

Italian market gardeners oral history project
Interview with Lina Campagnaro nee Ballestrin OH872/28
Recorded by Madeleine Regan
.on 13th March 2014 at Kidman Park, South Australia

OH: This is an interview recorded with Lina Campagnaro by Madeleine Regan on 13th March 2014 at Kidman Park. It's an interview recorded for the Italian market gardeners oral history project. Thank you Lina for agreeing to be interviewed today.

OH: (00:23) We're going to start with your family background. What is your full name?

LC: My name is Lina Campagnaro nee Ballestrin.

OH: What is your date of birth?

LC: 22nd July 1944.

OH: A big birthday coming up?

LC: Certainly.

[laughter]

OH: And were you named for anyone in particular in your family?

LC: I was. My Dad was working on the () line in Northern Territory because --- it was war time then and that's where he was sent to work and my Mum expecting me and --- he wrote home to Mum because there wasn't much communication then, and he said that he wanted me to be named Lina, not Natalina, or not Angelina, not Carmelina but just Lina because he was working with --- lots of Southerners, Southern Italians and most of them had a wife or a daughter whose name was Lina but it was really a diminutive of the actual names that I mentioned. But he liked the name Lina, so that's how I got my name.

OH: And it's a lovely name. Just to ask you a little bit about your father at that time. Was he working for the Government?

LC: He was, he was because he --- what is that word that they say, was he a ---?

OH: He wasn't exactly interned but did he work for a group called the Allied Works Council?

LC: Exactly. Exactly. I couldn't remember but that's exactly right, Madeleine. And so, I remember he used to talk about his adventures and he would say that a lot of the men did funny things when they were up there just to get home. Ah, like for instance, one of my uncles used to throw acid in his eyes so he could come home. --- Because he did not want to stay long the line - - - and be away from family. And I remember Dad's Mum --- I can't remember if it was Dad's Mum who died and he was away. And to get home, although it wasn't *his* Mum, to get home, this other uncle, that's what he did, so he could come home. To attend the funeral.

OH: Because it was like they were under the supervision

LC: Exactly.

OH: Because of being Italians during the War?

LC: Italians during the War, yes. I know.

OH: Let's talk about your parents. What was your father's name?

LC: My father's name was Narcisio Ballestrin.

OH: His date of birth?

LC: Was... now --- 30th July 1913.

OH: And your Mum's?

LC: My Mum's was 10th June 1914.

OH: And what was her name?

LC: Her name was Maria Maddalena Ballestrin but *nee* Dotto.

OH: Where were your parents born?

LC: One was, Dad was born in Valla' di Riese which is in Treviso and Mum was born in Salvarosa which is also in Treviso and it was only about four, two or three ks [kilometres] difference from each other. Yeah.

OH: What work did your parents do --- in Italy?

LC: In Italy? Well, Mum, I think she was only 13 when she went to Genova to work as a maid and --- you know, only 13 and there she was working as a maid. She brought home some lovely recipes though. I remember one of them was *gnocchi*¹ with cinnamon, sugar and butter. That's how she loved her *gnocchi* and she would serve them to herself and my brother like that but to Dad she would make the *sugo* for him.

OH: Is that like a sweet if it's with sugar and cinnamon?

LC: Well, it is but she never used to treat it as a sweet. That was her meal because that's the way she liked it. You know how you have sage and butter? Well, she used to like cinnamon and sugar on her [gnocchi]. That was a Genovese recipe.

OH: And your Dad? What work did he do in Italy?

LC: I don't really know what he did in Italy. But they had land so he never went out to work so he must have just --- worked on the land there because he never said that he did anything. Well, I can't remember him saying. Whether my brother said he did or not. I can't remember.²

OH: Where were you born, Lina?

LC: I was born here and at the Mile End hospital --- on Valetta Road where I'm --- about 100 metres away from Valetta Road now in a weatherboard house but had lovely memories.

OH: And we can talk about those a little bit later. What were your parents doing?

[sound of a visitor arriving]

OH: Shall we interrupt this?

LC: Yes.

OH: We're resuming the interview and Lina, I was asking what were your parents doing around the time you were born in 1944?

LC: Well, Mum was home looking after my brother because Dad was out --- up North. So Mum had to tend to my brother was expecting me. They worked on a market garden --- and she had to milk the cow and do everything while Dad was away. And that was when I was born.

OH: And how long was it before your father saw you?

LC: I think it may have been after --- I know he was away, I don't think he was away for a year but he must have seen me, after three or four months, I think. I'm not quite sure on that, but I think so.

OH: We'll finish talking about your family background. Can you tell me about your sibling?

LC: I have three. I have a brother, Jim, Egidio, called Jim who is five years older than. Then there's me, then there's my brother, Silvano, born five years after me, and then four years after Silvano, came Norina. And she now resides in Melbourne.

OH: (01:38) And in your own family, can you tell me about your husband and his name and

¹ *Gnocchi* are small dumplings usually made from potatoes and flour and usually served with a tomato sauce or *sugo*

² In the editing process, Lina confirmed that her father had five brothers and two sisters. "My Mum's parents worked the land and so did Dad's. From memory, I think they both leased the land they farmed."

how you met?

LC: Well, my husband came out when he was almost 20. And we knew that there was a new kid on the block and my next-door neighbour which happened to be my first cousin, used to --- meet with these young lads that came from Italy. And he came out just for a short time, intended short time and then you know, our ball would accidentally go into next-door neighbour's yard. And as young girls, that's what we did, we played with the ball and we met the boys who used to hang around next door. And that's how I met Lui.

OH: How old were you when you married?

LC: I was 19, and --- 19? Just going on for 20 but I was 19 in April and got married in --- oh, no sorry, I got that wrong. [laughs] No, I got married in April and my birthday was in July so I was about 19 and eight months, yeah.

OH: And where had Lui come from in Italy?

LC: He had come from a place in Rosa which is about seven ks³ from Bassano del Grappa, beautiful place in Italy, yes.

OH: A similar or fairly close to the region from where your parents came from?

LC: Well, its 20 ks from where Lui comes from but it borders Treviso. He is under Vicenza but it borders Treviso so not very far away.⁴

OH: To complete the story about your family, you have a number of children?

LC: I do. I have eight children who I love dearly. And 13 grandchildren.

OH: So you must have a busy life?

LC: Always, even though they're not here, it's always busy.
[laughter]

OH: Well, thank you for giving that background, Lina.

OH: (04:06) We're now going to talk about your parents and their arrival in Adelaide. So we'll begin with your father.

LC: Yes.

OH: When did he arrive?

LC: I think it was 1938. --- I can't remember, the month, might have been October in '38, I'm not sure.

OH: Do you know why he came?

LC: Well, he had his brothers here. Especially one, Isidoro was here. I think he came in 1927, I'm not quite sure, yes. And so he came out, better prospects. He was already married to my Mum back in Italy but wanted to come here and find work because there was nothing at home.

OH: It's interesting that he came before the War.

LC: Exactly, yes, because War hadn't broken out then.

OH: When your father came, where did he live?

LC: Well, I think --- this is some things that I don't know but I think he lived with my *zio* Isidoro. Now, I know Isidoro had a property at --- where was it? Two Wells? There was a property and they lived in a --- train. I think so. Was it Two Wells? I'm not quite sure but somewhere there, yeah. So I don't know if Dad lived there for a short time when he came back. Then he lived with Isidoro and then he called Mum out and then they found this place on Valetta Road.

OH: There's some unusual circumstances with your mother's arrival?

³ In this interview, the 'ks', Lina refers to are kilometres

⁴ In the editing process, Lina stated: "Luigi came from nearly the same town so they could communicate with him about how life was in Italy since they came to Australia."

LC: Yes, very much so. My Mum was stuck out in the middle of the ocean for about ten -- - I'm not sure if it was ten days but because War broke out and poor Dad had to travel every day down to Outer Harbour to see if she had arrived. And every day, they would say: "No, she was stuck out in the middle of the ocean." So there they were. That's how Mum got back. It was hard for her with the baby on board.

OH: How old was your brother?

LC: I think he was about 11 months, 11 to 12 months yeah. So it was difficult for her because you know although they would have a lot of --- And another thing, when they were on the boat, a lot of the men were repatriated --- That's the thing I've just remembered. They were repatriated and so there were these women but the men were all sent back.

OH: Oh, the ones on that boat?

LC: Yes, a lot of them were repatriated she said when she told us later on, yes.

OH: It must have been a very strange experience.

LC: Yes, it was, it was.

OH: Do you know if your mother brought any special items with her from Italy?

LC: I can't remember that. I do not know if she brought back things. She might have brought back cooking stuff, you know, implements --- I don't know that one.⁵

OH: (07:56) Well, let's talk about you and your memories of being part of the family. What about your first memories?

LC: Oh, my first memories were --- just being at the house going, running our beautiful mound that was our cellar that it was in front of the house and we'd go up and down the mound. That was my playing time and then playing in boxthorns with my doll making out it was a cubby house, preparing it using tomato boxes to sit on and working out in the gardens. I remember awfully sick when I was nine because --- Mum blamed me because I ate too many beans but it wasn't that. I had the baddest bout of rheumatic fever when I was nine and I remembered I was in bed for about six weeks, very, very sick. I had been out. I remember it still vividly, it was a Friday and it was very, very hot and we were picking these green beans and eating them, of course. And Mum blamed me for --- not intentionally blaming me but she blamed me for eating too many beans but it wasn't. It was just me, I got a touch of rheumatic fever.

OH: That's a long time to be recuperating, isn't it?

LC: Oh, it was, it was.

OH: For a healthy girl.

LC: Yes, yes. That's my --- memories. And playing with ball, playing by myself lots of time. But I was one of those that just enjoyed doing that.

OH: (10:11) What was your house like? Can you describe that and where ---? First of all where was it located in relation to Valetta Road?

LC: Well, on the corner of Valetta Road and Findon Road, about 150 metres in --- off Valetta, off the intersection of Findon and Valetta Road but on Valetta Road. It was like --- as you would call it now, one of those transportable type homes. It wasn't, but it looked like that, you know where you had your kitchen and then you had a bedroom and the bedroom led into another bedroom and then there was --- another bedroom on at the front of the house with the bathroom that we had to heat the copper up for to have a bath. Oh, our toilet was one of those

⁵ Lina added details in the editing process: [My mother] knew of them – Dad's brothers and she made lots of friends through living in Valetta Road. She never complained about life then, just running the house etc."

dunny toilets at the back but that's how it was. And we had a big shed at the back and grapevines, it was --- that was my recollections of being on the Valetta Road.

OH: What was the big shed used for?

LC: Well, Dad used to store his sacks of stuff, his implements and then ... Oh we also had chickens and stuff on there. But that was what he... I remember we had a buckboard, it was called a buckboard then and he used to wheel it, you know, drive it in there, and I always remember having sacks of Arnott's broken biscuits in there, always.

[laughter]

LC: And crates of apples because Dad used to go to the market garden to sell his produce so we'd always have these apples. Because I was such a poor eater, my diet was apples and biscuits.

[laughter]

OH: It doesn't sound very Italian, does it?

[laughter]

LC: No, it doesn't but that's the way it was.

OH: (12:38) And what do you remember about your parents' market garden on Valetta Road? What did they grow?

LC: They grew mainly tomatoes and green beans. When it didn't produce tomatoes, they had green beans in there. I remember potatoes where they didn't have the glasshouses, they had potatoes.

OH: So how many glasshouses, roughly?

LC: Oh, I'd say about --- would there have been ten? I'm not quite sure. I always remember they had a little shed right on the corner on the Findon Road side where they had a pump and that' be where the bore water came from. I always remember that little, for some reason I always remember that little shed, away from the house, on the other side of the property.

OH: You said earlier that you had a cow and your Mum milked it. What was the milk used for in your home?

LC: Mum was a very good cook and she would utilise everything last bit of the milk. So she, with the cream which produced very thick cream, she would make beautiful biscuits. She made her own butter, she made her own cheese with the milk, used for grating, used for eating. But most of all, those biscuits were absolutely beautiful, yeah.

OH: Did they have a name?

LC: Oh, no, they were just one of those biscuits. But there was also the *crostoli*. *Crostoli* were different but --- yes, they were just Mum's twisted biscuits, we used to call them. That's right, I remember that now, twisted biscuits.

OH: Did your Mum also work in the garden?

LC: All the time, yes. Yes, she worked in the garden and she'd get up early, get us off to school and then she would go off to work and I remember --- she would take my sister to work with her in the market garden and my brother would say, the brother, Silv, Silvano, after me, he would say to Mum: "Mum, do you think I could look after Norina today because I know you're busy?" Because he didn't want to go to school.

[laughter]

LC: So. And she'd say: "No, not today." But, yes, she'd just wheeled the pram just to the glasshouses but then she'd come home, she'd make lunch for Dad and then she would finish early and Dad would stay on.

OH: Did you land go down to the river?

LC: No, no it stopped at the place called Keele, where Keele was. No, there was --- there was another lot of land. That would have been Ballantyne's land, I think, yes.

OH: Who else would have been your neighbours? The Ballantyne's?

LC: The Ballantyne's were one removed from us. There was the Keele's and there was Yick Kee on the corner, no, next door to us.

OH: You told me about Yick Kee and his hospitality.

LC: Every night, almost every night, my brother and I would have a race. And he would say: "I'll get there first Lina." So we'd go, race down, because it was about, it was an alley way so it would have been about --- about 100 metres in from the road and it was like a shed converted to his kitchen to his living area and whatever. And --- he would invite us, my brother would eat everything but I just ate the fried rice which was I think --- soy sauce but it was just wonderful sauce and still to this day I do not know what it was but it was beautiful.

OH: And what was his house like?

LC: Well, it was just a tin shed but he had his kitchen and --- I never ever went to the bedroom but I presume it was there at the back somewhere but it was just like an open shed and he'd have ducks at the back and he had all his wonderful products out there and he would grow his own stuff, his own veggies as well.

OH: What sort of veggies did he grow?

LC: He --- I don't really know what he sold but I know he had them for the house but I don't know whether he had garden vegetables, I can't remember that.

OH: So he was on one side?

LC: He was on the side towards the beach, going towards the beach, so that's the western side, yes, the western side of us. But because he was down the alley way, you couldn't really see or I couldn't see at the time what was growing at the time. And I don't think Mum or Dad ever mentioned it.

OH: And who else would have been neighbours to your family?

LC: Well, there was the West, Mr West and then the Berno's and then the Mercurio's across the road. There was --- on the corner, the Rositano's, the other corner where we were, the

opposite corner was the Rositano's worked that land. And then there were the Recchi's on the Findon Road side of the land, yes.

OH: So the landscape in that area was very much market gardens...?

LC: It was all ...

OH: When you were growing up?

LC: It was all market garden. --- And our Valetta Road was just a little strip of asphalt with lots of potholes on the side. And my first... and the recollections of that road was the ice cream van. The ice cream van, although it was just all potholes, the ice cream van every Sunday would come down --- the road with the horse and cart and --- you know, he would ring his bell and I think he was a Greek guy, from memory, and he would ring his bell and we'd go out and get a cone of ice cream. It was lovely. That was my first recollection of Valetta Road, as such.

OH: (20:27) What kinds of things were important to your parents, do you think?

LC: Good food. --- Lots of friends ---

OH: Who would have been their friends?

LC: Oh, everyone around the area would have been their friends, the Ballestrin's, the Piovesan's, the Marchioro's, the Zampin's, the Tonellato's --- the Berno's, everyone around that area were friends and then they were all related in some way with being --- godparents to their families and so it went it on --- with that.

OH: So the social occasions were important to your parents?

LC: Yes, very. Then church. Church was a good, another way.

OH: Where was the church that your parents went to?

LC: Captain Cook Avenue because the Italian one wasn't established then, the Mater Christi wasn't established so --- but --- my Dad was involved with the church --- I remember he was part of a *carnevale* that --- we dressed up a cart, decked it all up with flowers and things and they drove it from or they took it from our house to the church and they all climbed on, all these young guys climbed on it. And then they had these greasy pole competitions. So, you know. It was excellent. It was a form of entertainment.

OH: When you said Captain Cook Avenue, of course, the suburb is Flinders Park.

LC: Flinders Park in Captain Cook Avenue, that's what we... It's Saint Joseph's actually, Saint Joseph's.

OH: (22:53) And did your parents have vehicles, like you had the buckboard?

LC: We had the buckboard, I remember that and then we had --- I think Dad changed but that was later on --- when he because he also had a market garden on Findon Road.

OH: At the same time?

LC: No, that was --- When I was about 12 so that would make it how many years ago?
[laughs] ---

OH: That would have been about 1956?

LC: Yes, about 1956, roughly. Yes, we moved to Findon Road and off Findon Road, about 400 metres which is now the Flinders Park oval, that's where Dad had his land. Yes, so I think we transgressed to a Fiat then. But before then, it was a Buckboard, it was a green Buckboard. But that Buckboard used to take everyone to dances and I can remember going with Lui in the back of the Buckboard [laughs] and the young guys, all the young guys from that era that came over and we'd go off to dances which were part of the church. This is what I mean, the church was important.

OH: Was the priest Italian at the church?

LC: No, his name was ---

OH: But the Italian community made an important centre?

LC: A centre because then, at that time or later on, not quite when I was a bit older just before I got married actually, the priests from Saint Francis at Newton were Italian so they used to sometimes come and say Mass at our local church and so this is where --- it also --- created more of a social out, more of social outings, yes.

OH: (25:29) In your family, what were some of the traditions that you remember as you were growing up?

LC: Oh, one I remember most vividly is the Christmas tree because we had a big --- pine tree out the front on Valetta Road and dad would go and yeah, cut off a branch and Mum would or Dad would put it in a bucket full of sand and Mum would dress it up either with material or something down the bottom that it would hide the bucket and then because there were not a lot of decorations, she would put up some balloons or... she never made anything that I remember but it was always made out of either balloons and lollies and the most important thing were cherries when you could find them then, those double-stemmed cherries where you can just hang. And that was just a tradition my Mum had, and I carry on with now. Yes, and that was one of the things. And making *crostoli* and biscuits and pasta and that's one tradition. Another tradition was --- that's mainly the ones I remember ---

OH: The *crostoli*, can you explain what they are?

LC: Well, *crostoli* are beautiful wafer-thin pastries sprinkled with either icing sugar or plain sugar but my Mum's secret was also to always to grind her sugar and we'd use ground sugar on top not icing sugar. She would grind hers.

OH: How did she grind the sugar?

LC: She had a grinder and she would, which I have still in my pantry and that I use all the time to grind the sugar. That's purposely just to grind the sugar. And ---
[sound of a family member coming into the room]

OH: We're just going to pause the interview again.

OH: We're resuming the interview once again and Lina we were talking about your Mum's cooking and her *crostoli* and you started explaining what they are.

LC: They're pastries cooked in oil but she didn't cook them in oil, she cooked them in pig's fat which was lard because they killed their pig every year. She used to keep the pig's fat and she used to render it down, the day after and she, it would solidify and she would put it in earthenware container in the cellar and she would then cook her *crostoli* with the lard but that's what --- traditionally *crostoli* were cooked in and I have also cooked them in that shortening but as time's progressed so have I and I cook them now in sunflower oil or canola oil but it, they do have a different taste but then you sprinkle them with sugar. It's a sweet wafer-thin and my Mum's recipe has been copied by lots and lots of families because they were really delicious. She had a knack.

OH: We were talking about other traditions in your family and there were a few of them?

LC: Yes, the pig or the salami produced from the pig, we used to make every year. Dad would also press grapes, they would go grape-picking so then he would make his own wine.

OH: Do you know where they got the grapes?

LC: I'm not quite sure but I think they used to go up McLaren Vale, there were quite a few going together, of their friends and then they used to share and they would make their own wine. None of them grew vines to make wine so they would have had to go together to get their grapes because not very many people had their own mode of transport so they used to share. That was it. And then another one was the sauce making which I still carry on that tradition, as well. And --- because Dad had red tomatoes from his garden, well, then he would -- because they weren't sold, so he would make his sauce and Mum --- and Dad together with us because that was a job for us as well, we would make sauce for spaghetti, so yes.

OH: What time of year did you do that?

LC: Well, that's another thing, they also grew their tomatoes, their summer tomatoes, so that would have been round about January, February when they would make their sauce.

OH: Was that a big process outside with the fire and ...?

LC: Yes, and of course it would have been a wood fire so the process was you boil your tomatoes because Mum then, because Mum was also involved with --- neighbours that were from the southern part of Italy because --- the *veneti* didn't really make their own tomato sauce. Nobody used to make their tomato sauce but because the southerners bought this tradition in, then, that's why Mum made her sauce and yes, she copied the recipe form them so it was boiling the tomatoes, crushing them. She had a *mouli*, she used to do it with a *mouli* because she used to make a few bottles at a time

OH: And was that hand...?

LC: One of those hand ones, yes and then she progress to one, the machine that clamps on the table. I don't think she ever bought an electric machine like we have at home. So yes, Dad and her would --- be out there. If we were at school, sometimes if we didn't help, they were out there. Then they would boil them, bottle them, salt the sauce and then re-boil them in beer bottles, recycled beer bottles and Mum would always make her beautiful pastas, risottos. Oh and she was also famous for her risotto.

OH: Would she have stored the bottles in the cellar?

LC: Yes, because it would have been too hot inside the house and sometimes if they're not really --- boiled enough, some of them could explode but not very often. They lasted for years, some of those sauce bottles. And --- I'm just trying to think of other traditions ---

OH: I think you've done really well, and they sound like really important seasonal traditions especially to do with food.

LC: Yes.

OH: (06:41) In terms of your role in the garden, what sorts of jobs did you have to do?

LC: I always remember helping Dad tying up strings for the tomatoes because in the glasshouses, I think there were about five rows ---- I can't remember exactly but I think there were five. There could have been seven, can't remember but I had the job of the low rows so it was my job and I always remember doing French knots on those tomato plants. It was very interesting because I've never forgotten that knot to this day. That was one of the jobs and that was done after school or in the holidays or weekends. Never on a Sunday because Dad never worked on Sunday. And my Dad was also a very avid football --- spectator and he would, every Saturday afternoon, he would go to the footy.

OH: And we're talking about Australian Rules football?

LC: Australian Rules football, that was his passion. Loved it with a passion until the day he died. But --- so Saturday afternoons was never, it was always a 'no, no' to work in the garden so Dad, although we never had --- the money that my other uncles might have had, my father enjoyed his life, he loved going to the footy.

OH: What team did he follow?

LC: Oh, the Eagles, then West Torrens, they were his favourite. Anyway. But he tagged me along as well so I also enjoyed that.

OH: Did you ever go to market, Lina?

LC: Oh, yes, sometimes with Mum but never, and Dad but I never remember --- going there just solely with Dad. Dad would take Mum in for shopping so we would go off shopping and Dad would go to the market and mingle with his friends and then when it was time, we'd go back to the market and come home. Right. So I did that and then I worked outside as I said that I was sick, you know, helping picking beans and also sometimes out --- in the open like that, we got some whirlwinds they were called, they were just, they weren't very big, they were just like a tornado type whirlies, they used to call them. And, but they picked up --- all the dirt from the ground and they would really damage the glasshouses sometimes I remember once when one came, oh, there were two or three of them coming through and one side of all the glasshouse was really damaged because, as you know, they're glasshouses. So that was another thing that I had to do. I had to go and help Dad, he would take down all the broken glass but then he'd have lots of glass in boxers so I would have to hand him the glass so he could fix up the broken panels. So that, I did that.

OH: (14:27) And you went to school locally? Where did you go to school?

LC: I went to Saint Joseph's and enjoyed it immensely but my biggest thing and it's called a bugbear for me but --- I had this vision of having beautiful clean shoes when I got to school.

Never did. Because we had to trudge through market gardens that was always being watered and so my shoes were always muddy. Whereas, my Flinders Park counterparts had beautiful clean shoes. [laughs] that was my memory of school, but I loved school.

OH: That would have been when you were living on Valetta Road?

LC: Yes, that. And we had to make our way by, you know...

OH: So whose gardens would you have gone through?

LC: Oh, we went through Zerella's, the Zerella's were prominent in market gardens.

OH: So was their land actually on Findon Road?

LC: No, it was in a tiny bit but it was mainly, it was off Drake Avenue but that's the way we had to get to school. It was mainly, all of that land was mainly theirs that bordered on the --- southern side of the school, yes. --- And --- yes, that was one of my memories was and I do love knitting and I do love crocheting and I love sewing but --- I first learnt knitting when I was in Reception with the nuns and we had to knit a tea cosy just using garter stitch but I said to Mum: "Mum, I need some wool because I need to make this tea cosy." So she gives me this ugly coloured brown wool, dark brown wool. Oh. And when I get to school these other girls have got these beautiful coloured wools. But do you know what? My Mum treasured [laughs] that tea cosy cover - was beautiful, you know.

OH: She probably thought it was just gorgeous.

LC: Yes.

[laughter]

OH: And Lina, we're going to have finish this interview here and we might pick up just a few things in a following interview. So thank you very much.

LC: Thank you, Madeleine.

OH: This is continuation of the interview with Lina Campagnaro on 13th March 2014 at Kidman Park. I'm Madeleine Regan and I'm recording the interview for the Italian market gardeners oral history project.

Lina, There are a few things that I wanted to ask you to complete the interview and the first one was:

(00:25) What language was spoken at home as you were growing up?

LC: Well, of course it was Italian. Well, Veneto, really. --- The Italians back home from the villages spoke their dialect, they hardly ever used the Italian. So we spoke dialect at home. And we are thankful for that because we all speak it, my siblings and I, we all speak the Veneto. And that's what Mum spoke too. Dad, then spoke quite well but Mum had great difficulty in speaking English but she knew how to ask for a discount when she went to the shops.

[laughter]

OH: That's delightful. So when you went to school what language did you know how to speak?

LC: I didn't know any English although I picked up a bit from my brother who had started school. He was five years older than me so I did have a little bit of knowledge. But mainly it was just the Veneto that we spoke.

OH: And the other children you were at school with, who were they? Were they from the area?

LC: Yes, there weren't very many Italians going to school with me at my age but they were mainly Anglo Saxons at the school. And then, of course, you have to learn to speak, because you mix up, you mix with them. But then later on, other children migrated to our area so I did have Italian children my age coming. But that was about three or four years later.

OH: And the social occasions you spoke about your parents earlier, what would the language have been spoken at those occasions?

LC: Well, the children spoke English if they knew how to speak but the Italians spoke their Veneto and of course, we all understood and we spoke back in our Veneto --- Yes, but Italian was not spoken as the Italian language, just as the dialect.

OH: As you were growing up, did you have friends who were *veneti*?

LC: Mainly they were *veneti*, I had a couple of girls who had a Veneto Dad but they had an English Mum. So they didn't know much of the Italian and but I, most of my friends when I was older were Italian girls, yeah.

OH: (03:42) And we were talking about your parents and being naturalised. What do you know about your father's naturalisation?

LC: Well, I think Dad was naturalised in August 1946, I think that's first recollection of him being naturalised with Dad along with my brother Jim ---

OH: How important do you think it would have been to your parents to be naturalised?

LC: I think then it was very important for them to be naturalised. I think it was the done thing ---

LC: (04:25) I know they had to report at the police station at --- Thebarton, once, I think it was every, I don't remember if it was every week or every month, they had to report that they were here --- and I don't know for what reason but there must have been a reason.

OH: That was during the War?

LC: That was during the War, yes, to say that they were here, I think. So they had to report.

OH: (05:02) And you spoke about your Mum going shopping, where would she have shopped?

LC: Oh, her favourite shop was Coles [pronounces it as Italians would say it] in the city, called Coles --- Charles Moore or what did she call it? Charles Morris which was Moore's and Cox Foys, she could say that. John Martin [pronounced as Italians would say it] which was John Martins but she knew how to spend her money She knew [laughs] how to shop and she also knew how to ask for discounts as I've mentioned before. [laughs]

OH: (05:46) What about food shopping, where would she have done that?

LC: Interesting question, that one because I know she had some of her produce at home but I think she used to go to... we had a local shop called Adami's, I don't know if you've ever heard of that name, they were on Findon Road and we used to do a lot of... actually I worked there when I was 12 after school and Saturday mornings. I remember that I was in Year 7, that's right and I was asked to work in their shop so --- yes, so she would have got her produce and stuff from them but she also had a young guy call on her called Rebuli⁶, and he would come and she would order what she wanted, the pasta or whatever but she also went to the city to a place called Star grocery and that's where they'd do a lot of their shopping. I don't actually remember her coming home with bits and pieces but, you know like now, you drag all these shopping bags in. But you know what? They still produce beautiful food.

OH: (07:18) And one other thing that I wanted to ask you about was summer and the sorts of recreation that you might have enjoyed in summer?

LC: Because as you know it was hot and no air-conditioning, we young children loved the beach. So my uncle Doro, Isidoro, who had a big truck, he would gather us and a couple more families and he would take us to the beach and I remember sitting on the back of the truck and he always had to wait for my Mum because my Mum was always late. That was her trait, she was always late. So anyway he'd patiently wait out the front for us but we'd all get into this truck and go to the beach.

OH: Which beach?

LC: Oh, Henley Beach, that was our haunt, under the, under the jetty and you know, we'd all, we had a wonderful time. And the men went to the pub, they never came in the water. And Mum, never saw her in a bathing suit but we were always in the water and having lots and lots of fun. And then we'd just climb back and come back home. That was my recollection of summer.

OH: Sounds lovely.

OH: (08:50) Going back to your schooling, you finished Year 7 at Saint Josephs' at Captain Cook Avenue, Flinders Park? And then?

LC: Then we went, I went to Saint Joseph's at Hindmarsh and I --- did Year..., well Intermediate which was Year 10, then? And then I finished and I went to work for about a month and then out of the blue, one of the nuns rang me up and said: "Lina." She said: "Are you happy where you are working?" I said: "Not really because I'm the only girl in the office." And not being 16 yet and being in control of everything, had to do the banking, had to do everything, I said: "No, I didn't really enjoy it." And she said: "How about coming to school and taking care of a Year 3 class?" I said: "But I don't know what to do." And she said: "Oh, I'll help you along," which I hardly ever saw her but the nun next door would often come in. But it was mainly all text books then, so you know, I helped for the whole year.

OH: Do you remember how you felt when you were first in the classroom?

LC: Well, I because I'd only just left school I thought it was part and parcel of what I supposed to be doing. I thoroughly enjoyed it because the kids didn't have --- discipline issues then. It was different like, you know, they'd listen to you and they weren't obnoxious and as I

⁶ Guido Rebuli and his brother ran a grocery/delicatessen on Grange Road

said, they didn't have those issues so it was relatively easy for me. Then I finished that year and then I --- she said, and I went into the next term, and then she said to me: "Lina." She said: "I think you should come with me. She said: "I'm in a three-classroom room and she said: "I've got Year 8, 9 and 10." She said: "I'll do Year 9 and 10, and you can have the Year 8s." She said: "You'll be here with me." And she said: --- "And you can take of them while I teach the others." Well, anyway that's what I did, and I did that for almost four years until I got married.

OH: Wow. About how many kids would have been in the class?

LC: Oh, I reckon about 25, then surely there would have been 25 children then.

OH: Were you teaching every subject?

LC: Every subject except typing. So that was English, Arithmetic, Bookkeeping, Italian --- French, and then there was something else I taught? History. So I taught them all those subjects and it was all textbook and ... and Shorthand and Shorthand. But towards the alter years, I was doing Pitmans Shorthand but no I was doing Dakin Shorthand and then had to teach the kids Pitmans Shorthand. But I had no idea so i was teaching myself with them as I went along. They didn't know that but that's how I did it. I taught myself as I was going along with them. And --- but you know, all those girls have done really well.

OH: How did you enjoy it?

LC: I did, I thoroughly enjoyed it. And now.... they used to call Miss Lina but they saw me the other day and they said: "Where's that beautiful tall girl?" I said: "She's shrunk."

[laughter]

LC: I said: "No, we all grow old, you know, I'm not that Miss Lina any more."

OH: But Lina you must have been doing something very different from your contemporaries, from your friends?

LC: Oh yes, totally different. So as I said --- I didn't have much interaction with other young girls. I only had that interaction when --- Oh, when we played sport. I was also a very good netballer but I damaged my knee and that was the end of that. And so we had social, that's another social thing we did, we went out to play with the Italian *veneti* with the boys and we played mixed netball teams.

OH: Where did you do there?

LC: Captain Cook, on the Captain Cook tennis and basketball court. So I didn't have many, very much interaction with girls because of me working with the nuns and working in the school and so I only got in that interaction when we were out socially.

OH: Because I was thinking you must have had to work hard at night to prepare and to get organised?

LC: That's what I didn't do. I didn't organise. It was textbooks so you just went onto the next thing. And that's why it was easy for me because now having worked in schools later, I found that you couldn't do that because there were different things. But then it was mainly textbooks so you just went onto the next subject.

OH: I'm interested to know that what that Josephite sister would have seen in you. What do you think...?

LC: I don't know.

OH: She would have seen in you?

LC: She must have known that I could impart my knowledge and that's what it is. It's not how *good* you are, it's the *way* you can teach people to do things and that's what I think I had the ability to do.

OH: Because she sought you out, didn't she?

LC: She did, she did. And then she must have seen, I don't know, because then she came to and said, no ... Her name was Sister Anne-Marie, you either liked her or you didn't but some didn't. But --- but yes, she was always gentle with me. And in the meantime, I studied Leaving and Leaving Honours and that's, that's it! I *did* work after school because I studied for my Leaving and Leaving Honours while I was teaching. --- I had to go to school on a Saturday morning --- with Sister Maria Anne, she used to teach me.

OH: It's very interesting...

LC: Yes.

OH: Background.

LC: Yes.

OH: What did your parents think?

LC: Oh, they thought I was... I think they were proud of me, they never said but I think they did so, you know, because they followed me everywhere with sport, when I was playing sport, Dad used to take me and --- and he always used to follow our interest but --- like taking us to the dances and things like that. And he loved doing things like that, that's the social interaction with my Dad. But yes, so it wasn't easy for me because I still had to study. And Sister Maria Anne would take me in on a Saturday and I'd go in and do Shorthand on a Saturday. I remember passing at 120 words a minute. So...

OH: Oh compliments to you!

[laughter]

LC: Oh, compliments to me! But it would be hard to do it now.

OH: I was wondering how different it would have been in some families because you were a girl and education wasn't always seen as being as important.

LC: No, no. See, there were girls about three years younger than me that then went onto Teachers College but you know, a lot of my cousins got work as in clerical offices so they did quite well. But they were a few years younger than me.

OH: Yes, I was thinking you were a bit of a trail-blazer.

LC: Yes, I was because I was three years older than most of them --- but yeah. So, but nothing was... you know, nothing was really hard for me even now having my kids, you know, they all

said to me: "Well, Lina how did you manage?" I said: "You just have to. They're yours and you have to. You can't fall in a heap." Even now, I have other problems but you just deal with them. You just have to.

OH: You obviously learnt that very early?

LC: Yes, I did. I had to do it that easy and to grow up very fast because the 15 and 16 year olds of today wouldn't have done what I did but that's most of us in that era.

OH: That's true.

OH: (19:16) And then you got married and you left that working life?

LC: Yes, because I was pregnant straight away with Lia, so ... Yes, and I told them I was getting married and they formed a guard of honour for me when I got married.

OH: The students?

LC: The students.

OH: Where did you get married?

LC: I got married at Captain Cook Avenue.

OH: And a big wedding?

LC: No, not by our standards. Yeah, it was about 100 people but it was lovely, it was at the --- Crittenden Road in that little semi-circular building, I don't know if it is still there. I think it is still there. That was where we had the reception but, yeah, the kids came and formed a guard of honour...

OH: Were they in uniform?

LC: Yes.

OH: How touching.

LC: Yeah, it was lovely, it was lovely. See we got married in April so Sister said to me that it was no use coming back for a term so I didn't -- So we got married and went overseas and kept having children.

OH: I'd like to ask you about your honeymoon because we're talking about 1964 and you went to Italy?

LC: Yes, we got married on the 4th [of April] and on the 17th we left on the *Galileo Galilei*, the big cruiser, oh it wasn't a cruiser, it was a liner. And --- we went overseas to visit Lui's parents and have an extended honeymoon. But it was mainly for Lui to get over.

OH: Because that was the first time?

LC: Yes, that was, he was here four years and he wanted to get back home. So we went over and spent lots of times with relatives. I also had a grandmother which was Mum's mum.

OH: What was that experience like of being with her?

LC: Oh that was... Yes, she looked exactly like my Mum. And my Mum had a sister who had a --- beach, a beach, was it a hotel? At Jesolo? [near Venice] --- No, it wasn't a hotel, she would let out some rooms of her house at Jesolo. They had a place on the beach that they were responsible for and when I met her, I cried because she looked exactly like my Mum. Exactly. And so I visited Mum's side of the family and Lui's side of the family and Lui's extended family because he had a half-sister because his Dad was married previously and his wife had died so he then married Lui's Mum. In the War she met this Neapolitan guy and they went to live in Naples so we also went to Naples and he has extended family in Naples and Rome now. So, it's a big family, yeah.

OH: And for you, being the child of Italian migrants, what was that like going back or going to Italy for the first time?

LC: Well, I had to sleep on a mattress made of --- what were they called? They were made from corn husks so the corn husks, they had a big mattress made out of corn husks. Because we had to go and borrow a room from across the road because they didn't have any room at their house. So that's where we slept. But, you know, we'd just shake out the mattress every morning and you were young and you didn't have any aches and pains. It was gorgeous. But the toilet was the big factor. I hated going to the outside toilet. But they had... because they knew I was going, do you know that they --- built a shower for me?⁷

[laughter]

LC: Yes, so it was lovely. They were always well dressed, that's what I found over there. They mightn't have had everything but they were always well dressed and that's what I found. But when Lui and I were there, we didn't have a lot of money but we went everywhere. We'd get on the motorbike and I remember having a big accident on the motorbike. And flying over the top of the handlebars with being five months with Lia. Luckily nothing happened but, yeah. We were coming around the side of a mountain and this guy was doing a U-turn in the middle of the road and our motorbike just went slap bang into him. But fortunately, as I said, I didn't hurt myself, a few scratches on my ankle but that's about it.

And we got around everywhere. We went to Venice, we went to Naples, and we went to Lourdes, we did that on the train. We went to France because Lui's also got a sister, had a sister that was living in France and he has nephews over there. Went to Naples, went to Sicily, went to --- we just travelled so much, went up the Dolomites, went to Trento and you know, but we did it all in five months. And we'd do it, you know, one day here and two days there.

OH: It sounds wonderful.

LC: We saw more than when we go back now.

OH: It sounds fantastic.

OH: (25:44) I'd like to ask you now to come back to the Kidman Park area.

LC: Hmmnn.

⁷ In the editing process, Lina explained that her parents “always talked about how they lived frugally – Dad had his first bike at 20. They ate the same staple diet, beans, polenta and a *minestrone*. They had to work in the fields but never had any money. People lived communally with extended families.” She confirmed that: “Dad especially told us about how he rode a bike at twenty and how his first plate of spaghetti, he ate when he was in his late teens.”

OH: And ask you what do you think are, for you, are the some of the biggest changes that you've observed over your time, knowing this area?

[Sound of door opening]

LC: --- Sorry, we

OH: We'll just pause this for a minute.

OH: We're resuming the interview now, and Lina, and I was going to ask you what are the biggest kinds of changes that you've seen in your nearly 70 years of living in this area?

LC: Yes, as, it is 70 years unfortunately, Madeleine, that I'm here. But look, the roads have improved as I told you before there were strips of roads with potholes on the side, boxthorns everywhere. So all that has changed but I dearly miss the open spaces, the houses, you know, 100 metres down the road, you could see, oh Mrs Berno's already done the washing, it's on the line. And Mum would say: "I haven't got mine out yet." But that's the dynamics of change. And that's what I miss that, perhaps we didn't have a phone then, but we managed to find contact, don't ask me how.

But, on the other hand, we have neighbours now that are multicultural and we get on fabulously well with the neighbours around here. And I do like my supermarkets. ---- But that's the biggest, and the open spaces where you could just ride your bike or go down the road or go for a walk without any worries, leaving your door open but... and the opening up of the land here because it progressed slowly. It would open in certain pockets so you'd come down Frogmore Road which was --- I remember it as being the worst road in history, I thought because there was all... I don't even know if it was asphalted. It probably was, but, but I found that really, it was really paddocky. --- And that would be, I think --- so that was opened down that way but then, when we came, because we lived on Gower Road for a short time.

OH: And Gower Road is?

LC: Two streets up from here, going towards to the west, just here. [in the suburb of Kidman Park] So that opened up --- when, oh when we got married, I had to go and live in Crittenden Road for about four years but then we came to Gower Road, we built a house

OH: And that's just off Valetta Road.

LC: Off Valetta Road. We were there for about seven years and then we came here. And then this side of Frogmore Road opened up so it opened up in sections because this was all, you know, rabbit country. So I only knew from Valetta Road, Findon end to Frogmore Road, I didn't know about Tapleys Hill Road, I don't think, not when I was young --- But this is the dynamics and I love the trees --- although, see when my sister-in-law because Lui's brother was here for a short time --- I think he was here for about four years, I'm not quite sure but then he went back home... but she said to me that the thing, she came back about ten years ago... the thing that she saw that was different here, apart from housing, was that there was, or there were a lot more trees because people planted trees and that's where she found the difference when she came back. She could not find anything resembled where she lived because it was all taken over by housing and schools and ...

OH: And such big changes?

LC: Such big changes, yes.

OH: Like, it would be hard to understand this area was an intensive market gardening area.

LC: Exactly. Our neighbours here, the neighbours on the southern side, Graham, he also worked for Italians... off Pierson Street --- off Pierson Street. [Lockleys]

OH: In the market garden?

LC: Yes, he was a student because he's a dentist so he was a student and to get money he would work in the market gardens and... Now he did mention names and they were Aussie names, Australian names. I don't know who they were. He said something about Marchioro's because they then shifted from Frogmore and went there. [Lockleys] But he also worked with Australians, there.

OH: Yeah, I think there was somebody, sorry, but I can't remember the name.

LC: Yes.

OH: I can't remember.

OH: (06:01) What about in terms of the community of people? I know that you've got lovely neighbours but you talked to me about the other *veneti* families...

LC: Mmnn

OH: That your parents interacted with.

LC: But you know what? We still do the same, we still interact because I have got lots of *veneti* --- friends. In fact, I've got two beautiful families, I've got lots. And we're all related, godmother, godfather and so forth. But yeah.

OH: So it's almost like it's a generation down?

LC: Yes, and we...

OH: But a similar kind of interaction?

LC: And we've added more friends but we still keep with --- *veneti*.

OH: Do you speak dialect with them?

LC: Yes. Yes. Because I've got, I've got friends that were born overseas but they came here as young kids and --- they, they'll speak English to me but they also speak Veneto so with Lui they speak Veneto. Maria and I will speak in English but on the whole, we all speak Veneto.

OH: Do your kids understand Veneto?

LC: Most of them, they all understand Veneto. Four of them speak really, really well. Four don't but if they have to, they will. It's because, say, now if an Italian person came in, they would then make the effort to speak but if they don't they won't. But four of them speaks, one speaks Veneto and Calabrese and Napoletano and yeah...

[laughter]

LC: Because he mixes with everyone.

OH: (08:04) Lina, what does your heritage mean to you, your Italian heritage?

LC: Oh, wonderful. It's part of me. That's who I am. I am Italian, I'm an Australian, I would call myself more Italian than I would Australian. But it means a lot to me. And as one of my grandchildren said while she was making *crostoli* with her Mum: "I am so glad that I'm Italian, Mum."

OH: Isn't that gorgeous?

LC: Isn't it gorgeous? Because her Dad is --- has --- parents that one is Australian and the other one is Italian so... and because she knows Monique is part of us, she just thinks it's wonderful that she's Italian because she was making *crostoli*. She loves all those traditional things. And the grandchildren are always involved with everything we do like the sauce and the salamis --- and the wine-making.

OH: And they're traditions that you continue with Lui?

LC: Oh, yes, we continue, yes that's one... Did I mention that before? Probably didn't did I? That's one of the traditions we also... and the cooking, the traditions were making salami, the wine, the sauce, the *crostoli*. And we all get together even now with the girls, I'll say: "Monique's making..." Actually, Monique's making *crostoli* on Saturday with another cousin of ours and she said: "Lina, are you going...? Mum...?" Lina, she calls me 'Lina' sometimes. She says: "Are you going to come and be part of the *crostoli* making?" I said: "Of course I will."

OH: That's lovely.

LC: Yeah.

OH: It's interesting that you say that you feel very strongly Italian.

LC: Yeah.

OH: What about Veneta, how strongly do you feel...?

LC: Oh more so, Veneta than Italian because that's where my roots are from. And because I've spent time over there, you know, not a lot of time but we spent six, seven weeks there, a lot of Lui's friends that were here that came to Australia and then went back home, still keep in contact with us. And they want us to be over there for tea and for lunch and so we'd keep carrying on the traditions.

OH: That's lovely, that's really lovely. Before we close, is there anything else that you'd like to talk about that we haven't covered in this interview?

LC: Oh, I can't... Do I need to say anything else? [laughs] --- I've probably forgotten lots of things, Madeleine, but no I think I'm fine. And --- my sister lives in Melbourne but we have, she comes over often, I go over there and we chat and we talk about Mum's recipes. In actual fact, she made this recipe the other day which is Mum's only, it's her recipe, I don't think anybody else makes it. It's called a pigeon pie recipe --- which is delicious. But my sister made it, hers became a duck pie because she couldn't find pigeons. But she said: "It was lovely, Lina." I thought if you can't get pigeon, just make duck. Duck pie and it's really delicious, you make your homemade pasta with mushrooms and your pigeon sauce and you encase in uncooked pastry just absolutely to-die-for. So we were talking that on, when was it? When she rang me because she'd made it during the week. So we always compare Mum's recipes. That's

one of the things. My brother Silv, he likes to, he loves family history as well. So he's been delving into it a bit more than what I have. And Jim goes along with the flow. [laughs]

LC: But that's it and I'm glad to have the privilege with you, Madeleine and I'll remember your name because Madeleine is my granddaughter's.

OH: An excellent choice of name.

LC: Of name. [laughs]

OH: Well, it's been lovely to speak with you and to learn more about the life of your family and especially coming from a market gardening family and also being part of the *veneti* who were in this area for such a long time.

LC: Thank you, Madeleine.

OH: Thank you, Lina.