

Youngstown State University
Oral History Program
YSU History

O.H. 1993

Frances Carroll
Interviewed
By
James Cook
On
May 15, 2000

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YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
YSU HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Frances Carroll

INTERVIEWER: James Cook

SUBJECT: YSU History

DATE: May 15, 2005

P: This is an interview with Frances Carroll for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on YSU History, by James Cook, at YSU on May 15, 2000 time is 11:40 a.m.

R: Also, this is John Russo from the Center for working class studies will be here working with here in researching oral history.

C: Frances, welcome.

FC Thank you, James.

C: Could you tell us a little bit about your background and where you were born and basic information like that?

FC I would be very happy to. I was born in October 70 years ago in Brier Hill, born and raised in Brier Hill. I attended Catholic school for most of my life.

C: What school?

FC: St. Ann's grade school on West Federal Street in Brier Hill and Ursuline on Wick Avenue, and still is to this day. I attended Youngstown College, married, had a family.

C: What did you do? Were you a housewife? Did you have a job?

FC: Before I married, yes I had a job. I worked at the office of US Steel in McDonald, I worked nights, and had various office jobs throughout my life. The last job I had I retired from General Motors.

C: So you were an auto worker for some time?

FC: Yes.

C: How was that?

FC:

..... inaudible . . .

C: Frances, you're very knowledgeable about the history of Brier Hill and what we're trying to do today it to get a feel about how life was life in Brier Hill and move into the changes you've seen in that area. There are also some special things that the people of Brier Hill have accomplished and, finally, we'll have a discussion about Brier Hill theft and its importance. What are you're earliest memories of Brier Hill?

FC: My earliest memories of Brier Hill were wonderful. They were just . . . it's hard to say. I'm not intelligent enough to tell you how wonderful they were. My living in Brier Hill with an Italian ethnic neighborhood, we had a few other nationalities mixed in, but it was predominantly it was mostly Italian and everybody was so friendly and so nice. Everybody's door was open to you. People had a lot of respect, a lot of faith in religion, and were predominantly Catholic. The steel mills were working very good and everyone had jobs and everyone was happy. Again, I repeat myself, I cannot tell you how wonderful it was growing up in Brier Hill in the ethnic Italian background.

C: What street did you live on?

FC: I lived on the corner of Dearborn and Sarah in my grandmother's home.

C: Your grandmother had lived in Brier Hill for how long?

FC: My grandmother had come from Cane, Pennsylvania and she moved to Dearborn street.

C: What year was that?

FC: It had to be, well, let's see, it had to be before 1916.

C: Why did she come to Youngstown?

FC: The mills were here and it gave them work.

C: In what mills did she work in? Did she work in the mills?

FC: No, my grandmother didn't work in the mill, my grandmother operated a grocery store. And my grandfather, Dan Pecchio, was in the category of a lumberjack. He cut down trees for a living and I think that's what he did when he first came here. I can't

remember exactly where he worked to the mills, not to my knowledge did he ever work in the mills. He opened a grocery store and he was into lumber.

C: And what did he do once he got here?

FC: I don't think I can remember. He died very young. I think he died when he was 50.

C: Okay, and where were your parents born?

FC: My mother was born and raised in Girard and my father was born in Cane, Pennsylvania.

C: So your grandmother must have moved to Girard at some point?

FC: No, she moved from Pennsylvania to Youngstown, to Brier Hill, and as you leave Brier Hill, I would say . . . how many miles from Brier Hill to Girard?

R: Oh, three quarters of a mile.

FC: It's very close.

C: So, it really wasn't out of Brier Hill, just another area of Brier Hill, per se.

FC: It's just another neighborhood, that's right.

C: Did your grandmother remarry?

FC: No, she did not. She was a widow, though. She had seven children: four girls and three boys. When she was widowed, her two oldest girls were married and she had five children at home, three boys and two girls.

C: Did the kids stay, like your mother, in the Brier Hill area?

FC: Yes, some of the children . . . her oldest daughter built a home on Gypsy Lane, I think probably in the year 1925. My own father, the eldest son, built a home on LaBelle Avenue in 1922 or '24, when my brother was born. So, they built homes and moved out, but eventually we all came back because the stock market and whatever happened and the depression came along.

C: So most children stayed in the area, but started to move and migrate to different parts of the state.

FC: Right. The oldest daughter and my father, the oldest son, moved out but then came back to Brier Hill. I think due to the depression.

C: So, during the depression, the kids came back into the Brier Hill area. Was that uncommon during that period, that kids were moving back during the depression? Did you're grandmother or mother ever talk to you about that?

FC: No, not really. My grandmother did so very well in her grocery business that she could build homes and rent them out.

C: In the Brier Hill area?

FC: Yes, in the Brier Hill area. She helped. She built homes and duplexes on West Federal Street in Brier Hill and she would rent out.

C: Who would she rent them out to?

FC: Well, to different people that were in need of housing.

C: At that time, there were a lot of duplexes rented out to immigrants coming to Youngstown.

FC: No, she was good. In fact, the duplexes are still there.

C: In that neighborhood?

FC: Yes, on West Federal, and she would build it and they would rent it. From what I've been told, she would rent it out and collect the rent so that the rent would pay for a week. And, as her children grew, one side would be for one child and the other side would be for the other child when they grew to marry.

C: So, some family members moved into the duplexes?

FC: Yes, one of her daughters did.

C: That's interesting.

FC: She was a very hard worker.

C: I guess so. Where was her grocery store located?

FC: On Dearborn Street.

C: And it sold conventional groceries?

FC: Yes.

C: So, your mom was born in what year?

FC: My mom was born in 1901 in Girard.

C: Do you have any recollections of your grandmother's stories about being in Brier Hill?

FC: I have tons of stories. Where do I begin?

C: Well, are there any stories about that your mother told you about growing up in that era?

FC: Well, my mother lived in Girard and she was very close to everyone at the Brier Hill area schools. She met my father at a festival in Girard.

C: What did he do?

FC: He worked for the railroad at the time. They met when they were about 18 or 19 years of age.

C: Was he gone for long periods of time on the railroad? Did he work for the rail yards in that area?

FC: No, they were home every night.

C: So, he was basically working on the rail lines within the Youngstown central steel industry largely? Because the railroad was down in that area?

FC: Right, that's right.

C: Do you remember what company he worked for?

FC: No. My father and my uncle worked there.

C: How did they get their jobs?

FC: I really don't know.

C: Do you think any family helped?

FC: I don't know.

C: It's not uncommon for generations of people to work in a particular industry.

FC: My father was the oldest son, and the next one was my uncle, and they both worked there.

C: And your brothers and sisters largely lived in Brier Hill and they moved out and then they moved back during they depression?

FC: My brothers and sisters? No. I have two older brothers. Dan, married and moved out into the west side, and Andrew married and moved out, also went to the west side.

C: That was my mistake. I want to go back. Your mother's brothers and sister.

FC: My mother's brothers and sisters married and stayed in Girard.

C: They stayed in the area? When did they marry?

FC: My mother's sister married a man from Italy. They had 12 children and he worked on the railroad. They lived in my grandfather's house in Girard. Her brother did the same thing, lived in Girard, and had five children. Another sister passed away really early.

C: What happened? Did she feel responsible for that?

FC: We don't know. She got sick and died very quickly. She died at the age 22, she was very, very sick.

C: Had she been sick for quite awhile?

FC: I don't know that.

C: Living close to the mills, at one time, many people have said to have had many respiratory illnesses.

FC: Yes there were, very many.

C: People have previous positions. I'm not trying to pry, here.

FC: No, you're correct.

C: So, tell me a little about your mother.

FC: Where do I begin? Mrs. Wonderful: the best there ever was. Well, let's see. She worked hard and raised three children, and she was the best mother anyone could ever want.

C: What stories did she tell you about her life, as she was growing up?

FC: As she was growing up, she said in Girard they didn't have electricity. When she was a little girl she had to clean the oil lamps and carry coal in from the outside and pump the water. The hardships of that life . . . She married into the Pecchio family, and

she came into Brier Hill; they had cars, electricity, and running water. It was a little bit of a move up, as far as the necessities of the house go. Not that she didn't have the necessities of the house in Girard. It was just easier when she married my dad and came to Brier Hill. She had electricity, cars, telephone, cleaning people, cleaner houses. My grandmother was a very, very hard worker and a very good entrepreneur. She worked very hard.

C: Good. Who were the people who would clean for them?

FC: Some of her neighbors she would hire, her good friends. As we say in Italian "Cumbas", which is godmother or godfather, a cumba or pizanno or whatever, or perhaps they were cleaning her house and she would give them food or whatever because she was financially fit. She was a very, very, extremely hard worker and had a lot of gusto.

C: How long did she keep the store?

FC: Let's see. I was born in 1929 and I was a year old when she died, so I don't know what happened to her store. But she did a lot of work.

P: My understanding was that she was in business before the depression and, when things got tougher, she began giving people groceries on credit and that's what put her out of business. Some still are around who remember, and that made a change in everybody's way.

C: What type of products did they sell at the store?

FC: Cheeses, sausages, groceries, you know, spaghetti, flour.

C: Do you know any of the prices of the various items?

FC: We couldn't tell you; we weren't even born yet. He's correct about the credit, because he knows. He's a lot more informed.

C: We're only supposed to do one person at a time, but you better introduce yourself on the tape.

P: My name is Daniel Bob Pecchio. There were three Daniels in the family.

C: We just needed to clarify for the oral history project.

P: I don't mind.

C: The depression had a great impact on Brier Hill, wouldn't you say? Growing up in the first three years of the depression in Brier Hill, what was that like?

FC: I never knew a depression. I honestly can sit here and tell you people that I never knew a depression, because my grandmother, my mother, my father, my aunts, and uncles, and the environment that I was born and raised in, I was the only girl and they educated me, and I had all the necessities of life. The depression, as far as I'm concerned, I never knew a depression in my life. However, I'm sure there was, perhaps there was more of it.

C: Think about, in retrospect, Youngstown had the highest unemployment rate during the depression in any city other than Denver. So, why do you think your family wasn't impacted? Your mother had just died, right?

FC: My grandmother.

C: You're grandmother had just died, the store was having economic difficulties, if I understand you . . .

FC: I imagine, before or during the depression, my father and my uncles arranged, probably, to get other jobs in the meantime.

C: Did you hear any stories about that? What those other jobs were?

FC: Well, yeah, he worked for the railroad, he worked for the city.

(Tape Stopped)

(Tape begun again)

C: Could you give your full name for us again? We had some trouble with the tape.

FC: My name is Mary Frances Pecchio-Carroll and I am known to everyone in Brier Hill in this vicinity, and I guess Youngstown, as Cuccie. I got this name from my Uncle Tom Detesco when I was a little baby. Why? I don't know, but I have this name, it was just a nickname, and it stuck.

C: We were talking about like during the depression, and you really don't remember much about it . . .

FC: No, I don't, because we lived in a ten-room house, my father had a job and car. I went to Catholic school, my aunt and uncle lived with us. I didn't know there was a depression. Maybe, perhaps, because there was only three children in our family, where as other families had six or seven. Most families had more than four children.

C: Tell me what you did as a child.

FC: I went to school and I played games.

C: Tell me about where you went to school and who you played with and where they lived.

FC: I went to school at St. Ann's grade school on West Federal Street and I played with my cousins, the DeTescos, the Pecchio children, the Agnone children, all my first cousins. My cousin Danny Pecchio, who lives on Dearborn Street, just a couple blocks away from me. I took piano lessons, took dance lessons, went ice skating at Crandalls Park, that's in Brier Hill. I just had a wonderful life. I wish I could do it all over again.

C: So, you took these lessons during the depression?

FC: Yes, during the depression I had piano lessons, I had dance lessons, and my mother worked weekends and my father worked all the time. My mother worked part-time when she could, when work was available.

C: What kind of work did your mother do?

FC: My mother worked at the Ohio Employment office, which used to be downtown. She also worked part-time at the General Fireproofing; that was during the war.

C: Let's talk about that. Did your mother talk to you about how many women went to work during the depression, or during the war?

FC: A lot of women from Brier Hill went to work. My father died in December of 1943 and, before he passed away, she went to work part-time at the General Fireproofing and women would work two shifts a week, one day-time or one night-time, and he wasn't too happy with that.

C: How old was your father when he died?

FC: Forty-two years old.

C: And, was it disease or what?

FC: No, he just had kidney problems. He was forty-two years old, when he died.

C: So, the war years . . .

FC: And, after my dad passed away, my mother worked more steadily.

C: Down at the employment office?

FC: There, and the General Fireproofing.

C: And how long did she continue to work?

FC: Oh, I really can't give you an exact number, but it went off and on for quite awhile,

off and on for quite awhile. When I graduated school, she bought her own restaurant in Girard.

C: Where about in Girard?

FC: On State Street in Liberty.

C: That's not too far away.

FC: No, that's the neighborhood she was originally from.

C: You had two other brothers?

FC: Yes, two older brothers. I had two older brothers. My eldest brother, Dan, passed away ten years ago.

C: What did they do?

FC: He was a Mahoning County Dog Warden.

C: And your other brother?

FC: He was a town fireman.

C: So, he went to work for the city of Youngstown?

FC: Yes, my eldest brother went to work for the county, and my younger brother went to work for the city, and I'm the baby. I'm the caboose.

C: Let's talk about the 40's, after the war. You're still living in Girard?

FC: No, on Dearborn Street, but we had the restaurant in Girard.

C: Right. What's happened to the neighborhood? Anything change?

FC: It was pretty much the same. When the boys came home from service, most of them went to the college on the GI bill and became professionals. That was most of the young men in the neighborhood. I was in the block ahead of me, I was in the 2900 block, the 3000 block, the next block . . . I counted 28 to 32 doctors.

C: All medical doctors?

FC: Yes, all medical doctors, doctors or dentists. That's just doctors or dentists.

C: That's on Dearborn Street?

FC: That's on Dearborn Street. The first doctor to come out of Dearborn Street is my cousin, Andrew DeTesco, which they now own First Medical, him and his son. He was the very first doctor to come out of Dearborn Street, Andrew DeTesco.

C: What are some of the other names of people who have become doctors?

FC: The Broucli boy, three in the Bitonte family, three in the Rimedio family. Across the street from me was two doctor Criscone, Dr. James and Dr. John. They lived across the street. On West Federal Street, there was Dr. Bitonte, the dentist.

C: Were they all men?

FC: Yes.

C: Why do you think that happened?

FC: Because they went to school on the GI bill.

C: What about the girls?

FC: Some of the girls had nursing training. There was a Broucli girl, two of her cousins. Donna became a nurse. One of their cousins became a doctor. In my own family, there are eleven doctors that came from the Pecchio family. Did you want their names?

C: No, I just want to get an idea.

FC: They originally came from the Pecchio, Detesco, and Agnone family. Eleven doctors came out of those.

C: This particular street, people produced a lot of professionals?

FC: Because I think, as they were growing up, their parents taught them that, either they to go to college or they go to the mill. They had two options, here, where are you going to go when you get out of high school? That surrounded us, the mills.

C: How did you feel about the mills?

FC: Not very good.

C: Why is that?

FC: Well, because it was hard work, it was dirty. Men had to work two shifts, and you have to rise above it, you have to educate yourself to pursue other avenues, other than the mill. That would be the last resort, I would think I would teach my children to go to school, to educate themselves, and get ahead in life.

C: What happened when these folks moved into this sort of professional jobs? Did they move on?

FC: Yes.

C: Where did they go?

FC: They moved to Boardman, more than 50% of them moved to Boardman and established their offices in Boardman or the surrounding area. Or, they moved downtown. A lot of them, like the Bitonte boys, were at the Mahoning Bank for 50 years. A lot of the dentists or doctors moved to Boardman, or the west side, or the north side, predominantly downtown because downtown was very active in the forties, after the war, and the early fifties. Wherever was convenient for the bus services, for a lot of reasons, elderly people to get on the bus to go to their offices. Like, if a daughter had a family and moved out and couldn't take her mother to the dentists, her mother would get on the bus to go downtown to the dentist or doctor's office. That's the way it happened.

C: So people started to leave, people who moved out due to professional reasons, there are people who have got different types of backgrounds and trainings: Who is moving into the area? Are there more Italian immigrants than other ethnic groups?

FC: No, not now.

C: Well, I'm not talking about now. I'm not talking about the 40s and the 50s, when peoples started leaving Brier Hill. Partly, it's the people that have gotten more education and training, but partly why else?

P: I think the minorities moved in and the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Project developed.

C: So, Brier Hill housing project began developing postwar era in that area. What about Dearborn Street? What's happening there? Who was moving in?

FC: Mostly people were moving out.

C: Most people were leaving? Why were they moving out?

FC: Well, because of the Metropolitan Housing Development . . .

C: Do you part of it was racist?

P: No, I wouldn't say it was racist. People just thought they could better themselves basically, because they did have better jobs.

C: But the housing authority did have an impact?

FC: Oh, yes, I think it did. I think it had a great impact, and the people were getting older and the children were growing up and they're getting more educated and they wanted to get away from the mill and wanted to better themselves. Naturally, they bettered themselves as they got older: you don't go backward, you go forward.

C: So, by the 40s and the 50s, the neighborhood does become transitional?

FC: I believe so.

C: We also know that the highway has an incredible impact.

FC: Yes.

C: So, the neighborhood starts to decline at that period?

P: I saw Brier Hill in two different ways. I saw it prior to the war and after the war, and to me that was a dividing line. It certainly changed us, because people were working and there were better jobs and better education.

C: How much of that do you attribute that to the GI Bill of Rights?

P: Quite a bit. In my case, I went to college on the bill.

C: So, that's one of the main reasons Brier Hill changed?

P: Yes, I think that's correct.

FC: One of our uncles, his father was in the mill and his mother worked in the Hathaway Bakery, and were able to put their children through college, their son through college and their daughter through nursing training. After and during the war, the mothers went to work, and some of the fathers worked in the mill, and the mothers decided the children would go to college. Most of that contributed to the GI Bill.

C: The 60s, where were you living?

P: 1961 or 1962, I moved to the west side.

C: Why did you move?

FC: Because it was nicer. It was a nice neighborhood. It was a growing young neighborhood for people my age with children.

C: Where about on the West Side? Austintown yet?

FC: No, not Austintown yet. On the west side, off Thurber Lane.

C: West side of the farm?

P: Yes.

FC: Kirk Road, but not Austintown. St. Christine area. It was a nice young neighborhood, and most of the people I grew up with were moving out.

C: Where were they moving?

FC: Mostly to Girard, a lot of them went to the west side, some went out to Warner Road, some went to Liberty, but predominantly the west side.

P: There began to be housing developments and people were able to buy these because of low down payments, and it just looked good, so that's what we did.

C: It's very interesting to hear what you're saying. Part of their move is located near the church.

FC: We're very church-oriented, very much.

C: They're identifying places with churches, just by hearing you talk. Your memory is associated with churches.

FC: When you come from an Italian background, you're so well-oriented with family and religion, I think religion is first. In my house it was. My grandmother was a very strong, Catholic person. She didn't care what religion you were, as long as you were practicing it. We happened to be a predominantly Catholic-Italian neighborhood . . .

C: Was that St. Christine's?

FC: St. Anthony's in Brier Hill. She didn't care, as long as you practiced your religion, but we were Italian-Catholics, so it was her way or the highway.

C: So, there was a migration toward other parts of the city. Were there many people leaving the area?

P: To go to other cities or states? No, I don't think so.

FC: No, they went mostly to the west side and Liberty, some went to Hubbard, but mostly west side and Liberty.

C: So, you moved out to the suburbs . . . and what year was that? 1960?

FC: Well, I think it was 1960. You went before us. You were there in the 50s.

C: Were you influenced by the fact that he was out there?

FC: My cousin? No, I wasn't influenced because he was out there. It was a nice, young neighborhood and it was near a Catholic Church. And it was near Mill Creek Park, right across the street. All we had to do was walk across the street to get to the park, and that was a lot better than looking at the steel mill, and a lot cleaner: moving up the ladder.

C: Why was leaving Brier Hill a heartache?

FC: Oh, there were good, fond memories. You'll get a different opinion from everybody. "I was born and raised with you, I ran in your house, I ate with you, I slept with you, I played with you, I went to school with you, you were my friend. I never had to worry about anything or anybody. We never locked our doors in Brier Hill. First of all, we all had the same lock key to begin with, because I think there was only one lock in those days. It was so wonderful to have that comfort and that kindness and the manners and people were so warm and kind and understanding. Now, there were some that weren't, a few of them, I mean you can't see eye to eye with everyone. But, nine out of ten of them you did. You were welcomed, you were loved.

C: What happened when you moved to the suburbs? Did you have that?

FC: Yes, but not as much as you did where you were born and raised. There, we started to lock our doors. Half and half. It was nice, I don't know, people were more laid back, a little more hesitant on calling on your child. It all depends on who tells the story. That's my story: there was nothing finer. Now, some people will tell you about Brier Hill they couldn't stand it. I have a friend who was born and raised there and said she was so glad about getting out of Brier Hill, she hated Brier Hill. I said to her, "Shame on you for thinking that!" She was the eldest of three girls and she came from a very strict father, extremely too strict, and she was only allowed to go to football games or ice skating when she came to my house. He would never allow her off the front porch because he had three girls and were very protective of them. It all depends on who the parents were in the homes and where you're coming from. He allowed her to do many things in my home because we were allowed to go skating and to the movies.

C: So, it all depended on the parenting?

FC: The parenting, yes. This girl was not of Italian, but of Greek background. Her father was a wonderful man, and she had the nicest family that gave her the world, but he was very, very high-strung. But, when she came to my house, she got to do all these things, football games, ice skating, all that stuff, you know, fun. He was very strict. So, the mother would say to the father, "How do you expect these three girls to get married if you don't let them off the front porch?"

C: What was gained and what was lost by leaving Brier Hill?

FC: What was gained? We moved to a nicer part of town. We had access to everything, church, school, environment, politics, a move up the ladder. We were always making friends, but we kept our old friends. There was no friends like the old friends: the kids

you were born and raised with, and grew up with, and laughed with, and cried with, and shared good times and bad times.

C: So, there was an economic advancement in your move?

FC: Yes, that was a key factor. We go back there every August.

C: Let's talk about that. Why do you go back there?

FC: For memories, to treasure our roots and where we're fun.

C: Tell me what you feel when you go back there?

FC: I just feel wonderful. It feels good to be back in that area. It's so depressing, the condition of it now, the way the neighborhood looks. It's very depressing to see what has happened there. It's a heartache, really, because everyone had a nice home and a nice yard, and everything was so beautiful and clean, in spite of the mill. The people were extremely clean, that was number one, the first was God then being clean. I'm so happy to see people who I grew up with and played with and shared my youth with, because when I moved to the other neighborhood I met new people with different nationalities, which was wonderful, and you move on, but there's nothing like your roots, no matter where you go.

P: St. Anthony's Church was located in a different location than it is now, and that's one thing I miss. When I see the church, regardless of where it is now, I still remember the one on Federal Street. The priests were wonderful, they never asked for money and they spoke in Italian. That's the one thing I miss.

FC: Yes, that's true. It's where you're from, it's who raised you, it's your parents, it's your Italian background. What more can I say? Read page A-9 in yesterday's Vindicator. It's about a divorced professor from the Middle East and he went back home to live with his mother. She was washing his shirts and ironing and cooking his spaghetti. Another professor was on the phone with his mother and he said, "Ma, I'm 78 and you're still telling me what to do!" and she told him, "I'm 80 some years old and I will always tell you what to do because I'm the mother!" You should read that and include it.

C: Why do other people come back to Brier Hill, because their memories are different than yours?

FC: Because we've indoctrinated our children and our grandchildren how wonderful it was in our particular neighborhood. We were truly blessed. I have to honestly say that we were blessed, I feel that way and I know my brothers feel that way. We were blessed with wonderful parents and a sense of value and love and respect for each other and church. We clung on to that and we teach our children and our grandchildren that, too. When they ask, "Grandma, where did you live when you were little?" . . . (inaudible)

C: You have some things to show me?

FC: This boy is our cousin, who passed away a few years ago. He was in *The Hunt for Red October* and I have a thing here on how they made the movie in Brier Hill from 1983, June 5. I have some great pieces. That boy, his mother was German, and his father was Pecchio, Andrew.

C: His name was . . . ?

FC: Carmen.

C: So, his name was Carmen Pecchio but he went by Tony Peck?

FC: Yes, here's his resume.

C: When did he change his name?

FC: I don't know. They made him changed it for the movies.

C: When he moved to Hollywood he changed it to Anthony for the movies?

P: When he went to Hollywood he took my father's nickname and shortened his last name. Then he ran into trouble with Gregory Peck's son and, as a matter of fact, they were going to do a show about this very name change on Johnny Carson.

FC: Here's a more recent picture of him before he died. In July, he'll have died three years ago.

C: He was a German-Italian from Brier Hill?

FC: Yes.

C: This is very interesting. This is great.

FC: We had one boy in our family who made the movies, and another girl who was Miss Ohio in the Miss America Pageant.

C: Brier Hill is an important part of the history of our town.

FC: Yes. There's so many nice, Italian people that only had two choices after high school: go to college or go to the mill, and that mill didn't look too nice.

C: It did to a lot of people.

FC: Well, yeah. Don't misunderstand me, it didn't look good to me. I was a girl.

C: One area that we did not talk about was the question of the mob influences in that particular neighborhood. What type of mob influences were there early on?

P: Davis's, remember Davis's Store, or the bank? We used to play football just about everyday after school, except on Saturdays when all the police cars were lined up, getting gifts. That's one of the things I remember.

C: What street?

P: They were on Federal Street, but moved down to Davis Lane, a side street.

C: Do you know much information on what happened during the prohibition era?

P: I really don't. In fact, I was going to ask you about that. There was a big business there.

C: What was it?

P: There was bootleggers, I think.

C: There was a lot of bootlegging.

FC: There was. People made a good living in other ways, that's what I meant.

C: What did people think about organized crime?

P: People thought about it about as much as they do today, especially among Italians, it seemed to be at least a way of making a living, because during the days of the depression it was tough to earn money.

FC: Well, if John F. Kennedy could do it, why couldn't the Italians?

C: So, what Frances talks about not knowing . . . You have more vivid memories?

FC: How can I tell you a story when I don't know? I had baby dolls, I had clothes, I had a bicycle. Some people didn't even have a telephone in there house, and I did. See, I didn't know there was a depression.

C: I'm just repeating what you said.

FC: My girlfriends would say to me, when their dads worked in the mill, sometimes they'd have butter and sometimes they didn't, and I looked at them like they had two heads. What are you talking about?

C: You had butter all the time?

FC: Yeah! I had a big tablecloth on the table.

[. . . inaudible . . .]

C: Alright, so you were very much aware of the mob influences, but you say it was fairly acceptable?

P: Yes. I don't think families minded.

C: What were the families involved?

FC: I don't want to know their names! I don't care what they did, they were good people.

C: Why were they good people?

FC: Why wouldn't they be good people? They were good people. They were kind. The parents were generous, kind, and loving. They would help clean your house during a disaster, a sickness, or a funeral, or whatever. What the boys did for a living was their business, but they came from good homes, and the boys were good, too.

C: How were they good?

FC: Like I said, they were kind, generous, if someone needed their water turned on, they would pay the bill.

C: During the depression?

FC: Yes, during the depression. They had a little more access to money with the business they were in, and they paid a lot of people's bills. Not ours, we didn't need them. Where they lived in Brier Hill was more than a mile away from us. They were very kind and generous to people who had their electricity or water shut off and who couldn't pay for it themselves.

C: And they were like family or friends?

FC: Yes. My grandmother was very kind to people. She gave out food to people, my grandma Pecchio.

[. . . inaudible . . .]

C: Do you remember the Jennings family, just from your memories?

FC: Well, our aunt, our father's sister, married a Jennings, whose real name was DeGino. But, they're from Niles. Only one Jenning married into this family. They had a gambling place in Niles. See, the time and era was right, people made a living out of that. [. . . inaudible . . .] How did you get the meat on this family?

C: Listen, I'm studying this era and I can't go back. I've got to understand the ideas about the mob. I've read all the books on Brier Hill and the mob and I've interviewed people and found both good and bad. I want to hear your stories, because I have some ideas about that.

FC: By the time we were born, it was pretty much over. I was over a year old when she died.

C: What year was that?

FC: 1929. It was over. How would we know?

C: What's the story behind the grocery store?

FC: She would have the grocery store, and she would make wine and sell it, and then she'd build a house and rent it out to Jennings, and build another house and rent it out to Don. This little old lady gets in from Italy, she had seven children, two are married and five were in the house, she had to move. You have to give credit to this woman.

P: Growing up in Brier Hill, things were tough. People ask you questions and you don't know anything and you don't know how to answer.