

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Life in the 1930's and 1940's

Personal Experience

O.H. 1276

SAM MANTINI

Interviewed

by

Richard Testa

on

July 10, 1989

## SAM MANTINI

Sam Mantini was born on May 27, 1921. His parents, Joseph and Mary Mantini, came from Italy in the early 1900's, from Abruzzi and Naples, respectively. Joseph arrived in 1912, and Mary arrived in 1915. They were married in 1919. Sam is the oldest of three children. His brother, Michael, and sister, Ellen, also reside in Youngstown.

Mr. Mantini attended Sacred Heart and Haselton Elementary Schools, Roosevelt Junior High School and East High School. He graduated in 1939.

He began working at Graef Aluminum in 1939, until he was drafted into the Army in 1942. This was the first time he had been away from home.

During his service in the Army, Mr. Mantini served in ordnance. He was stationed in England, France, and Germany. He arrived in Normandy on D-Day plus 2, on June 8, 1944.

While in France, he served in truck maintenance and repair on the "Red Ball" Highway.

Sam returned from the war in November of 1945. In 1946, he resumed work at Graef Aluminum. On May 17, 1947, he married the former Helen Klus, at St. Nicholas Church in Struthers, Ohio, and they had a son, Robert.

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Life in the 1930's and 1940's

INTERVIEWEE: SAM MANTINI

INTERVIEWER: Richard Testa

SUBJECT: life in the 1930's and 1940's, the Army,  
stationed in France, England, and Germany  
during the war

DATE: July 10, 1989

T: This is an interview with Sam Mantini for the Youngs-  
town State University Oral History Program, on life in  
the 1930's and 1940's, by Richard Testa, at  
Mr. Mantini's home, on July 10, 1989, at 7:00 p.m.

Where were you born, Mr. Mantini?

M: I was born in Youngstown, Ohio.

T: What date?

M: May 27, 1921.

T: Your parents came from Italy?

M: [They] both [came] from Italy.

T: Where 'bouts?

M: Well, my dad was from Castellammare, Abruzzi, and my  
mother was from Modena, near Naples.

T: Is that mountain country?

M: Mountain country.

T: How about Abruzzi? Where is that?

M: That was . . . this town was like a sea resort.

T: Sea resort?

M: It was something like Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

T: Oh, really?

M: Yes.

T: What were their names?

M: My dad's name was Joseph, and Mom's name was Mary.

T: Okay. Do you happen to know when they were born?

M: My dad was born on November 21, 1887. Mom was born on July 28, 1895.

T: When did your dad come to Youngstown, do you know?

M: In 1912.

T: And, your mom?

M: About 1915.

T: Why Youngstown?

M: My mother had a brother here, and my dad came with a friend of his. Mr. Kinachi brought him here, and he went to work in the steel mills.

T: Which one?

M: Republic Steel.

T: How long did he work there?

M: Forty-one years.

T: Your mother, did she ever work?

M: My mother never worked, no.

T: How many children are in the family?

M: Three kids.

T: And, you are the oldest?

M: I'm the oldest. I've got a brother, Mike, and a sister, Ellen.

T: Tell us about your childhood?

M: It was a good childhood. My dad was a good provider. Then, when the depression came in 1929, things got a little tough. There was no work. I went to high school in 1934. We got along, but it was real tight. Money was very scarce.

T: Where did you go to grade school?

M: I went to Haselton School.

T: Where was that?

M: Down on Center Street. From there, I went . . . actually, I went to Sacred Heart for one year. Then, I went to Haselton School. From there, we went to Roosevelt School on Jackson Street, and from there, I went to East High School, in 1934.

T: Okay. What was your grade school like?

M: There was more discipline in those days. You respected the teacher. You just didn't. . . . Today, they go in there, and they just. . . . When you went in school, you were a little afraid of the teacher. Today, it's different all the way around, the way I see it. It's the same way in high school. The first day I went to high school, there was a strike. They got rid of the football coach, Harly Litler, and we got Dick Barrett.

T: Who went on strike? The teachers went on strike?

M: The students [went on strike].

T: Why?

M: They didn't want Mr. Litler. The coach wasn't winning for the school, and they got Dick Barrett. He was from Memorial [School]. From then on, East [High School] was a powerhouse.

T: For how long?

M: As long as I was there. I went to the service in 1942. When I came home, he was on a couple of years. After that, it still was as good, but not as good as when Dick Barrett was the coach. He was a motivator. He could really develop teams.

T: What did your school look like? Let's get back to your school.

M: High school?

T: High school and grade school. What did you study? What were some of the things you did? What activities were there that kids could get involved in?

M: In grade school there wasn't much. In high school, we had football and basketball. I don't remember having track in those days, or baseball teams. There was a few clubs like the Glee Club and a few things like that. I don't think there was that much money around, to tell you the truth.

T: Who was your principal?

M: At Haselton School, it was Miss Perkins. [She was a] very strong woman. She was a real . . . she was the boss. When I went to Roosevelt, I don't remember who it was. At East High School, it was Mr. J.W. Smith. He was a good educator, but the man who took charge was the assistant, Mr. Fell. He was tough. He kept everybody in line. He was a real good teacher. He taught Commercial Law. I had him for Commercial Law. He was a real good teacher and a good assistant principal.

T: How do you mean he kept everybody in line?

M: He disciplined them. If you got out of line, you went to see him. He was a little stocky guy, and he would shake you up a little bit. And, you took it.

T: Paddle?

M: No, no. Miss Perkins was the one who paddled in grade school. Mr. Fell was more of a . . . he could put his point across. He let you have it.

T: He'd shake you up a little bit?

M: He would shake you up a little bit. The principal, Mr. Smith, he would take every graduating class, about 10 or 15 students at a time, in his office. We would have an all day session. He would talk to you about what you're going to do, how you liked school, and life. He did that to every graduating class.

T: What happened if, say, you got a bad report from school? What happened when you got home?

M: We didn't get any sympathy. (Laughter) In our house anyway, you didn't get no sympathy. If you got a bad report, it seems like, my parents stuck with the teacher.

T: Was it tough to communicate, because your parents were both Italian? Was it tough to communicate with them?

M: No, not really. My dad was pretty well educated in Italy. My mom wasn't. She couldn't read or write, but she was no dummy, really.

T: Did they understand English?

M: They got through. They never could talk too good, but they got their business done.

T: Let's see, what about the depression? Tell me about it.

M: The depression was real bad. [It was] the crash of 1929, and everybody had no work. There was what they called the relief, the Allied Council. You'd go down and apply. After that, they had what's called a soup line. The people would walk . . . it was right across the street from Haselton School. These people would go down with a bucket, and they would give you a bucket of soup or mush and a loaf of bread. After that, you go downtown to the relief [office], they call it the Allied Council. After you applied, there was a woman . . . I'll never forget, her name was Mary. She would go check on the houses. When they saw Mary coming up the street, all of the kids would run home and tell Mom and Dad that she was coming. If you had anything, you better hide it, because you wouldn't get relief.

T: What was her job?

M: That was her job, checking out to see that it was true that you were hurting.

T: No food hording?

M: No food. Later on, when Roosevelt became president, he started a bunch of programs. There was the CCC Camp for the older fellows; the National Recovery Act, the NRA; and the WPA [the Workers Progress Administration], where my dad worked for a while. He worked all month for \$60.

T: [For] \$60?

M: [For] \$60 a month.

T: That was \$2 a day.

M: [For] \$2 a day. First, he worked at the stone quarry up there on the Corner of Haselton and Gladstone. He was out there chipping rock and stone up there. Then,

he went to the Vienna Airport, where he helped build Vienna Airport.

T: You mean the WPA built that?

M: The WPA built that, yes. He used to ride to work with a fellow that lived on Decatur. His name was Paul Lutso. He went to work in a broken down 1929 Ford. Around 1930 to 1939, things started opening up a little bit.

T: What was it like in the soup lines?

M: You know what it was like? You'd be surprised. People were destitute. They would laugh, and everybody was happy. I couldn't believe it.

T: Is that right?

M: Today, if they had that today, they'd blow their brains out, bitch and complain. (Laughter) Most of them were from foreign countries, and I guess they were used to it. They just took it in stride.

T: They still felt they were better off here than they were back in Europe.

M: Yes.

T: What about the story about--what was it--Mike's Dinner? There was supposed to be some story about Grandma and your mother standing in line, waiting for a soup bone?

M: Yes. Mike, the guy who ran it . . . there was a big ladle. They would take the bone and say, "This is for Mike." I don't know whether it was Grandma or whoever. They said, "Give this to Mike, too." They threw their soup on the person who was serving.

T: So, every piece of meat and everything was for Mike?

M: Everything was for Mike. All you got was the water.

T: All you got was the broth, okay. What about . . . I've heard about Mrs. Schwebel had a bakery down there.

M: She's a wonderful woman. She had a bakery. Her husband died during the flu season, and she ran that thing herself. She'd be down there at 5 o'clock in the morning, watching them load the trucks. She was a real boss, but she was very generous during the Depression, I hear. She had a pastor from St. Elizabeth's, Father Costick. [He] would go down there. She would give him bread to give to the people.



T: She had the bakery where, down on Center Street?

M: On the corner of Lawrence and Center Streets.

T: From what I understand, she used to walk around with loaves of bread in a basket on her head.

M: That's right. Then, I don't remember when . . . she got big. She built the bakery over here on Midlothian and Lake Park Road. [It was] one of the biggest bakeries in the country. Of course, she's gone. Her kids are running it. In fact, I think her grandchildren are now. . . . I just read not long ago where David Schwebel retired.

T: What was it like at East High School? What were some of the subjects you studied?

M: I took the commercial courses. I had shorthand, typing, bookkeeping, commercial law, English, and history.

T: What were the other courses?

M: Well, they have academic and industrial [courses].

T: So, it's kind of like tracked. You can take whatever you wanted.

M: Yes. I don't understand. Is that the way it is in high school today, with courses?

T: Not really.

M: How do you get your itinerary?

T: You just pretty much pick and choose. You have to have so many credits.

M: Do you make your own schedules, or does the school make it?

T: It depends pretty much on what school system you're in. It really depends on what school system you're in.

M: How could a kid get into typing and bookkeeping? Does he ask for that?

T: Yes.

M: But, it's not in the main courses?

T: It's not divided up into commercial, academic, and industrial courses.

M: We had commercial, academic, and industrial. Industrial was little shops they had. At East they had auto mechanics, electric, pattern making, and tin shop.

T: That was when?

M: I graduated in 1939.

T: What were some of the games you played? What did you do for entertainment?

M: At East?

T: As a young man, as a child?

M: We lived near an open field, our residence. We used to go up there and play baseball and football.

T: What other games?

M: At night we used to play--what was it called--"Run Sheepy, Run," and stuff like that. There was nothing else to do. There was no money around.

T: How do you play "Run Sheepy, Run?"

M: I forgot. As far as on our street, I don't remember anybody having a bike. [There were] not too many sleds. We used to go down to Fitzinmen's. They would have scrap metal. It was a bar shop and had scrap metal. We'd bring it home, bend it around our shoe, and ski. That's it.

T: Yeah, I heard about curtain rods.

M: Curtain rods. Either that, or go down to Fitzinmen's. They had it in a back yard, which really wasn't scrap. We'd take it and go home.

T: What about "Kick The Can?"

M: What?

T: "Kick the Can." Did you ever play that?

M: "Kick the Can." Yes, we played that! Or, "Buck, Buck, How Many Fingers Up?" You'd jump on a guy's back with your fingers up. He wouldn't guess. He'd just tell me that I'm jumping on him.

T: You guys sounded like a rough bunch. How about your father? Tell me about your father. What kind of man was he?

M: My father was a very good man. He was terrific. He was a good provider, a good worker. He was a family man. He never went for. . . . We lived on Gladstone Street for 52 years, and there was nobody on that street that ever said a bad word about him.

T: How was he as far as disciplining the kids, disciplining you, your brother and sister?

M: He was very good.

T: Really?

M: I thought [he was] not as good as Mom. He didn't say much. Mom, she kept chirping on. She was all right. She would discipline, too. My dad, I think he was the best. . . .

T: [He] never hit you, paddled, or spanked you?

M: Not too much. Mom did it more.

T: Oh, she was the heavy. You said he worked 42 years?

M: [He worked] 41 years at Republic Steel.

T: During the Depression, did he work at all?

M: Maybe one day a pay. There was no union in those days. You'd go to work. In the morning you'd have a big spot and the men standing there. If you were a bosses boy, you'd go to work and the rest of them would go home. [If you would] go down [during the] 3 o'clock to 11 o'clock [shift], the same thing. Sometimes you would carry the same lunch for a week. You might get a day of pay, maybe nothing.

T: How much would he make in a day, do you have any idea?

M: I don't think he was making \$4 or \$5 a day.

T: Was there any work for you when you were a teenager?

M: For me, no way!

T: Nothing?

M: Nothing. When I graduated in 1939, I finally got a job. I graduated in June, and I got a job in December at Graef Storm Windows. I worked there for forth-three and a half years. We never had a union until 1955. The shop was on West Federal Street, and then we moved up here to Velma Court. The new shop, that's where I retired from.

T: Were you born on Gladstone?

M: I was born on 41 North Blane Avenue.

T: So, that was the first house your parents owned?

M: No. They rented that house. The first house they owned was the one on Gladstone.

T: They rented on Blane?

M: Yes.

T: What about the steel strike? Your father got locked in the. . . .

M: In 1937, when they got the union, he wasn't locked in. But, it was violence. They brought in the National Guard. One guy got shot. The guys who were in there, the guys that were on the bridge, they took pictures of them from in the mills. Some guys lost their jobs.

T: What bridge?

M: Center Street Bridge.

T: The mills didn't want the unions?

M: No they didn't. No way!

T: The National Guard, they did what?

M: They came in, and they put the violence down. It was a pretty tough time there for a while.

T: How long?

M: I don't remember how long the strike lasted, but it was quite a while. I know that most of the men with my dad, they used to hang around at Henry's Cafe and play cards for nothing.

T: For something to do?

M: Just to kill time. He wasn't too much for picketing and that. They weren't allowed in.

T: What about your neighbors on Gladstone Street?

M: It was all mostly Italian or Slovak on there. There were a lot of Slovaks and Italians. It was a nice neighborhood. We got along real good with the people.

T: Who were some of the . . . give me some of the names.

M: There were the Besista's, the Banjo's, and Gerlash. Then, there were Kinachi's and Narducci--they moved to Cleveland later--Blazo's, Sable, Meravich. . . .

T: The Capelli's were there?

M: They came later. Yes, they were there, but they came a little later. They moved in where the Narducci's were.

T: And, everybody just played together?

M: They stuck together. You never heard anybody that was jealous of one guy. There was nothing to be jealous about. You didn't have nothing.

T: Nobody had anything, so you couldn't be jealous. How about the adults? What did the adults do? There was no T.V. What did you have for entertainment for the adults? What was their entertainment?

M: In the summertime, they all had a big garden, the whole back yard. In the winter, that was it. You just sat in. You were in bed by 8:30 or 9 o'clock.

T: Did you listen to the radio?

M: Yes, we got a radio in 1937.

T: In 1937?

M: In 1937.

T: Up until then, what?

M: Nothing.

T: Nothing? Newspapers?

M: No. I got a newspaper when I got to high school, because sometimes they would say that they wanted you to report on something out of the paper. That's when the paper was 3 cents

T: How about visiting? Did they visit at all?

M: Yes. They visited among the relatives. In those days, if you had a wedding, they'd have a wedding for two or three days at the house. The weddings would go on and on. There was nowhere to go. There was no Mahoning Country Club or Mr. Anthony's. They were all home deals. I've got some wedding pictures here. Pictures [were] of thirty or forty people, everybody and their brothers. There were babies and everything.

T: So, it was very informal and very close knit.

M: People were much closer in those days. They helped one another.

T: How about a car?

M: No cars. You could buy a bus pass for a dollar and ride all week.

T: Where would you catch the bus?

M: Down on Wilson Avenue. You could go to town. You could go to the West Side. You could go to Idora Park. You could go anywhere you want for a dollar all week.

T: What was Wilson Avenue like?

M: Wilson Avenue? Much cleaner than it is today. First, there was a street car, and they had the tracks in there. After that, they got the trolleys that used to run on electric wire. Then, they got the bus with diesel. It was well kept. Right now, it's like a ghetto.

T: How about stores?

M: Stores were nothing like the modern stores. [They were] very small. We had the Max Handsberg's, a little Kroger store down there, and we had a bakery. There was an Isaly's and a shoe shop, and a couple confectioneries. People in those days had no money. All the fellows, after they got out, would hang around that corner and have a ball. Nobody had nothing.

T: What was Max Handsberg's?

M: He was on Wilson Avenue. He was a real nice fellow, and he helped. He'd give you credit to where it hurt him, almost.

T: Was that a grocery store?

M: A grocery store, yes.

T: I think Gardner Boich was down there.

M: Gardner Boich was a hardware store. He was really a nice fellow, too. I don't remember how many gas stations [there were]. There might have only been one gas station, that was it. We didn't have no car. We didn't have no car in our family until I got out of the service. We got a car in 1951, I think.

T: So, what was considered a trip?

M: A trip? To Idora Park.

T: That's it?

M: That's it. We never went nowhere. No way, we never went nowhere. The first time I left home was when I went into the service.

T: When did you go into the service?

M: In 1942, August 12.

T: Were you drafted?

M: I was drafted.

T: How long were you in?

M: I got out on November 6, 1945.

T: Tell me about it.

M: We got drafted. We left from Lincoln School. There was about 60 of us from the East Side. We all went down to Fort Hayes, Columbus. There were a bunch of us that went to Camp Sheldon, Mississippi. We had our basic training down there. They broke us up again, but there were quite a few of us from Youngstown that still stuck together. I got into the ordinance. We were there until--I got there in 1942, and in 1943 we went on maneuvers to Texas and Louisiana. We went back to Shelby. In October, we took off. We took off for New York. We went to Scotland, and I went to England. I was in England until January 4, 1944. D-Day was January sixth. We left from Maidenhead, England, and we went to France, D plus 2 [June 8].

T: You were [there on] D plus 2?

M: Yes.

T: So, that was what, June 8?

M: June 8.

T: What was your division? Were you in the infantry?

M: We were attached to the 3rd Army, our outfit.

T: Where did you serve? In what branch?

M: Ordinance.

T: Ordinance. That was supply?

M: Supplies and truck maintenance. [It was] more truck maintenance, not supply. We kept the supply lines. When we went to France . . . when the 3rd Army and Patton broke loose, they went to Paris, and they had what they call a "Red Ball" highway from Sarrebourg to Paris. The job was to keep--no matter what was going on, you had to keep them trucks moving is they had a red ball on the doors. When they would break down, you'd back another truck up, whatever they had on it, take it, and fix the truck. You'd fix the other truck and let the other one go. It was like an express highway.

T: In other words, just keep the trucks moving, regardless of what. . . .

M: Exactly. Those were the orders. They had to move.

T: So, you served in England and France?

M: I was in Luxembourg. I went through Luxembourg, and we ended up in Germany. The last town I was in, was. . . . When we got to Germany, there was a Remogen Bridge that was left intact by the Germans. They made a mistake. They didn't blow it up when they retreated. We went across that thing. Then, we ended up in Wurzburg. That's where I stayed until the war ended.

T: Where?

M: Wurzburg. That's where we stayed until the war ended. While I was there, I got a letter from my brother, Mike. I went to see him. He wasn't too far from us. He was in a little town called Bad Mergentheim. After the war, we went back to France. We were sent to Marseille. From Marseille, we got on a boat and came home.

T: So, you came back on November 6, 1945?

M: November 6 was the day I was discharged. I think we were brought back about three or four days before that. We went to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania and got discharged.

T: You came in on the East Coast, then?

M: Yes.

T: Were you married during the war?

M: No.



T: You got married after the war?

M: After the war.

T: How about communications? Were you able to communicate with people back home?

M: During the war? Yes. You could write letters, but the letters were censored. Ours were, anyway, the ones going out. They had what they called a victory mail. It was a one sheet that you would write, and the officers would censor it. Then, it would go to home.

T: So, the people back home had no idea where you were some of the time?

M: No, unless you had some kind of . . . some guys say they had a code going. You couldn't say, "Well, I'm in. . . ." When we landed in France, we were in Sainte Mere-Eglise. I couldn't say that. They would scratch that out or cut it out. All you could say was what you were doing and how you were feeling, stuff like that.

T: And just let them know that you're still alive?

M: That's it. You'd get quite a few letters. You could write all the letters that you wanted. I think the mail was free, too.

T: What was it like after you came back? You came back in 1945.

M: When we came back, there was nothing. They were still on rations. Everything was rationed during the war. The first day I came home, we went downtown to try to buy a large shirt. I couldn't find one.

T: Everything was for the war effort?

M: Everything was still rationed. But, it broke away right after the war. Then, you could start buying clothes. It was hard to adjust. It was funny coming back. You're used to one life. You come home, and there was nothing. I didn't go to work. They had what they called the 52-20 club. You could have went on unemployment for 52 weeks and \$20 a week. I went on for a while, and then, I went back to work at Graef Storm Window. When I came back, they gave me a dollar an hour.

T: A dollar an hour?

M: That's it. My dad was making 82 cents in the mill. In about two months, he gave me \$1.10. That was big money in those days.

T: That was what?

M: [In] 1945. Well, 1946, because I took a couple months off.

T: That's amazing. So, you would work all week for \$60.

M: About \$60.

T: No, \$40.

M: For about \$44.

T: For about \$44.

M: But, that was good money. When I first started for him, it was \$10 a week and no clock. I went out to work with the sun, and came home after dark sometimes. It was like a salary job.

T: Do you have any idea of what went on back home while you were in the war?

M: No, not really. I think my sister used to write the letters. My mom and dad couldn't write American. They would just say that they were all right and stuff like that. I had no idea that. . . . The way I found out about the rationing and that [was] the guys would come over after we left and would say, "Boy, it's tough back there. You can't get cigarettes. You can't get butter. You can't get gasoline." We got all we wanted. We'd get a ration book, go to the PX, and get all we wanted, at least seven packs of cigarettes a week. Shaving, razors . . . when we were in England, I had a friend of mine, we used to go downtown. We had a couple of girls that we used to see. The rationing was so tight there, they would get one razor a year.

T: One razor a year? Oh, my God.

M: I went into Woolworth's in England to try to buy something to send it home for my mom, and I couldn't get nothing. You couldn't even get a handkerchief without a stamp.

T: So, if you had anything, you could just about get what you wanted.

M: You could change your rations for soap, cigarettes, and razor blades. You could go to town and sell them. In France, you could go buy yourself a pack of cigarettes and go out and sell them for \$20 or \$30. [Then, you could] send money orders home.

T: How much did you make in the Army?

M: The first month I was in, I made \$21.

T: [You made] \$21 a month?

M: [I made] \$21 a month. Then, they passed a law, and we went to \$50 a month.

T: That's amazing. When you consider what people are making now as far as pay. . . .

M: Right now, they're making good money in the Army. We never made. . . . I think, when I got out of the service, I was a Tech Sergeant. I think I was making \$96 a month.

T: When did you get married?

M: I married [on] May 17, 1947.

T: [In] 1947. Where?

M: Youngstown, at St. Nicholas Church in Struthers.

T: [Were you] married ever since?

M: Married ever since.

T: That's good.

M: [It's been] 42 years, now.

T: You have one son?

M: We have one son, Bob, Robert. He lives in West Virginia, now. He's a Chemical Engineer. He got married. He's got three girls.

T: I think we're going to be finishing this up pretty soon. I wanted to talk a little bit about Roosevelt, Hoover, and Truman.

M: Hoover . . . I was a kid. The way you hear people talk today about the Republican, he wasn't very well liked by [the public], especially the foreigners. They figure that he brought the Depression on, and they had no use for him.

Roosevelt, they idolized him. I did, too. He brought up social security. I'm retired, and I get my check every month. I thought he was a great president.

Truman, he wasn't as well educated, but he's got to be one of the greatest presidents we ever had.

T: What about the bomb? What about the dropping of the bomb?

M: The atomic bomb? It saved a lot of lives, but I think it ruined the world, myself.

T: Why's that?

M: There's no such a thing as a war. If there was ever a war, we're all gone. They say that they negotiate: "You got 50,000 bombs, and I got 20,000." What's the difference? You only need three or four.

T: That's true. Then, you eliminate the world anyway.

M: They can blow up one of these nuclear plants. Look at Russia, when Chernobyl . . . look what happened over there, and that was just a little atomic bomb. In fact, I've seen in the paper tonight where Russia is supposed to release their papers on disasters. They claim they've had a lot of them over there.

T: Is that right?

M: It's in tonight's paper.

T: So, you would probably say that Roosevelt and Truman. . . .

M: Were the greatest presidents in my life, in my years. I would say that.

T: I know the immigrants, as far as contact with. . . .

M: The immigrants, they'll tell you that Roosevelt was the greatest guy that ever lived.

T: Because of social security?

M: Not only that. He pulled this country out of . . . this country was in bad [shape]. The Depression was really bad. It was bad! We went on the soup lines with a bucket.

T: There are some people that would even say that Roosevelt knew that the invasion was coming on Pearl Harbor, but he ignored it just so the U.S. would get into the war.

M: I think so. He was warned that the Japanese were going to attack Pearl Harbor.

T: And, he ignored it?

M: Well, yes. There's a lot of things that a president in Washington . . . he sits there, and he listens to everybody. That's a big job. That's an awesome job! Something might go over your head, then it happens and you're in trouble.

T: Well, I think that just about concludes the interview. Do you have any other statements or anything else you want to add to it?

M: Not really. All I can say is that the greatest part of my life is right now, retirement, I think.

T: Retirement.

M: Retirement. I retired in 1983. I took up golf. I've never golfed before. I enjoy it a lot, and I'm better off now than I ever was. My home is paid for, and I'm just having a ball.

T: That's good. So, you feel like you've realized the American dream?

M: Right.

T: Very good. That concludes the interview with Sam Mantini on July 10, 1989. Thank you very much.

M: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW