

Lucy Damiani April 7, 1972

7:00 - 8:30

1. Joseph Natale Giovanella

2. none

3. widower wife deceased 1970

4. 106 Earl Street

5. 679-8247

6. Born Dec. 3rd, 1896 - 76 yrs. old

7. Taino como Prov. (now known as prov. of Veresa) Italy

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9. Italy

10. now 5th 1912

11. on ship Province from LeHavre France, it was a French steamship line. The "Province" was one of the bigger faster liners, it was sunk during the war 1915.

12. We were 8 days crossing then landed in New York, 1912. Came to Cobalt by way of New York Toronto and North Bay, Cobalt by rail from Bay no road no cars

13. I came with my mother my sister, I was 16 at the time, and my father was already here he had come over in 1897.

14. Started working in a mine a few months after I arrived.

J. In 1918 I was married to Beatrice Gamlin of Ville Marie. I met her in Cobalt she was working as a housemaid. Her family was one of the first pioneers to come to Ville Marie they came from "Palycarpe des Saint" Quebec

16. Retired mill hand

17. widower

18. It was a lively town full of bob nailed boots and flannel shirt miners -their families at that time there wasn't just one or two families move in They used to come gangs of 40 or 50 families at a time. No wonder they built these shacks in a hurry, they needed a place to stay right away.

19. It had dirt roads wooden sidewalks frame homes, some were just shacks, supposed to have been temporary homes some of these still stand on their original sight.

20. The family and I came over from Italy to live with my father. He came in 1897 and made a home then sent for us.

21. Mining mostly we had a saw mill at Moose Lake which was later moved to West Cobalt. My sister Lind who lived at home with us until she married Anthony Rava in 1922. He was also a miner and they lived at the Buffalo Mine Property - it was like a small community out there connected with West Cobalt they had a large ball field a few stores and a mine hall or mess. In 1924 the Rava's bought a large two storey frame dwelling with glassed in verandah and three rooms upstairs 4 downstairs this was on Earl Street where we are living now.

22. Worked 10 hours a day when I first started in the mine this was for 5 months then I worked as a mill hand until my retirement. Our pay was \$1.75 a day and machine men were paid about \$2.00 a day. There was a union even in those days and the Union Hall was situated where the present Recreation Office is. There was a strike and after it was over the men got a raise of 25¢ a day. I bought a house on Earl Street and lived here until 1928 when I moved to South Porcupine.

23. The mines were starting to close so I went to South Porcupine to work. I was employed at the Dome Mine for three years from there I went to Preston East Dome until it closed in 1948 because of a fire. I went to Hoyle Mine Co. owned by Ventures and I was in charge of the mechanics. My boss was Jack Dunlop who was until his death last year retired and living in Haileybury. In 1949 I came back to Cobalt and worked at the Refinery then I worked for Bill Taylor at the Mensilvo Mines went to Giroux Lake for a few months before started at the 104 Mill under Harry Bambrick when it burnt down I retired.

24. We had water in the homes when I bought my house it was only in the early days perhaps early 1900s that they bought pails of water from a vender who went around with tanks on his wagon.

25. There was electricity in the home. We have the necessities and commodities common nowadays radio refrigerator, electric stove, iron, taster, kettle, TV, a new gas furnace installed a few years ago

28. We used to cook on a wood stove then we went to oil, two years ago we bought an electric stove which we now use for cooking

29. In the old days it was a big Quebec heater in the centre of the living room with stovepipes running all through the house, now it's a modern gas stove.

30. There were all kinds of stores on both sides of Lang Street right from the bridge at North and to the South end of town. It certainly was a different picture coming back in 1949 from about 100 stores to some 25 left here now there are about 10 left.

31. We used to play horseshoes, bocce, card games, that sometimes went all night long. There were many drinking places, shows, halls for dancing. We used to get big tent circuses in here at North Cobalt with live animals and trapeze artists these were a big thing. In winter there was always skating, skiing, sleigh riding and we used to go back and forth to the homes for cards dancing, singing.

32. Not many sports other than horseshoes and bocce

33. just trains and horses

36. Dr. Schmidt

37. There was a Red Cross hospital where Buffam's is today. It was a two storey building with about 10 rooms downstairs and about 4 or 5 large rooms upstairs

38. Both Charlie & Mario were born in Cobalt

39. Both boys went to High School

40. At about age 19 they started out on their own. Mario got a job at Hollinger Mine and was a hockey player for Hollinger team. Charlie went to School for radio technical in Timmins. Later on he went to Toronto and took a TV technical course.

41. We have always dressed in just a plain shirt and trouser.

42. On Sundays if something special was on we would dress up in suits. I remember when we used to drive to North Bay to see the first talkie movies I think about 1927 and it was something to go that far in those day- There were also about 7 or 8 cars in the Tri-Town area

Highlights

Jack Murphy from Haileybury used to drive one and it was also rare to see a woman driver the police used to stop her for speeding often. Then there was a truck in town and he got a contract delivering for O'Gorman coal dealer. Mr. -Rowdon our local hardware merchant went to England for a visit and to take his car over with him he had to have it sent by flat car on the railroad to North Bay the Ferguson Highway hadn't opened up yet. I worked in the mines for just a few months before going to mill work but I found the mines were fairly good for working conditions because even in those days they had mine safety inspectors

On July 1st there was always big drilling contests going on at the West Cobalt field it used to attract miners from the area Kirkland and Timmins also we used to have fun in those days. Sunday was always a big day. Horseshoes, baseball, mucking drill contests, picnics always something doing.

I don't know what can be done to help Cobalt but it sure needs a shot in the arm. I've seen it when it was good and bad but this last recession we went through I think is the worst of course I think part of it is the general economy of the country. In the last few weeks I've heard encouraging rumors the mines are getting a grant and this will help some of them with low grade ore to operate

at a profit. The Refinery is opening up again price of silver has gotten a little boost so I think we are over the hump.

Definitely we need a subsidy for silver like Timmins is getting for gold and Elliot Lake is getting for uranium this will help our economy. There is still much silver to be mined.

They should have never leased properties to private leasers. They took out the best of veins and left the property in shambles when they were finished. They didn't care if it was left without proper stoping etc., when they were through pining at the silver they just threw everything back in & left, now over the years these holes have frozen up closed up and it would be very hard to open them up again. Tourist trade should definitely be encouraged but lets educate our business public or those with facilities for the tourist not to fleece them as the saying goes. Many places have filled their own tourist boom by doing this.

Just to the south of us in Temagami

as a perfect example - the tourist will just go somewhere else where he is well treated.

Also more advertising and have capable personnel in charge of Tourist information Booths. I have been told by friends who came here and wanted to see sights fish etc.

They stopped and inquired downtown no one could tell them where to go for mine sights fishing & picnicking, so they went up to

Kirkland and stopped here for a visit on the way back. Have all kinds of folders available to travelers make sure publicity gets in all the papers, not just local ones. I think its very nice to see the downtown renovation program old sites are being removed new parks going up we have a trailer park, new subdivision with lovely homes new parking spaces are available. This is all very good for the town a credit to our Mayor and Council we should carry on and keep the best old town alive. It's always been a good place to live, I like it here. I can drive to a spot for fishing and hunting without going too far. We have a fair rate in our taxes good snow removal, garbage collection and I would like to see all this kept up.