YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Smoky Hollow

Personal Experience

O. H. 43

ALFFONSO ROSSELLI

Interviewed

by

Annette D. Mills

on

May 1, 1976

ALFFONSO ROSSELLI

Alffonso Rosselli came to Youngstown in 1909. He was born in Italy on February 11, 1889. Mr. Rosselli had five sons with his wife Mary. After her death he maried his second wife, Anne, and was blessed with five stepchildren. His wife Anne died in 1960. Mr. Rosselli was proud of all his children and jokes about having his own baseball team. He is the father of Dominic Rosselli, coach of Youngstown State University basketball team. Mr. Rosselli worked at Carnegie Steel, Wilcoff Company, and the Sheet & Tube Company, where he was employed for twenty-five years. He retired in 1960.

All of Mr. Rosselli's sons served in the U. S. Army. He is a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. His special interests are gardening, working with motors, plumbing, or anything he can do with his hands. He quips about not being as active as he would like to be, however, he still takes a great interest in sports, both live and on T. V.

The early day reflections of Mr. Rosselli in Smoky Hollow places one in an era of scarcity of monies, prohibition, and the experience of obtaining a citizenship in America.

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INTERVIEWEE: ALFFONSO ROSSELLI

INTERVIEWER: Annette D. Mills

SUBJECT: Early days, prohibition

DATE: May 1, 1976

M: This is an interview with Mr. Alffonso Rosselli for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Smoky Hollow. The interviewer is Annette Mills, at 437 North Walnut Street, in Youngstown, Ohio, at 11:15 a.m.

Mr. Rosselli, would you like to start by telling us how you came to Smoky Hollow?

R: I came to Youngstown in 1909 on February 9, I think it was. It was snowing then. At the time we came here, we came from West Virginia. When we got to Pittsburgh, it was snowing. By the time we got the train to come here to Youngstown, it was about 9:00. When we got off of the train it must have been around 9:00 or 10:00. It was at Spring Common, Pennsylvania Depot. That's all I can remember.

We walked down to the square. Everybody was showered with snow. The streetcars were a block all around the square. We walked to the square. We went down to Warren Oak Street and we had the address of where we were going to stay the night, the board, the room. What happened? We went down Warren Oak Street, we crossed the tracks there. He had a house. Well, you don't remember. A man used to be right on the hill on Warren Oak Street. This house was next to the hill. This man had three or four girls and one son. The son, after the Erie Railroad came in and bought this land and his house, a little, small shop, he bought a place on the corner of Wood Street and Champion. I don't know where he went now.

So we went by the railroad and the snow was about a foot and a half high. You would be tired. There was me and a couple of other friends. I said, "Where are we going?" It was dark and there was snow all over. We did not have the right kind of shoes. The Salvation Army had a hotel right on the corner from there, Commerce Street and Warren Oak Street. They had a beer garden in there and so we said, "Let's go in there and see if it's warm." We went in there and we asked them if they had any room. They said, "Yes, yes, yes." So we stayed there the night. We had a stove and we got something to drink. Then we got a room.

In the morning when we got up at about 9:00, we looked outside and there was snow all over. Where this address was, it was access to the railroad. The only way to go was go across the railroad and into the house where we were supposed to go, to stay in the room. So in the morning, a fellow named Geno, we went in there to have board. We stayed there for about two days. We had to walk through Youngstown. We didn't know much of Youngstown. The streetcars were there and you could go around the square. After two days he said, "Well, we want a job." Where do we go? We went down to Republic down on Center Street and got a job in the morning and went to work.

We worked there, we were unloading some cinders, they called it, the stuff that came out of the blast furnace. We worked a hard day, it was tough. We didn't dress like you do. We worked for two days. Some of the fellows said, "Come on, let's go work over there." It was a different job. We worked for two days and we didn't even get paid. $1.50 for ten hours is what we made. We got hired there at about 10:00. We unloaded the steel, did everything. We stayed about six months. You never moved, you had board. We used to pay $3 a month. We used to cook and wash the clothes and even fix the lunch to go to work. We stayed there about a year and a half, then we went back on East Wood Street.

We moved. They had a guest house. They used to have guests, right down there on Andrews Avenue. You know where I mean? That's where we came in and the conductor started talking about marrying and this and that.

This one fellow used to make bagels. He used to live where I used to live and we got acquainted. I used to go down and help him make bread. I was making the dough. A couple of hours I used to work there. He said, "You want a job? I'll give you a job making the bread." I

said, "What am I going to do?" at that time bread was only 5¢ for a big loaf of bread. We used to peddle it from house to house in a big basket. There was no gas, just wood and you had to make it when the oven was hot. There was a nice girl there and I wanted to get attached to her. I was twenty-one years old. She used to stay with her brother. I didn't have any money. I didn't have anything to prepare the house, you know, to get married. But I wanted to get married. She didn't want to get married, so I broke up with her.

When I was boarding with this first wife, my wife, her sister rented rooms. She had a bedroom, a big room. That's where I came to the conclusion to marry this sister. If the brother was over there, my brother-in-law, they started talking about marriage and all that. They had a sister in the old country. We didn't have any money. Nobody had any money. I sent a little money, $160. But at that time $60, that's how much it would be for passage on the boat. At that time you had to carry so much, at least $100. We used to call it lira. She came to this country and we were married. We stayed together with her sister, for almost three months. Then I rented a place.

I didn't have anything. The only thing I had was $5. My wife's wedding dress cost $25. But for $25 at that time, it was made of silk, real silky stuff. Anyway, we bought a bed and that's all we had. We didn't have a stove to cook on. But my sister-in-law, she had a kitchen and children. She was in the family way again. She had another child. The room wasn't enough, so I had to find a place. I rented a little cottage, a little room, or a three room house on 320 East Wood Street. I stayed there. I bought a stove, it was a secondhand stove because at that time there were a lot of secondhand stoves. I stayed there for about a year and she was in the family way.

We moved out of that one and we moved onto Andrews Avenue, right down on Andrews Avenue, down in Oak Park, at the end. Then I rented a four room house, me and another fellow. We had a problem. Whenever it rained, it flooded down in the cellar and you couldn't get out to start a fire. We had a coal stove and we couldn't get down in the cellar to get the coal. There was about four feet of water. We stayed there for a year and a half.

Well, the godfather of the first child was talking about buying a house, buying a little house. There was a little home on Oak Street, 1204. He had two houses, one little

house and one big house. Well, he said, "I like the big house." "I'll take the little house," I said, "the four room house." The other house was a six room house and that house had a bathtub. We didn't have a bathtub. But what happened, we argued and he backed out. I didn't back out and I went to a lawyer, Frank Mangini. He used to live down here someplace on Warren Oak Street. He used to live on Wood Street at that time. He was an American lawyer. Finally, I bought the house. I said, "Well, he doesn't deserve it." There was no water, no electric, and I think it didn't even have gas, no gas. I bought the house and went to see Mr. Jones, he used to have a shop on East Emerald. I paid $110 before I put water in there and then I moved in. I stayed there. I went in there in 1912 and in 1915 I sold the house, after putting water in and fixing up the house and making the garden. Of course, it only had four rooms.

This fellow came along, his name used to be Nick. He was Irish. He said he lived on Poland Street. I said I don't know what they are doing. We came out and we went in there and looked in and they had two houses, a seven room house and a three room house. There was a little house in the back. People never rented. A family of Jews, nice people stayed in there and I moved into the little house. I moved in there and I sold my house for $1400. I paid $800. The rest of the money I paid $3150. The owners, I was made a deal with the owners.

An Irish man lived next to me. So after I moved in, I used to get rent off of him. There were two families there--one on the top and one on the bottom floor. I used to get $22 upstairs and $21 downstairs. I paid for the house. I borrowed the money and I paid them cash, $3150. I went to the bank, the National Bank. It used to be right across where it is now. It was a little bank because on Federal Street there was only a small place. There were no buildings like there are now. The bank was surprised when I pulled out $3150 cash to pay them. I bought that and I went in and moved in to the little house. Then I had a family to support.

Dominic was born on Oak Street and Louie, Tony, and Joe. I wanted to move into a big house, can't stay in a little house because she got sick. That's how I came out here. I had a house that I rented on East Rayen Avenue. The house was too big. The children, I had to take them here and there, I had to take care of them. I stayed there for a few years and then I moved out here on the corner of Webb Street and Walnut.

There was a man, they used to call him Jim. I forgot his last name. He used to be a lawyer. He had three girls and two boys. Anyway, that's where I was rooming, room and board. I paid $80 a month. Then I used to work. I used to make a little money. Long hours, I used to work thirteen hours on Sunday. I moved into a place across the street, they had more room--Joe Lariccia, Mike Lariccia, Catherine Lariccia. She wanted to go to work because the family was getting big.

After, I met my second wife, but she had five kids and I had five. But they were all eligible to go to school. They all went to school, every one of them. She had three boys and two girls; I had five boys. All were going to school. You know, that's a handful. So they would get together, but we didn't marry for almost six months because her husband was rich and he used to be in Chicago, Illinois, working for Carnegie then. Well, you know how it is. She didn't want to go back. He came in and she didn't want to go back. Finally, we did it. I could get married in the church, but she couldn't. We got married in the church. I stayed with her for thirty-two years. We have been living in this house since 1927.

We moved out one year and a half, two years in 1931 or 1932. Of course, we had to have a bigger house, we had to have four bedrooms. We have four bedrooms here, but the kids used to sleep in two beds here. Finally, she got sick and she passed away in 1961. I have stayed here. My kids, her kids used to be all combined together, loved one another. Stepchildren, my children, there was never any argument. They played ball down at the field. The sports, every Sunday at 10:00 they came in over here. They all used to be on a team. I said, "Well, I'll make my own team." That's when I got a job, I made a little money, got it all straightened out.

They all went to school. Ralph went to school, graduated from school and my daughter went over to East High School. One night she came over and she said, "Pop, we have to move. On this side they have to go to Rayen. On this side you have to go to East." So my kids, those poor kids, they walked; Dom, Ralph, William walked down here and went to Rayen High School. We have a little, junky car, but I had to use it myself to go to work. So I lived here, I took care of things, the kids' graduation and doing things. Tony went a year and a half to college. He went to Ursuline. He went to college right after that. Then the war broke out and every one of them went in the service.

I didn't have any citizenship papers. What happened to the first citizenship papers was that they expired. After ten years your first papers expire; after ten years they give you your second papers. You had to apply. So I applied, after five or ten years I applied, but you had to have money. We didn't have any money. I had to apply all over again. The boys were all in the Army, all in the service. At the time Roosevelt was president, they started a school on Wood Street and they learned the Constitution over there and the teacher asked me, "How many children do you have?" "I've got eight." He said, "You're not a citizen?" I said, "No." "Are they all in the service?" He said that he wanted to know how they did it. I told him and he said, "That's a shame." I saw my stepson and he said, "Pa, I'm going to write to the president." I said, "Well, do what you want to do. Who's going to listen to you?" But I applied for the second paper and I was going to school. You had to go to school for so long before you go to court, if you get it or you don't get it. Everything was politics, it isn't just now.

My stepson wrote to President Roosevelt and told him the whole story. All the children were in there and after one week he sent him a letter. I had laughed at him. You go to the examination and you have to wait six months to go to the examination again in the court with the judge. You had to pay $10. Well, I had $10 and I went down there and they gave me no questions at all. They gave me the papers. They said, "How does it feel to be a citizen?" Otherwise, I would have had to wait two years, six months, three weeks before they would give you another examination. That was the situation. I was living over here, working, doing anything I could do, making money, and raising a family. I raised the children and grandchildren, everyone was over here. That's the whole story.

Now when I was working with Carnegie, the boss his name was Charlie. He was the general foreman. At that time at Carnegie, they used to use thousands and thousands of people because it was all hand work. There was not much machinery. They came in one day. We only used to get $1.50 a day for ten hours of work. He came in and he said, "Alffonso, (he was an Italian) I've got a watch here, I've got a wristwatch." I said, "Well." He was pleading with the boss to give you a job because you go work in the morning, and if your boss doesn't want you, you wait and you go home. Gene, Giovanni, and Antonio go to work here and Alffonso goes to work there but you wanted to be in sight. He said, "This is not a watch worth $1, $1.50." It was a seventeen jewel watch. He said, "We are going

to need this because we're going to start an Italian style church." At that time people used to use St. Cyril Church down in the basement. They used that for a church for the Italian people and that's when I got Joe baptized, down at St. Cyril Church, Polish church.

That's where we had to rent. He said, "We're going to build a church, an Italian church. It will cost you $1.00." I gave him the dollar. What are you going to do? I couldn't say no. So they made enough money. Our Lady of Mount Carmel donated the lot. So he made enough money to dig the cellar. He started the church. It took a lot of money. They made everything down in the basement. That's where I first married, down in the basement, and that was the first wedding down at Our Lady of Mount Carmel and then we collected enough money to finish the church. I belonged to the church. All of my children belonged to the church, all were registered. Then I had to go to St. Cyril Chruch, down in the basement, they served mass.

M: Then you and your wife were, had, the first wedding in the church?

R: In Our Lady of Mount Carmel. After that, she passed away and I married my second wife. Then I left Our Lady of Mount Carmel. I had to change because my second wife had a daughter who wanted to go to St. Joseph School. Well, to go there, you had to join the parish, but St. Joseph is a German church, and they didn't want any of the other nationalities to go there--Irish, Polish, Slavic, Italian. They gave permission to use the cellar, but they didn't mix with you. The Italian people would go down there and the Slavic people upstairs. The girls were going there and we had to belong to the church. Father Rand was the priest. Well, when they sold the church, I went back to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and Father Fabrizio. I never registered. I never told him, "Father, remember, I had the first wedding that took place here down in the basement."

M: Mr. Rosselli, can you tell me something about your neighbors, people that lived in Smoky Hollow and what you thought about them and what made you stay here all those years?

R: Oh, we had a great team. We had Mr. DiGiacomo, and Mr. White lived next door and all of the neighborhood. Mr. Malone, Mrs. Malone used to live on the corner of Walnut Street and Carlton Street. All the neighbors here, we had a fellow, his name was DiBlasio. He used to live on

Court Street. He used to be a carpenter, a contractor. I used to live here. There was a corporation that wanted to make a store right on Webb Street and Walnut. I bought the house and rented the contract. Then we came in. Then Joe wanted to give me the money. He said, "Mr. Rosselli, go ahead. I'll give you the money." He used to live on the last house on Court Street. His wife said, "Mr. Rosselli, we'll help you." I didn't have any money to start a business. I didn't have any education, I told him. When you go into business you have to have education, first. You can't handle it like a blind man. He said, "You'll do all right."

Well, I built my house. He gave me the contract. I built three or four garages. I started building here and there and the neighbors all were building around here. Next door, there was a fellow, he had two houses. They were torn down. He had a little store.

We couldn't go anyplace because of the inflation. When the holidays would come, all of the neighbors would get together. We went to one house or the other, neighbors, you know.

We had a neighbor down there on Adam Street, he had one kid. I think he was crippled or something happened to him. He was paralyzed and his wife had a beauty shop, I think. My wife used to go over to her to get her hair fixed. He used to be in the neighborhood, all in and out.

Over here, next door, there was a Hungarian woman, family, she had a girl. She was named Barbara. Well, that wasn't her daughter. She didn't have a daughter, but this family raised her like a daughter, they really did. She had a boy friend form the south. He came here to go to college, he and his brother. They came looking for a room. She had six rooms in that house, so she gave him a room. Little by little, in the end he married Barbara. He was just a schoolboy. He stayed there and took care of his mother. She was her godmother from the beginning. She raised this girl and took care of her. They had two children, two boys.

He used to be a very respectable man,this southern man. He came over here and I said, "Do you like it better over here?" He said no, he liked it better in the south. He stayed here until he sold the house and he went to california. The boys were two or three years old, the children were sickly, they needed a change of air. He wanted to sell me the house. He said, "Johnny, I can't buy the

house. I don't have any money." He wanted to give me the house for $4500. So he sold it to these people here for $4000.

Here a colored woman bought this house on the corner. She was from North Carolina. Her husband used to work over at Carnegie too, Briar Hill. She didn't have any children. Her brother had seven or nine children, I don't remember exactly. She took care of five of those children. They were all over here. She made those children work. They were five or six years old and washing the clothes down in the basement. My wife was sick; she didn't want to see that. Well, that was a rule or regulation.

She used to have a room, a furnished room. She used to call. "Mrs. Rosselli, how do you feel?" She said, "I didn't rest last night. There was noise under the window where I sleep." Everyone was making the noise. He said, "Okay, Mrs. Rosselli, I'm sick myself. I don't want no noise." The next day he chased those fellows out of the room. No kidding. She stayed in there and chased them out. She said, "We don't want any noise." "I know how you feel," I said, "I'm sick myself." When you're sick you don't rest. They were good neighbors. They called on the telephone. "How do you feel," this and that. "Where do you expect to go?" You can't find better neighbors.

So she passed away. She had a heart attack and passed away before my wife passed away. She had a woman in there, Mrs. Smith, and she watched her husband and she had a boy. She donated the house to her as long as she lived just so she took care of her husband. If she would take care of her husband, the house was hers. The husband passed away. She passed away last year. She was very neighborly. When she didn't see me one day she would call me on the telephone. "Alffonso, how do you feel? Don't you feel good? I haven't seen you." She has been very neighborly. That's what kept me staying there.

M: The warmth of the people is what enticed you to stay in Smoky Hollow?

R: I stayed here and I was always doing something and that's why I stayed here. Smoky Hollow was the best district for craft people working all along with each other. They didn't mind what it was, didn't fight. Polish, Slavic, we used to have all kinds of nationalities. They would come over there, over here, all over. If anything would happen, they would come over and turn your house upside

down. That's what made me stay here.

M: It was the neighborly neighbors that would come and visit and you could go visit them anytime, and they would come and visit you anytime.

R: He would come in and it would be like a picnic.

M: So that's what kept you there. You had a good time with your neighbors.

R: Now it is finished, everybody has died. People are leaving. It looks like Smoky Hollow is going down low. The college has taken over everything and old people, my class is almost gone. There is only one of the fellows left, one fellow named Andy. I forget his last name. He's older than I am. He's ninety-one years old and he walks like a bird.

M: You still manage by yourself?

R: So far. My daughter-in-law comes down here and helps me and cooks. We got a boy here, Louie; he's alright. He does what he has to do, but he's alright. He goes out and does what he wants, but we manage. So far, I manage things and do things. I call my dauther-in-law and son and say, "Come down here and have supper, dinner."

M: So you still have your family come down here to visit.

Mr. Rosselli, from what I have heard, you are very proud of all of your family. Would you like to make a comment about what you think about your son Dom Rosselli?

R: Well, that is a little hard to do. He was always a good boy, quiet, no trouble. He used to say to me, "Pop, don't fight, don't argue." He wanted to be a very quiet man. You know how it is. We didn't have any money to send him to college, so he used to be doing good in school. He went to public school and I never got called about him. I might have been called for Joe or Ralph, but never for Dominic. The teacher was particular. There was a rule that you had to obey what the teacher said. Well, finally they got a break. They did good.

The kids used to play football down on Watt Street and Emerald, right on the corner. One time he got hit in the head playing football. We had to take him to the doctor. It cost $5. He never got mad; he was always a nice boy.

M: He never got angry.

R: When he went, he got himself a name in school, a scholarship. They didn't want to put him on the team because he was small. Well, what happened was there was a fellow named Paul Buck, he was a graduate of Ohio State. He was the coal of the football team at Rayen. They told him, "Put Dom Rosselli in there, see what he can do. Don't leave him on the bench. See what he can do." So, he played. He snuck through and made himself a name. He used to win every game, whatever he played. There was no question about it, he came in as champion in high school. Rayen High School was at that time up for the championship. Everybody liked him.

When he graduated, they gave him command to go to Geneva. He went there and everybody was surprised, about this little man, 125 pounds, what he could do. He went down there. I didn't have any money. It was a scholarship. He washed pans in the kitchen for the room. Only thing he had to pay were books. Really, I used to give him a dollar here and a dollar there, even if I had to sell a bushel of peppers; every dollar, I used to help. I used to wash the clothes. Well, anyway, he got a good name up there and they even had a Rosselli Day. He came in one day and he said, "Pa, I'm going to quit school." He had a job, but I told him, "No. Don't do it. We'll get along somehow." Now the older two brothers used to work down at Republic and I told the brothers, "Now, when you get paid, help your brother, he needs it." But he helped himself. So, we couldn't do anything.

He stayed down there and graduated and made a big name for himself, and he came back here and looked for a job. You couldn't get a job if you wanted to buy a job. He used to work on the playground here in the summertimes and make a few dollars. He went in the Army, the service. They sent him away for three or four days and he applied for the education that they had. They sent him to Washington to school. Those military schools are supposed to be six months and he was there for a year. He came out a first lieutenant. When he graduated, he was a captain. Then he came back over here and was offered a job in California.

At this time he was married. He had Rose, the oldest child. He could be a teacher, a coach in California. Then he came back here to Youngstown College so he could be assistant coach for football. Then when he came out he had a chance to play basketball. When he was a teacher

he had to leave baseball. That's what he had to do, and that was the end of football.

He worked himself up and when he came back he stayed with his mother-in-law because they didn't have a home. She had a home down here--one house, small house. He said, "Pa, they're selling the house for $1000." I said, "Buy it! If he wants to sell it, we'll give some money." $1000 for a four room house, no porch, no anything. So he bought the house, paid the carpenter $1.50, spare time. He started learning carpentry, so I helped him put in the sewer because there was no sewer. The sewer was about ten feet deep. I tried to help him with what I could, but I couldn't do too much. So anyway, he built a house up there and he's up there right now. That's how it came out in the end.

M: I'm sure that the rest of your boys did just as well.

R: He's the only one that knows how to handle everything. They are all good, but he never caused any trouble. He gets along with everyone. He's quiet, honest, does everything he's supposed to do. In other words, he helped himself from the beginning to the end. He went to school to get his master's degree. He went to Pittsburgh, but he was working and he worked his head off. He worked as a carpenter in June and July and August to make money. In other workds, he went in there and raised himself up. I have never been able to help him much myself because I had a big family then and the jobs I had were working in the mill. That's how it is.

They have four children, God bless them, my grandchildren. Now I have a great-granddaughter and great-grandson. That's what he did and he did alright. I'm proud of him and of all of them.

The other boys worked too. He worked himself up as a young guy and he went to work for the government and he made himself and now he retired. He gets enough money. I don't need anything, but if I did, I know where to get it. They call me and ask me if I need something. I worked my head off on hard jobs, but I made it for myself and today, if I need help I know where to get it. If you need help, you know where to get it.

M: Mr. Rosselli, do you think that no matter where you would have lived, that you would have made it and that your family would have done as well as they did?

R: Well, I think so. No matter here or on the east side. I had neighbors all over, even Scottish people were neighbors of mine. There used to be Irish. Sometimes they would come in because they were jealous, they wanted this and that and I said, "I am honest with you. This is the deed. If you think there is something that belongs to you, you take it, but this is what I have. I bought five feet of land and that's my five feet of land. If you can read or write, if not then you go to court." So I talked with the man who sold the home and he said, "Mr. Rosselli, you told Mr. Jones if he doesn't shut up, you can stop the sewers in his driveway. I'll stand back."

As soon as I got $3150, I said, "I'm going into business now. I'll make business." I said, "What are you going to do?" He wanted to build new houses at that time for $300 or $400 down. The neighbor came here next to me and he had two brothers and a sister, another one was married. The girl was not married. They had all those people. They came in and helped me dig the cellar, give me a hand. This fellow was helping me, he was a Jew. He helped me build the foundation. Everywhere I stayed I had good neighbors. I never was hungry and they never were. Whatever we used to do, we got along. We used to be common neighbors. All of us got along.

On Oak Street I had a sweet time. I lived there for a couple of years. The people used to live in there, the man used to be a foreman. The next neighbor was a mailman. He had five or six kids, just as many as I had, almost. He used to come over to the house and say, "How are you doing?" He said, "Well, I got a job. It doesn't pay much money." He had a little house. He said, "If you need anything, I'll come over here and help you." He was very nice. If he was doing something I would go there, no questions, no charge, nothing. On Oak Street my neighbors were very good. Everybody was Italian. You know the Irish, Swedes, or Germans were jealous to have Italian people around there. So then other Ialians came in down there. Then it turned out that everything was moved.

M: Well was this true in Smoky Hollow, too?

R: In Smoky Hollow, too. Everyone everywhere. I used to go to a bar down in Smoky Hollow. The owner wanted to give me a job as bartender. I said, "I don't want a job." He said, "Come on over." I said, "I've got a job now, the job I've been doing." So they all used to come in.

Whatever you want, whatever he did. Mr. Malone, Mrs.

Malone down over here, he said, "Mr. Rosselli, can you put hot water in a furnace?" I said, "Why not? It won't cost you anything." So we did it.

We had to get together with no fight, no anything. Never had an argument with a neighbor.

M: There were never any arguments? It was always one helped the other, not matter who or what?

R: No arguments. Whatever could pass would pass. That's what makes the world. There have been some great things down here on Walnut Street. I stayed where I was and I left because of sickness, Federal Street. They watched my kids, my wife, when I was sick. They went over there and watched my kids and fed my kids. Then a neighbor came in and he said, "Mr. Rosselli, take him to the doctor, see what he can do, give them medicine." I said, "I appreciate it." She got sick too (my wife).

M: And then everybody looked out for their neighbor, good or bad.

R: Everybody looked out for me, whatever was happening.

M: Mr. Rosselli, I wanted to mention or ask you about two different things that you mentioned in the tape. Number one, you said something about this woman from North Carolina when she moved into the house on the corner of Adams and Walnut that she took numbers. Could you explain what the numbers game was a little bit? What kind of numbers was she taking?

R: They used to be poker numbers.

M: They would call that the bug, then. What happened? Was it gambling?

R: Well, they were making a few dimes or nickels. If you wanted to play, it was just like playing a game. If you wanted to play, you would play. Sometimes you would play with a nickel and dime; sometimes you did not hit. Sometimes you could play all you wanted. You have to know how to play. People used to be happy to play. They used to call them picking numbers, pick up. The man said, "Do you want to play a number?" And you would pick up the number that you wanted and put in 2¢, a nickel, a dime, whatever it was. Then they had a fellow who used to come and pick them up and take them down to this place; it was just like a bank. That's what we called it then. When

the number came out, if your number came out, he paid you off and people gave him so much money. The odds were three to one, four to one, five to one.

M: I can see this was sort of a gambling thing. Was this legal at that time?

R: No, it wasn't legal; you had to hide it. Of course, nobody was watching much at that time.

M: It was not legal?

R: No, bootlegging, we used to call it.

M: Kind of like bootlegging.

R: That's right. On the side we used to call it bootlegging.

M: I was going to ask anothing thing: Did they have bootlegging during that time?

R: When the country went dry, we all had bootlegging.

M: That was kind of like during the days of Prohibition?

R: Yes, Prohibition.

M: Could you tell us a little about that?

R: Take like Saturday, you used to be in back of the house. They were big fellows, they used to make moonshine, making whiskey. They used to call it moonshine. One man used to wholesale and he used to retail. You would go for a gallon, five gallons, ten gallons for $1 a gallon. Take Louie, he used to live on the corner of Audabon and Emerald. He used to be a bootlegger. He used to make it. Around this house, he had a tunnel. The cops used to go down in there, you know what I mean, when you have paid. So he was a policeman. If I was making it, I would say, "I'll give you so much for whatever I make." So the policemen were around there all the time.

So what happened? He wanted cigarettes, he wanted money, so poor Louie had to give; everything he wanted to eat, drink, this, that, without pay so he would not squeal to the federal man, the state man. He knew where the door was in the wall, where to get in, right where the tunnel was. He was making a tunnel, right along side the ground and they carried things in there and the federal man came in. The federal man, you know when you're in contact with

the federal man, you're finished. There's no money involved. The minimum when they caught you was ninety days in jail and $1000 fine. But the people used to get it, no matter whatever it is. Barrels of mash, they used to call it, the ones that you made moonshine from. The policemen jumped out of the window. You're not supposed to be making moonshine, bootlegging. That's all over.

M: It was all over the country?

R: It was almost all over the country. If they caught you, they caught you. That was prohibition. It wasn't legal to do until it was over. I don't remember just when it was exactly. Beer came out first; it was legal to make beer. Then, of course, the breweries all were closed. People bought it. Then came out the law--Roosevelt came out and said, "That's industry," and everybody started making beer. Beer came out in this country. Then after six months, the state law passed saying you could have liquor. Still they were working on the moonshine. If they caught you, they would put you in jail and you would pay a fine. Still people are making it now, that bootlegging stuff.

M: Some people still make it today?

R: Yes. They make it today and you can buy it. That's how they did. People used to make a living that way, by bootlegging. They made money, but nobody got rich, remember that. I can't think of anybody because if the law caught you, if the city caught you, they wouldn't put you in jail; $150, $200 for the fine to get out and they would go make some more. It wasn't legal but they didn't tell you that. Even the city used to trust you. If you had to go to court and they charged you $150, $200, and if you didn't have the money, you paid $50 and then $50 the next time, like a mortgage.

M: Like a charge.

R: Like a charge account. That's how they did it.

M: That was a terrible way to have to live, wasn't it? There was the fear of being caught all the time.

R: All the time. In April when the beer came out, I myself had a fellow on the corner of Webb Street and Walnut and I told him, "Put in a beer garden." He was Tom Ciarniello. I said, "Tom, why don't you put the groceries in the back and open a beer garden." Beer had come out. It only cost

$200 for a license. He didn't want to do it. He had a little money. I didn't have any money. After six months whiskey, liquor came out. Liquor was very good because you could make a profit of 200%. So that's how a lot of people got into business.

M: There was a larger margin of profit,then, after liquor became legalized?

R: Yes, because that was legal.

M: Of course, it had to have the state sticker on it.

R: Oh, yes. If you went to buy whiskey, you had to have a sticker on it.

M: But even in spite of this, they still are bootlegging today.

R: They have some, yes. Some had have it a long time. After it became legal, the people who had a beer garden, still some made moonshine and sold it for good whiskey. Some got caught, too, you know, and lost their license, suspended their license, for thirty days, for fifty days. If you had legal whiskey, the inspector used to come in and test the whiskey in your bar. Of course, when he bought whiskey, he ahd to go to the liquor store. Of course, when he went to buy whiskey at the liquor store, he had to bring the license number. You have to show the permit and the number and just how many bottles you got.

M: It wasn't like today when you could go in and buy just as many as you want?

R: Today you can go buy wholesale one thing and retail is another. You go in there and you can buy all the whiskey you want. At one time, they had to limit. They used to give you two bottles a month, thirty days, $2.50. You had a card; they would punch your card every time you went in. If not, they wouldn't give you any more. The bar and the businesses, the taverns, had their own code. The people had a code, so if you used your card, okay, but if you didn't use your card, you could give it to me. But that was supposed to be equal. The tavern couldn't sell you a bottle.

M: You couldn't buy it in a tavern?

R: No. Every time you would go, they would punch your card and they would give you so many and then you were finished.

When you went in there, and it was all filled up, you had to wait for next month.

M: You couldn't buy it once you used up your card?

R: You couldn't buy it if your card ran out.

M: Or you had to borrow somebody else's card?

R: Well, a lot of people didn't buy it. I used 2/5. You probably don't use 1/5. Well, every month you have to get a new card. Your card wasn't good anymore. Well, they would do you a favor. "Here, go get your whiskey. How's your card?" That's how it was. There used to be some bootleggers who would slip you the whiskey and sold it in a bottle because it was already inspected. There was also the inspector. The money, you had to pay taxes, you know.

END OF INTERVIEW