we come from they used to plant once a year because you'd get the snow that high, every year, I still remember the snow there.

**Really deep, like ...**

Yeah, it was ...

**... you just pointed to what, about two feet?**

Oh yeah, even the creeks, they used to come up with ice and we used to skate on them back there. Yeah, I still remember a kid broke the ice, he went on the ice, it was too thin, he (*inaudible*), he couldn't get up. They had to break the ice to get him out (laughs).

**And he was saved?**

He was lucky, he found some air, they freeze there, straightaway.

**And do you think it would have been something that your father had to, and other market gardeners, had to learn that there were opportunities for more than one crop a year, here in Adelaide?**

Yeah, yeah, he heard from other people, see he knew some other people that came here. He knew how warm, that you never get snow here unless you go to the mountain, and all that, you know, he must have ... he was supposed to be in Canada or here, which one opened first, Australia opened up first so he came here instead of going to Canada. See we got relation in Canada too.

**So people had to leave your region?**

Oh, nothing they could do, you know. A lot of them stayed there but a lot of them, most of the young people left, them days.

**Had your father's or your mother's families been landowners?**

Well landowners, what do you call landowners, I think they used to lease something, only about a ... when they call the campo, it's like two and a half acres here, two and a quarter acres, one acre, is one of their campi they used to call them. It was two and a half acres here, two and a quarter acres, and she only had, when Dad wasn't there we used to, I remember going down there and help her to weed the corns and make, then they used to make bread with

it, that's all. That's the only bread we had out of corn, you know, how they (*inaudible*) (laughs).

**So that's an indication of the kind of poverty?**

Oh yeah, there was poverty alright, yeah. See, most of the ... that's why we couldn't eat polenta. Do you know what that is? We like it now but it took us thirty years before we'd start eating it (laughs).

**Why?**

Because you had too much there (laughs). That's where you're having it all day.

**And not enough variety of other?**

No, only that, and vegetables they used to grow out on a piece of land, mum used to grow a small area, used to grow a bit of vegetable, that's all.

**And five children?**

And five kids that were crying for food. My sister used to say, and older brother, used to say "Oh yeah, it was wonderful when Dad was home and he had that job there. We were better off than anybody in the town". Yeah, I said while he was working the council used to pay him well. He came back from the Army and they gave him that job when he got married. Whatever they did, returned soldiers, they gave them a piece of land each, something like that. Didn't give them the land they just gave them a job. We thought "Well, the kids are growing up", he said ... you had to think of something.

**So big decision to go to Australia?**

Yeah, yeah. We were all happy about it but at the same time you don't like to leave your great-grandfather but home (*inaudible*), I still remember him, the great-grand... my mother's father. He had to be home by himself.

**It must have been hard for your mother to leave him?**

Oh, it was very hard, yep.

**And what about your mother here in Adelaide, what was her life like as you were growing up, what did she do?**

She had a job to look after us, and she used to come out on the garden the same as everybody else, oh yeah, yep. She had enough work to look after us, just when we were all growing up, you know, feed and washing and ironing and all them sort of things. We had six, seven of us altogether, you know, it was pretty hard for her, but she still put on a lot of weight. She was as thin as a stick over there, and when she came here she (*inaudible*) (laughs). She was happy.

**Did she have friends here?**

Yeah, she had most of the people, the Piovesans that had the ... Nilo ... Johnny's father.

**Johnny Marchioro?**

Marchioro, yeah, just further, next farm, yeah.

**And did those men get together, you know?**

Oh, they used to get together and play cards and that at night, you know, that's what the main thing was then, they used to play cards, and the women used to talk. That wasn't bad – better life than the other side any time.

**And did your father make wine or do some of those things?**

Yeah, he used to make it when he could afford it. After they were going [growing] up again, the money, we used to make his own little wine, yeah. That's what I said, when we were kids over there we used, we're used to drinking wine – I remember that – and one year when we just arrived he made thirty-five, thirty-five gallons of wine, thirty-five gallons of wine. You know how long it took to finish that off, seven of us, at the table with a big glass each of wine for dinner (laughs)? He said "Ha, ha, no more", he said "we're going to start on tea"(laughs), started drinking tea and never touched the wine again. I haven't ... sometimes ... I never have any drinks here, beer or wine. Anybody comes I have like my brother-in-law, Elio and Frankie, when they come here they don't get any drinks, any wine or beer, they take their own (laughs).

**So your father didn't drink after that?**

One glass for dinner, that's all, yeah, he never, he never drank (*inaudible*).

**Oh, and what about things like killing the pig? Did your parents do that?**

What?

**Kill the pigs?**

Yeah, we used to kill pig, every year.

**And where would you have got the pig from?**

Up on the hills and people that grow them, you know, and things like that. We used to have them ourself, we used to grow ourself, some of them, but they used to smell like mad (laughs), you know, even calf. We used to go down people that had that, milk cows, milking cows, they never used to worry about the male, they used to get rid of it, kill it and throw it and bury it, and they just wanted female, they would have nothing to do with it, so we used to go there and get it for nothing.

**Where would you get them from?**

Like where the Santins lived, that was a dairy farm.

**So that's on the other side of Frogmore Road?**

Other side of Frogmore Road, yeah.

**Near the sand hills?**

Yeah.

### **So you'd get the male cow?**

Yeah, but the trouble is you had to run, you had to be there waiting for them to be born because everybody else was still waiting for it too (laughs), but then they came, even the dairy man said "Ah ah, male or female, whatever it is, male", he said "I'll sell it". He got money for it (laughs) but nothing like it, and then he wasn't allowed to ... well they complained about its killing and we used to kill it and wait 'til it come about that big.

### **How big is that?**

Oh, would it be about that big, he used to feed him ... we had a cow used to give milk, cow, milk, and it was beautiful meat them days, and then he wasn't allowed to do it anymore after a while because the abattoirs complained about it, so we had to stop that too.

### **And what other animals did you have? You said that you kept pigs for a while but ...**

Only one.

### **Oh.**

Just for the, you know ... we were allowed then, the pigs even then they stopped because you had to go to abattoirs. You could have a pig but you couldn't kill it, you had to go to the abattoirs to do it. They used to do it for you. They charged you, it wasn't worth it, but they used to kill it for you, clean it and everything. You'd come home, come home with it nice and clean, you know, you cut it up and make the sausages, but you can't ... sausages was a way you make it, and they can't make it here in the abattoirs because they wouldn't make any money. On a pig, say about three/four hundred pound a pig. We used to put about a hundred pound of meat with it, you know, and it was all done with a hard turning too (laughs), so it was a big one but they used to turn it all by hand.

### **And good, good eating?**

Oh beautiful [sound effects], what's name here makes about the same, that butcher we got down, Nino's Butcher they call it, beautiful meat, that's not bad, but not ... he still got to put ... he said ... he used to buy it from my brother because that was real pork you see instead ... he said "I can't make it like that, I won't make any money on it".

### **And where would your mother have kept the sausages, like did you have a cellar or anything like that?**

Oh, in the cellar, yeah, we made a cellar under the pine trees.

### **So you would have dug that cellar?**

Yeah, we dug a hole and put a roof on it and put a floor on top, earth on top of it to keep it cool. That's before, before that that we had the ... we actually (*inaudible*), so we had to buy ice every, I think it was a block every two to three days and wrap it up with the bags, they'd put it in the box, and a little, what's name, fridge underneath, then you'd have ice.

### **And how did you get the ice? Did someone come around?**

They used to deliver. Them days there was milk delivery, everything delivery, we used to get delivered home (laughs) you cut all that out now (laughs). There wasn't a shop like you get now, there wasn't supermarket like here. They used to call it *the corner store*.

**Where would you parents have got their groceries and things like that?**

Well another one, they were delivered, they used to come around with the groceries, vegetable truck, or something, and she used to get all their bread delivered, everything delivered. We used to go around and ... no, she used to buy six, seven loaves every, six loaves every other day of bread. That's how much we used to eat (laughs).

**And was there an Italian bakery at that time?**

Yeah, there was one ... no, but not when we first arrived, after there was, years after they started, so they came around, you'd get the continental bread, you know, it's a lot better than having the square one half cooked. Mum used to put it in the, inside to cook it more sometimes, but that was still ... when you're young you don't think of that, you just eat.

**And on your farm also, like did you have a milking cow?**

Yep.

**Yeah! And so horses?**

Yeah, we had three horses 'cause they used to get tired, they'd go to the market and back, you know, and then work all day pulling the plough, working like that, so we made it three so one would stay home and they used to do a lot of work at home, and the other two were going to the market but that, you know, after the war that's ... and even during the war, before the war, we got a little Ford truck, little ... it was only, what was it, it had no windows, nothing, just a little cabin made of wood, you know like that, Ford, what did they used to call them, Ford something, and you still see them on, only on show now, chuff, chuff, chuff, chuff, chuff, chuff along, twenty miles an hour (laughs), and then during the war everybody who had a little truck, every once a week they'd go down Woodville on the oval and train to Home Guards, that's right. They used to laugh their heads off (laughs).

**And what was the idea of that?**

Well in case something was coming, after sort of the Japanese come in, and you've got, they've got the trucks and then there was the Home Guard they called them, and they used to drive, pick people up and take them out to safety sort of, you know, just things like that.

**And were you involved in that training?**

No, I didn't, no, no, no, it was my father, my brother, older brother, used to go, and Nil's father, they used to laugh their heads off, that's what they used to do, they used to hit each other.

**And do you remember much else about the war years?**

Well I was called up and because ... my brother was called up, they left him home, I was called up. When you come of age, eighteen, you go for the examination, and they say "What do

you do?” “I’m a market gardener”. I said “We’ve got contract with the Army, cabbages, caulis, and potatoes”. We had a contract for the Army at Keswick, and then they go “Oh”, they looked that up, we were there, then we had the contract to plant stuff for the Army, so “No, we don’t need you, you go home and feed the Army”. A friend of mine, an Australian chap, we used to go to school together, he nearly wet himself when they called him up (laughs), he didn’t want to go, he was a shoemaker, and they left him home to make shoes for the Army (laughs).

**And was he happy about that?**

He was happy alright (laughs).

**And what about you, what do you remember, like did it feel, you know, good that you weren’t being choofed off somewhere to the Army?**

No. Well, I said if I have to go, I told mum “If I go, if I have to go, I have to go, that’s all there is to it”. Assunta’s brother, they went, they were in the Army, the older boy, and he was lucky, he went overseas and sees his uncles and relations over there, for free.

**This is Assunta, your cousin who lived with you?**

Yeah.

**And her brothers?**

Her step-brother.

**Her step-brother, yeah. And you know the contract with the Army to grow the food, did the Army come and collect the food each week that they ...?**

No, no, no, we used to take it there.

**So you were ...**

Take it down Keswick and they used to, you’d take it today and tomorrow you’d get the cheque. They used to be pretty good for that, but they used to rot a lot too, potatoes. They took them a week before, so next week they want say twenty or thirty bags of potatoes, but not many, the one, we’re not the only one that was taking them in, a lot of other people, and they used to ... in the back, we used to leave all the back ones all rotten, you know, because they always pick the front, but they paid pretty well, you know, they used to take cabbages and caulis and things like that too.

**Do you know how that contract would have started?**

Well it was a contract, I think it was a written contract, we were looking for it, you know. I don’t think it was a written contract because they used to like buying from the, straight from the gardens you see.<sup>3</sup>

**And do you have any other memories of those war years, growing up or ...?**

---

<sup>3</sup> Lino explained in the editing process that he together with his brothers, Albert and Nano had to report to the Army. They used to take vegetables such as potatoes and cauliflowers to Keswick barracks on Anzac Highway. “Tod o a ton of potatoes, three of us had to work a day.”

Well, we never had any trouble as far as the what's name go. We used to get along fine with everybody. Any friend of ours because they come from the south of Italy, they didn't used to like us much (laughs), because they were real dark, you know, they got into trouble but we never got into trouble. We had Australian friends, we went to school together. I remember one night we went to a dance down Hindmarsh church there, he said "Let's go (*inaudible*) the dagoes out" (laughs), and they said, a friend of ours he said "They don't know who you are" (laughs).

**They didn't know you were Italian?**

No.

**So the word 'dago' was use to ...?**

(*inaudible*) house. Some people used to get mad about it – don't worry about!

**Oh.**

They used to get (*inaudible*).

**Oh.**

No, we had people, motorbike friends and the Leverenz and the what's name from Findon there, motorbikes, we used to go a lot on motorbike races and that, you know. We never used to race but (*inaudible*).

**And Lino, you bought some land with your father, didn't you?**

Yes.

**And two of your brothers or one of your brothers?**

Yeah, Nano, we bought that piece of land there. It was ten acres I think, ten acres, and my brother used to lease one acre to put his glass, twelve glasshouses when he got married. His wife had six glasshouse, and he took six from, well his share, and six, yeah, so that start him off, he started off pretty good with twelve glasshouse, very good.

**And we're coming to the end of this part of the interview, but if you look back over those early years of your life growing up, what stands out for you?**

Well, when I met my wife, that was the best day of my life, you know.

**And how old were you when you met ...?**

The first time I seen her was, I was twenty-two I think, no twenty, then she disappeared for a couple of years and then I met her again, so it went on.

**Oh, what good fortune that was.**

Yeah (laughs).

**Yeah. Well that's a lovely note on which to end, and you've been married for a long time, haven't you?**

Well, December it will be sixty years.

**Oh, that's lovely, and congratulations, that's fantastic, and thank you very much for the interview and sharing your stories about Frogmore Road. Thank you Lino.**

No worries, thank you.

**End of interview**

**In the editing process, Lino added the following information:**

Lino and Rosanna travelled to Italy in 1988 with Lino's brother and sister-in-law, Albert and Mary Tonellato. Lino's mother's family name was Gatto.

Lino said that his parents were naturalised. "We came here to live and make our lives here. It was not the dream to work and go back."