

J. MORAN: Now, before we had trouble with our tape, we were talking about union activities at F.A. Patrick. Now, after F.A. Patrick went out of business, we talked about the fact that you went to work for another clothing firm, another garment factory, and you stayed at that garment factory until 196...

FEDO: Eight.

J. MORAN: '68. Now, was that firm unionized?

FEDO: When we come here it was not. In fact, I understood that in order to get away from the union that's originally come to Duluth. It's going to settle this little garment factory in Duluth. So, after I went to work for them there was a -- may be a year, a year and a half, we were approached by organizers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. We were approached -- I was approached even at my home asking me if I would like to help and organize the union and they also told me or explained to me why that little shop had moved to Duluth from beneath the St Paul. It was because they thought that they could run away from being organized. So, I don't know. I was pretty young then yet and to make a long story short I says alright, I says I will go along. So I did. I helped to organize, I and another friend of mine. It was two of us, two men to begin with. Then as time went on we got a group of women too and we held meetings, sudden secret meetings that finally, to make a long story short, we did, we organized the shop.

J. MORAN: So, you were an active member in the organization of the union?

FEDO: Yes I was.

J. MORAN: Would you say that many of the Italians who had previously worked for F.A. Patrick also worked at this firm?

FEDO: No, no. Not too many to -- not too many worked for this firm here. There was I'll say about six or seven women that were Italian that worked at old F.A. Patrick's, plus me. May be there was -- that's all probably as far as the Italians [unintelligible - 00:02:34] was about six or seven people that actually there and many of us worked out there for many years.

J. MORAN: Would you?

FEDO: No, I do not know. No doubt they just found other jobs other than the clothing industry and some started up a little like a little tailor shop. In fact there was two, three of them that started up like that. Repair work, not actually tailor work, but like a seamstress or repair work in other words.

J. MORAN: You told me of working on the boats when you were only 16. Now, how did that come about?

FEDO: Well, one night I was at post, I was packing papers then because I peddled papers more on the ships than I did on the streets for the simple reason is because I was making much more money for each paper that I sold that I could sell down the street. I was getting five cents for each paper on the ships where on the streets I was getting two cent so.

J. MORAN: Well, now why is that? Why wouldn't the paper go for one rate?

FEDO: Well, because who would want to go chasing? It's miles.

J. MORAN: Okay.

FEDO: When you would go from one dock to another. I witnessed as much many times. Either I used to cross the bridge pay a toll. If I had enough papers there was enough ships that were pretty close to the other side of the bridge, the Interstate Bridge I believe that was the name of it. Well, the great northern railway. I didn't went as far as there so would you go? I could do just as well on the streets and plus I never had to go hungry. I always got my dinners or suppers what have you for only a little paper.

J. MORAN: On the ships.

FEDO: On the ships. So, that...

J. MORAN: So, they approached you then to serve as a...

FEDO: Then they approached me. When I was on this certain ship of which -- by the name it happened to be Duluth. It was a -- it belonged to the [unintelligible -- 00:04:53] line.

J. MORAN: [Unintelligible -- 00:04:54]

FEDO: See they had ocean ships too. [00:05:00] So, I was approached in the galley or kitchen if I wanted to go to work. They needed a porter and I says, "Well, I don't know." I says, "I'll go home, I'll ask my mother and father." He says, "Well hurry up. We'll be here for three four hours yet. Go to [unintelligible - 00:05:17]." And so I did. And when I come home I told my mother. She was very much surprised, but she didn't even know the difference between a boat and a river. But she just told me to be careful and I says, "All right ma." So, I did and I worked for the rest of the season. I laid up the ship in Buffalo, New York, and I -- in fact I stayed over with this family, they were Irish people, Fitzpatrick was the name. And I come home, I really believe it had to be sometime in -- about the 1st of March of 1919 when I come home.

J. MORAN: Now, you mention that they had taken advantage of you.

FEDO: Well, I think they took advantage of me. I found about it years later because I always have been -- was a good worker, I am to date. And being that I was a young -- a boy I was, that's all I was, they -- I really believe they took advantage of me by the head steward when he says to me, he says that being that they helped me do some of my work, which I really believe they didn't, that if I would kind off kick back, in other words, \$15 per month. And I was forced to give this to the second cook. But now while I am thinking about it I wouldn't be a bit surprised that it was split up in three levels, head steward and the -- because I work but the following year I was on the great lakes also and I didn't even do as much work as I did on that steamer in Duluth and still I was paid the same amount.

J. MORAN: What nationality were most of the ships personnel?

FEDO: Well, it was a mixture. Yeah. There was even some Swedish people from Norway that sailed on the great lakes during the summer. In fact Norwegians also. I got a family they wanted even to take me to Norway one time, two of them. And I didn't go but they were so nice they wanted to take me to Norway and then from there on the way that we could ship

back on the great lakes for the summer, and in the winter time go sailing on the salt water, what they used to call salt water. But there was four others. There was Greeks, there was French, and there was Italians and Irish. I will say that there was a very mixture practically the League of Nations.

J. MORAN: Now, did you send the money home to your parents?

FEDO: Yes I did. I received -- I was receiving \$60 per month now. The \$60 I sent \$55 to my parents and the rest, the \$5 I had was for little things that I thought -- like I said I was still a young lad and maybe I would buy, well, maybe a pack of cigarettes because I started to smoke then. I was going to be a big boy. I started to smoke and not much. Maybe it was -- or if I went to a certain port or even when we come back to Duluth, I would hire a cab to take me home instead of walking from the docks. So, I used that \$5 more for that because otherwise -- other than that I didn't need any more money.

J. MORAN: No. Then after you went to work at F. A. Patrick did you continue to donate?

FEDO: After I went back to work at F. A. Patrick's, yes, I did. I did send -- I did give money to my parents. Like I said did pay for room and board. I actually gave them a certain amount I kept myself. Maybe to begin with I was working only time work and I wasn't making much money. I started at Patrick's to begin with was running a freight elevator up and down. It was -- I started in 1919. I was getting \$19 a week. And on that \$19 a week I think I gave my parents \$15, \$16 of that.

J. MORAN: Now, I am not sure if we got this on the other tape or not. How many years did you actually go to school in this country?

FEDO: I actually went to school...

J. MORAN: Till what grade?

FEDO: I started -- I went through -- I graduated from the sixth grade.

J. MORAN: In the sixth grade, and that was not a catholic school?

FEDO: No, it was a public school the old F.A. -- I mean the old Adams one of the old schools in the city of Duluth. The old Adams school.

J. MORAN: Yes.

FEDO: That was on 18th Avenue Western [unintelligible - 00:09:57] Street.

J. MORAN: Now, when you started school were you speaking English at that time?

FEDO: [00:10:00] No English whatsoever.

J. MORAN: Were you speaking English fluently when you finished?

FEDO: Yes, I was. Yes, I was. I was -- in fact I was speaking just as good then as I am right today.

J. MORAN: Were there many other students in your class...?

FEDO: There were not too many, but there could have been. I remember then at the time there was -- I would say there was about five.

J. MORAN: Who didn't speak English?

FEDO: No, they spoke English. It was only I and my brother didn't speak it because these other four or five, they were actually were born here.

J. MORAN: But they were Italians?

FEDO: They were Italians, yes.

J. MORAN: How about other nationals, were there others...?

FEDO: There was a mixture.

J. MORAN: Who did not speak English?

FEDO: There was -- no. There was -- yes. I beg your pardon. There was a young man I think he come from Greece. He was a young man, he wasn't a boy, because when he come they put him in the same grade as me. That was at the time around the third or the fourth grade. He came from Greece and he was probably about 18, 19, possibly 20 years old, and I really believe he come to school to learn more of the English language the fastest way. Because he only was in my grade maybe about two years more and then either he quit or he went up because he was a smart young man. It was the English, his speech that wasn't there.

J. MORAN: Did you experience any discrimination that you can remember?

FEDO: No. The only thing that could have -- no, we get along just fine.

J. MORAN: Did they make fun of you because you couldn't speak English?

FEDO: No, no nothing like that. In fact my brother and I, and even my sisters, when we started school those children then, the same age or younger, they took a liking to us and we were -- it's called bragging, but I really believe that we were not only liked, we were loved, and we got along just beautiful with boys and girls.

J. MORAN: Now, you told me that your family belonged to St. Peter's Parish even though actually you really **[unintelligible - 00:12:34]**.

FEDO: No, no. We always belonged to St. Peters Parish until two years after I got married.

J. MORAN: And you would have been in the parish when the church was down at 11th Avenue West. Do you remember the [vestures] or the outdoor designs?

FEDO: I remember because I was into that. Yes, we had whatever doings to raise funds. I was one of those that was there constantly at every like a bazaar or what have you. And I also -- we also formed a band, we called it the Italian Band, and I go to that. We learned and we were very good. And some of these what they call saints days like Saint [Roch] and saint what have you, Saint Peter, we held what they called a festival and our band donated the services. So, it was really -- looking back now I think it was a very, very nice thing to happen, but I was very active in helping out. It was nothing, like I say, for my dad and I to walk miles to visit Italian families, to raise funds to help the entire church. And I even worked to -- until the new church was raised. I worked up till then either to raise funds or did something because that church was practically built about 90% where people donated the services.

J. MORAN: The new church?

FEDO: Yeah, the new church.

J. MORAN: Did you belong to the new church?

FEDO: No, no. I did not belong to the new church because I already -- when the new church come up I already had joined the Saint G Parish church. That's a French church. We only joined just after I got married because it

was close. But I still, after I got married, I still attended the St. Peters church. **[00:15:00]** That was our church. In fact that is where I got married, St. Peters church.

J. MORAN: Was your wife Italian?

FEDO: No, she was Polish.

J. MORAN: Now where did you live after you were married?

FEDO: After I was married I moved just across the street from where I am living right today. The house number was 2724. I lived there for a year, then from there on I moved maybe about eight times. After I moved away from was the first year and of those eight times, I don't think I moved more than four blocks away from one block to six blocks apart. Then until I finally, that was around 1938, I bought my present home that I am living in right now, and that is just -- and my house number is 4749 so you see how close it is from where I actually began?

J. MORAN: Yes. Now, there aren't really that many Italians that live in this immediate area, are there?

FEDO: No, no. There was a family up the street up here, but he passed away.

J. MORAN: But the largest concentration then would have been 17th Avenue Western?

FEDO: 11th Avenue Western.

J. MORAN: Well, I mean like between here and there.

FEDO: Oh yeah 17th Avenue Western **[unintelligible - 00:16:22]**.

J. MORAN: Right, right.

FEDO: New Street

J. MORAN: Now, what did your family think of Father [Zuli], how about your parents?

FEDO: Well, he was a priest, he was well known, but he was a strict man that was mostly his way or none. And...
[Pause for 6 seconds.]

J. MORAN: Yeah, you were talking about...

FEDO: Well, yes Father [Zuli] my sister was to be baptized, at the St. Peter's church, but being that Father [Zuli] had his way and no other way, his way was right, he thought -- my father and Father [Zuli] got into a little

argument on account of the sponsor or the godfather. So, in the long run my father didn't even try to have the baby baptized at St. Peter's church. He went to that Polish church, St. Mary's church, which is a Polish church next to St Mary's hospital in Duluth here. But as far as Father [Zuli], he was a smart man, but...

J. MORAN: Did your parents go back to the church after that or was there a permanent rift there?

FEDO: Well, they did attend the parish. They didn't break away from the parish, no. [Unintelligible - 00:17:59] right now, no. They didn't break away from the parish, they still attended mass.

J. MORAN: Some families were antagonized to the point where they actually broke...

FEDO: They broke away from there, yeah, because Father [Zuli] now that we are talking about him, I remember a little bit more and more. He was liked by some, but he was disliked by more than liked him.

J. MORAN: Do you recall anything like a petition that was circulated in 1920 by some of the older members of the parish trying to get rid of Father [Zuli].

FEDO: Yes, I do remember that.

J. MORAN: Do you remember anything about the petition?

FEDO: Well, no. I do remember that they wanted to -- they did want to get rid of him. The majority of the parishioners actually got fed up with Father [Zuli] and eventually they did get rid of him. And he went I believe to [unintelligible - 00:18:55], then from [unintelligible - 00:18:57] I think he went to two [unintelligible - 00:19:00].

J. MORAN: He went to Hibbing [unintelligible - 00:19:10].

FEDO: Was that Hibbing? Well, anyway, he travelled a little bit, then finally in his later years he was brought back to Duluth and I think that's where he passed away from.

J. MORAN: Yes. Actually I think it was about -- it was in the 30's when...

FEDO: Something like that,

J. MORAN: ...Father [unintelligible - 00:19:21].

FEDO: That's right. He is the one that married me.

J. MORAN: Now, how about when he came back later, you were not in the church at that time. Did you hear...

FEDO: No, I was not.

J. MORAN: Did you hear much about Father [Zuli]?

FEDO: No, I didn't hear much about Father [Zuli], I never asked, and in fact I don't think I was much interested. Maybe that is the reason that I never asked. But I did know where he was before he came back and I do remember when he came back, and I don't think I've ever attended a mass while he was actually the father, the priest of St. Peter's church after that.

J. MORAN: Now, you were in the parish -- now Duluth church, you say you weren't in Duluth church at all **[unintelligible - 00:20:03]**?

FEDO: **[00:20:04]** Not as a parishioner.

J. MORAN: Not as a parishioner. Can you recall having heard or know anything of the reason why once the new church was built on 3rd Street, why they discontinued the bazaars outside and **[unintelligible - 00:20:16]**? They continued to hold them in the basement, but it was a watered down version.

FEDO: Well, I tell you I think that's a good question, and I think I can answer that. You see after the new church was built the [band] was disorganized already.

J. MORAN: Yes. I think it was 1826 or '27...

FEDO: Something like that. What was the question that you were asking? Would you please repeat?

J. MORAN: We were talking about why they watered down the bazaar and discontinued...

FEDO: The reason they discontinued is because it could not be done like at the old church. The old church we had a band, that's the attraction for outside doings like a picnic, and if you have music you draw people, which we did. It was nothing to see hundreds of people sitting in the yard and all over their homes on their porches, all the way up **[unintelligible - 00:21:10]**. Well, out there we were already disorganized. We had no

band so I would believe that we had a lot, 90% of the reason why, but we still held bazaars and this -- and I worked with them even then. Even those later years I still was called. Even though I did not belong to the St. Peter's parish, I still went up there to give a hand selling tickets, whatever work was to be done.

J. MORAN: That's very interesting. **[Unintelligible - 00:21:44]** suggested that was the reason.

FEDO: Well, I'm glad that -- I told you, I said, "Gee, that's a nice question," but that's the reason it was. It was because we didn't have a band no more and people scattered here and there and everywhere, you know.

J. MORAN: Now, did your father belong to any [00:22:00] societies, did he belong to Sons of Italy?

FEDO: He -- my father John [Peter], yes, he did belong to the -- it was a lodge, the Sons of Italy lodge, and later on in life I belong to it too.

J. MORAN: Now your father died in 1945.

FEDO: '45.

J. MORAN: Can you recall exactly when the Sons of Italy was disbanded **[unintelligible - 00:22:20]**?

FEDO: No, I cannot. That's how -- to go back it's many, many years. I do not remember if the Sons of Italy were still -- I would say it still was going when my father died. I still believe that the lodge was still in existence.

J. MORAN: Some people seem to think that it broke up just after the war. Some people think it broke up around 1942.

FEDO: Well, it was in the 40s I know. Somewhere in the 40s between the -- I don't think it was any later than -- I don't think it was -- either close to 1950, maybe 1946, '45, '44.

J. MORAN: I think you might be right. I think most people place it just at the end of the war.

FEDO: Yeah, yeah, because I'm pretty sure my father...

J. MORAN: Were you in it at that time?

FEDO: Yes, I was in it, but I do not remember when -- what year it was that it broke up.

J. MORAN: Did you serve in the service?

FEDO: No I did not. I did not serve in the service [unintelligible - 00:23:23]. I was one year too young for the draft and I was one year too old for the second war, so I did not serve.

J. MORAN: Did either of you belong to the Italian American Club?

FEDO: I belong to them.

J. MORAN: You belong to the Italian American...

FEDO: Yeah. My dad did not because the Italian American Club was not in existence then [unintelligible - 00:23:46]. If it was it was not in Duluth. I cannot remember, unless maybe [unintelligible - 00:23:54] might have had it, but [unintelligible - 00:23:57].

J. MORAN: Roy [Croschendo] was very active in the group.

FEDO: Well, that was a scientific...

J. MORAN: No, no that was the Italian --- see they're two different organizations.

FEDO: Yes, they have to be.

J. MORAN: The Sons of Italy was the mutual benefit society, in other words there were a few more benefits.

FEDO: Yes, that's certain.

J. MORAN: Now, the Italian American Club was basically an Americanization club. In other words, they held classes in English, they encouraged [unintelligible - 00:24:22] encouraged Italians to get citizenship [unintelligible - 00:24:25].

FEDO: I understand what you're trying to tell me, but I do not remember of the Italian American club. And that's funny if I cannot remember.

J. MORAN: So, then you did not belong to the Italian American Club?

FEDO: No.

J. MORAN: You belonged to the Sons of Italy?

FEDO: Just the Sons of Italy.

J. MORAN: The Italian American Club was not confined to that line down and that was it, was one was operative issued a lot of account, that wasn't the first thing that everyone was doing?

FEDO: Well, that was the same thing with the Italian lodge.

J. MORAN: With the Sons of Italy?

FEDO: The Sons of Italy lodge. That took all Italians from **[unintelligible - 00:24:56]** all the way to **[unintelligible - 00:24:57]** Park. It was not just solely for us people around coastal **[unintelligible - 00:25:03]**. **[00:25:04]** That was city wide too. That's the reason I cannot remember of the Italian American Club. If it was it was very small.

J. MORAN: Were you aware, for instance, of **[unintelligible - 00:25:15]** the northern Italians?

FEDO: Yes, I was aware of that. I never joined it, but I've got a brother, I think he belongs to it, and I know many, many Italians who actually belong to it even today.

J. MORAN: Well, **[unintelligible - 00:25:32]**.

FEDO: The **[unintelligible - 00:25:37]** something else. I'm sorry that was.

J. MORAN: You can never know **[unintelligible - 00:25:42]**. Okay, we'll talk about that. At what point did your father become a citizen or did he ever?

FEDO: My father tried to become a citizen. He went to school for two or three winters, semester or whatever you want to call it, but he never had a confident speech. He could read and write, he had a little education, but what he learned while he was in Italy night school. He could write letter, he could speak well, that the English language is one of the worst languages any man or woman could ever want to learn, and he had an awful time with that. So, he failed, of which he said, "I never fail." He said a gap, whether he was right or wrong, and I considered those stories later on about me. I was...

J. MORAN: Did your mother ever try?

FEDO: No, my mother never tried, but my father did. He wanted to be American until let's say two years he went to night school.

J. MORAN: Do you remember when that might have been?

FEDO: That could have been about 1919 and 1920, something like that.

J. MORAN: And then the May was?

FEDO: May the 1921, one of those -- two of those date. He become the first so he says why, because he couldn't answer **[unintelligible - 00:27:13]**.

J. MORAN: So, he never tried again?

FEDO: Not after those two years. He never tried, you know, **[unintelligible - 00:27:20]**.

J. MORAN: Now, it's my understanding that had your father become a citizen before he got into this country, you would have become a citizen at your age?

FEDO: Before we come to this topic, that the last person?

J. MORAN: I think Tammy was the...

FEDO: Yeah, there had to be that age.

J. MORAN: Yeah, so then you yourself didn't have to become a citizen...

FEDO: Yes I did.

J. MORAN: And when did you do that?

FEDO: I will say that must have been about -- I go to school also. I went to school two winters too. Even though I had a sixth grade education, my English was plain. I knew what I was talking about, but would you believe it, these men that couldn't even speak as good English as me, that something to say it was first. He was a French person. The first year when the examination come along, well, everybody, you know, people that could hardly speak English could hardly -- had a hard time. They were asked maybe -- they were asked many questions too, but whether they answered **[unintelligible - 00:28:33]** it didn't make much difference, but they were asked, but maybe out of ten questions or out of six to seven questions, they might have answered one if they answered one correctly. Yet these very people that went up to the -- in front of a judge and this examiner you call them, and the teacher, **[unintelligible - 00:29:01]**. He passed it. You get what I mean? I've seen one then, he was a **[unintelligible - 00:29:10]** and was a huge man, an old man. So, this

man, here I forget his name, like I say the examiner he [unintelligible - 00:29:19] Russian he says, [unintelligible - 00:29:22]. His taken it up and he says, "Look at that map." He says, "Can you point, show me where you come from." Well, you know, Europe is up, Mediterranean, then there is Asia, Africa. This man actually couldn't even tell by looking at the map, he couldn't show. And he was looking way down to the south peak of Africa and he's says, "There." Everybody laughed. They shouldn't laugh, but [unintelligible - 00:29:53] that's, you know. So, when my turn come, well, he passed like everybody else did [unintelligible - 00:29:58].

J. MORAN: [00:30:00] I think we should turn this off.

J. MORAN: Okay. Now, what happened when you came up before the examiner?

FEDO: Well, I was called and I come facing the judge. He was, what I believe, one of the finest judges. He was a Federal Judge, if I'm not mistaken. Judge Pestler was his name. But, the examiner, I cannot remember his name. My teacher -- I called him my teacher -- his name was White. Anyway, I started to be questioned. This examiner asked me many, many questions, much more than he did anybody else. It got to the point I was up there probably about 20 minutes when others were there only about six or seven minutes to answer one question or to answer or not then he'd pass them. He kept me up there for about 20 minutes -- maybe longer -- until, being a young man, wondering why should he ask me so many questions and I answered them all perfectly. Until he came to the point he asked me a question which I learned while I was in school. He says to me, he says, "Who was the President," -- I believe that was it. "Who was the President during the Civil War?" I got nervous. I knew it. I knew the question, but I got so nervous and I stood there fumbling and everything else. I did not answer the question. Then he says to me, he says, "Well," -- it was broken English like I said. Here's an examiner that should be brilliant and in his broken English he says to me, "Val, I think," he says, "you better go to

school one more year.” I thought to myself, “That man is out of his mind.” I think I was about 20-years-old then or 21. I said, “All right. I would never.” He says, “You went to school. You should know all that questions.” Do you think that is fair? I don’t think so.

J. MORAN: Do you think that, again, that you were being discriminated against?

FEDO: I believe it. In that case, yes.

J. MORAN: Because you were Italian. Did you go back, then, to try to get your citizenship the next year?

FEDO: As I walked towards the rear of the hall, Mr. White, who was my teacher - - or whatever you call it -- he raced after me and put his arm around my shoulder and he says, “Mr. Fida,” he says, “What happened?” “Well,” I says, “You was right there yourself.” I says, “You heard.” I says, “Mr. White,” I says, “that wasn’t fair.” I says, “As you know, I answered maybe -- at least -- 20 questions or more correctly,” but I says, “About President Lincoln, that question: Who was the President at the Civil War,” I say, “I knew it, but I got nervous.” So, being that he was a very kindly man, a very good person to have as an instructor or what have you, he says to me, he says, “Mr. Fida, I’ll tell you what.” He says, “You don’t have to come to school next winter, but if you happen to be downtown,” which the school then classes were held at the old YMCA, he says, “If you happen to be down here,” he said, “just drop in. You don’t have to attend the class. I’ll put you down as an attendant.” So, during the whole winter, of which I should have been there all winter maybe about 20 times, I was there only two times. Then, in the spring, I get a card that was examinations for the papers at Old Central High School and I was asked to come for the examination. I was in doubt. I was saying to myself, “Should I go?” because I didn’t go to school all that winter except just for those two visits you might as well say. So, I thought to myself, I says, “What have I got to lose?” So, I went to Central High School. **[00:05:03]** I went to Central High School. I was the very first one there and I sat at the last seat in a row. While there was about 50 or 60 people who come there for their

class, I was there early. It was about eight o'clock. Then the other people start coming. So, I sat there and I sat and I sat. Nobody bothered calling my name, but they did call all the rest of them. Me, being the first and everybody had gone home and I wasn't even called yet.

Then I thought, "Gee whiz. There's something wrong." So, they were all there -- the same judge, the same Mr. White -- he did see me -- and the examiner. So, I comes up to him, I says, "See," I says, "I received a card," I says, "to come here for exam," I says, "and I was the first one here." I says, "Everybody's gone home." I says, "I'm not called." And Mr. White gets up and he says, "Oh, Mr. Fida, I'm sorry." And he told them, he says, "Yes," he says, "I sent Mr. Fida a card. I'm very, very sorry." But I wasn't even on the list. So, then they thought, well, as long as I was there, I received the card, so they were going to cross-examine me. So, then this examiner looked at me and he looked at the judge and he looked at Mr. White and he says, "All right." He says, "Sit now." They were going to test me. So, I sits down and the first question they ask -- he asked me, he says, "Do you read the newspapers?" I say yes. He says, "Do you know Senator Borah?" This Senator Borah was from Montana and there was something that Senator Borah had done in Congress and the Senate the day before. I didn't read because I -- even today I read everything under the sun. I read from the front to the back. So, in order to get away from that, because I figured if I answer that I do know who Senator Borah is, he would asked me what did he do and what bill was passed and I failed to read that that morning. So, I thought to myself, "Well, I ain't going to get the papers anyway." So, I says, "Well," I says, "I may as well tell you." I says, you know, I says, "I do read the papers. I read them every day, but the first thing I turn to, I read is the sport page." I almost told him the funny pages because I was going to get back at him, but thank God I didn't. I says, "I read the sport page first, then I go on to reading the news of the day." The examiner looked at Judge Pestler and he says, "Well, well." He says, "What do you know of a young man," he says, "wants to

be a good American citizen,” and he says, “He reads -- but he reads the sport pages.”

J. MORAN: It sounds like he had it in for you.

FEDO: Well, there was something. You know what I mean. Anyway, I don't know if he did or not, if he had it in for me, but nevertheless that's what actually the actual things that happened with me. So, the examiner looked at the judge and he told him back, he says, “What do you think of a young man who wants to become a citizen, an American citizen, and when we ask him if he reads the newspapers he gives me an answer that he reads the sport page first. What do you think, Your Honor?” Judge Pestler looked at him and he nodded his head a couple of times and then the examiner says, “Judge,” he says, “do you think that he's entitled to the papers to become an American citizen?” And Judge Pestler -- what a beautiful judge he was -- he looked at me and he nodded saying like yes, he's entitled to the papers. Then he did -- the judge himself says to me, he says, “Well, young man, you are going to receive what you went after. [00:10:07] You want to become a good American citizen?” I says, “Yes, sir.” He says, “But here's what I want you to know.” He says, “From now on, when you pick up the paper and you read, you go to the headlines in the front page first. Read the news, then go to the sport pages or if you read the comics, that should be last.” I said, “Yes, sir.”

J. MORAN: Did you ask him how many Americans did that?

FEDO: No. I don't think there's anybody else that ever did it. Do you think so? Anyway, then the judge says to me -- no, then I says, “Your Honor,” I says, “You know, I says, “I've got a name that's pretty hard to pronounce.” It's Pasquale. Pascal or something like that. People had a hard time calling me by my right name. I says, “And also my last name.” I says, “Could I have them changed?” Well, he says to me, he says, “What reason do you want a name change?” He says, “You've got to have a good reason.” He says, “Is it because -- have you ever been in trouble? Was you ever in jail?” Now he says, “Give me the reason why

you want your name changed.” Well, I told the judge, I says, “Your Honor,” I says, “only to simplify that pronunciation of my first name and my last name.”

J. MORAN: Your name was Pasquale Fida. F-i-d-a.

FEDO: Yes. My first name was Pasquale. It was spelled P-a-s-q-u-a-l-e. My last name was Fida. Pronounced Fida in Italy, but here, we didn't know how to pronounce it, Fedo or what have you. I says, “To make it easier. For no other reason but just to simplify.” He says, “What do you want to be called?” I said, “Could I be called Pasco?” He said, “How do you spell that?” I says, “P-a-s-c-o.” He says, “What about the last name?” I says, “Fedo.” He says, “How would you spell that?” I says, “F-e-d-o.” So, I says, “Could I?” He says, “Young man, it'll cost you \$4. Are you willing to pay it?” I says, “Yes.” So, then all right, I passed the exams. Then, as I was just turning around to leave -- I was a happy young man -- a man approached me that had a pad in his hand. I didn't know who he was, and he says to me, he says, “Say, young man,” he says, “what is your name?” So, I gave him my name. I gave him my old name, not the new one that I was to get. He says, “How old are you?” And he says, “Where did you come from?” And he says, “I've heard the rest,” he says, but, anyway, I didn't know this. Then he told me, just before he left he told me that he was a newspaper reporter and he thought that it was one of the nicest little script that he had picked up for news for the day about answering. The next morning I went back to work, I was working at the **[unintelligible - 00:13:19]**, and as I walked into the shop -- of which there was three buildings. You went into the first shop and from the first building you walked through hallways or whatever you want to -- and as I was walking along everybody was looking at me and all kind of had a big grin on their faces. Men and women. Then I met the superintendent. I forget his name now, many years now. I met the superintendent and he stopped me, he said, “Hey, smart guy.” He says, “What a guy.” I said, “Why?” “All right,” he says, “go to work.” I still didn't know why everybody was

laughing. Why did the superintendent stop me? When I got to my machines -- my pressing machines -- there was about eight or 10 women that as I pressed the garments, they received them to do some sewing on them, [unintelligible - 00:14:10] I think it was. That's sewing the lining on our overcoats. Then they says, "You're a pretty smart guy, aren't you?" I says, "Yeah, I think I am." But, still I didn't know what it was all about until I went home and I see in the front page an item about three inches high, two inches wide. The reporter had put it on the front page of the Duluth Tribune about Pasquale Fida that gave the examiner such an answer. Then I knew what it was. Then, when I went back in the afternoon, it was all over, but I was questioned by many, many people how come I gave that answer. I gave that answer because I was angry, believing that I was not going to get the papers anyway, and being so nervous and he kept me up so long, and that was it, but I got my papers.

J. MORAN: That's an interesting story. Had anyone ever tried to convince you that you should get your citizenship papers?

FEDO: [00:15:02] No.

J. MORAN: That you should become a citizen?

FEDO: No. Nobody convinced me. It was on my own.

J. MORAN: F. A. Patrick never tried to encourage...

FEDO: Nobody.

J. MORAN: ...his employees to...

FEDO: Not even my father and mother, but my father did try before me.

J. MORAN: There was no pressure during the First World War?

FEDO: No pressure whatsoever.

J. MORAN: For aliens to...

FEDO: Never.

J. MORAN: You mentioned that you belong to the Italian American Club, the First Italian American Club. I'm sorry, the Sons of Italy.

FEDO: The Sons of Italy Lodge, yeah.

J. MORAN: Can you remember some of the activities of that group?

FEDO: It was more of a friendly get-together.

J. MORAN: A sociable.

FEDO: A sociable. It was more sociable because, actually, the people that started this up were already pretty well up in years. It was not a young man's lodge or society. In fact, there wasn't many. It was mostly, like I says, of these older men and it was a social affair for them.

J. MORAN: Were you still getting death benefits at that time and sickness benefits?

FEDO: There was, if I'm not mistaken, a certain amount -- very little though -- sick benefit. I don't know about the death benefit. I don't remember. Maybe there was. Probably \$100.

J. MORAN: I think it was about that.

FEDO: Yeah. I don't think it was much more. But, then my father asked me if I wanted to join. They were trying to get young people in there. My father asked me to join. Most of the time, us Italian children, we always happily did what our parents asked us to do. Very seldom I said no to my parents because I regarded them as good people, really respected them and I did almost what they asked me to do if I could possibly do it. So, I joined the lodge. But, it was not for me. I was too young a person to be with those older men. I might have belonged to it maybe a year, maybe two years.

J. MORAN: Did they play cards?

FEDO: Yes, they did.

J. MORAN: They played cards.

FEDO: They played cards. They used to bring wine there and they used to pay for the wine. Like, my father had wine, each one had wine could bring two or three bottles of wine and they would be paid -- if I'm not mistaken -- maybe 25¢ a bottle.

J. MORAN: Did they meet at St. Peter's?

FEDO: Yes. Yes, they did. At St. Peter's -- the basement.

J. MORAN: The basement.

FEDO: Yeah. Then, they met across in a building... there was also a basement hall. That's where we met. But, anyway, I dropped out and I never

rejoined, but my father belonged to it until his death. Then it disbanded maybe a year, maybe two years later or maybe even the same year. They disbanded and that was that; the end of the Sons of Italy Lodge.

J. MORAN: You do belong to the New Italian American Club.

FEDO: Yes, I do.

J. MORAN: That was started in the middle 70s. Were you a member from the beginning?

FEDO: No. I was not a member from the beginning. I think I belonged to or should I say, if I can remember, maybe five, six years I belonged to it.

J. MORAN: What kinds of activities is the club engaged in now?

FEDO: They had good activities. We have a meeting, which I haven't attended too many meetings because it's so far and the weather sometimes, you know, and I'm alone.

J. MORAN: Are they also held at St. Peter's?

FEDO: Yes. At St. Peter's in the basement. That's our hall for everything. They are a very good club. Social also. They have an auxiliary and they have one meeting per month. Then they also have like dinners and dances maybe about three or four times a year, maybe a little bit more. They have a picnic for the community, for the members and their families. In fact, we just had one. We just had a dinner/dance that was Saturday, this past Saturday, the 22nd of March. It was very, very nice. We had a dinner, a beautiful dinner, and a dance and it was held at St. Peter's Church also. Our hall. But, before that, big doings like if they have a real big dinner/dance, it would be at Hotel Duluth or Casa Deville. Some place that's big.

J. MORAN: Outside of the social activities that they have for the members at the club, what do they do, if anything, to promote the image of the Italian American? [00:20:00] Do they do anything?

FEDO: The only thing I can see in that is that they're trying to recruit more and more and more members.

J. MORAN: Are they successful?

FEDO: No. They are not successful. In fact, there was almost -- I think there was about 550 members at one time, and sorry to say this, but this last time I talked to -- I don't know if it was the President who told me
[unintelligible - 00:20:30].

J. MORAN: Joe Mayo.

FEDO: Joe Mayo? I did talk to him, but maybe not on that, but another officer about...

J. MORAN: **[Unintelligible - 00:20:39]**

FEDO: **[Unintelligible - 00:20:39].** Yeah. I had quite a nice conversation with him throughout the evening, besides dancing. In fact, I usually dance all the time.

J. MORAN: I've heard you were a great dancer.

FEDO: I am a good dancer. I have to admit it, but I know you should say no. I am a good dancer and I dance with young and old and half the time I might have to ask for one dance. Otherwise I'm asked, so I have to be good. I do, you know? Anyway, I had quite a talk with this -- I think his name is Dominic Shavani. He's an old member and he's also an officer of the Italian American Club. He told me, he says, "Here," he says, "we've got to do something." He says, "We've got to make a drive again." He said, "Do you know we've only got 81 members?"

J. MORAN: Did they not pass the rule that non-Italian spouses, Italian women, would be allowed to join? A year or two back, didn't the management finally say that they would allow non-Italian husbands to join the club?

FEDO: I wouldn't be a bit surprised. It must have passed. I don't remember that. I know one person -- his name is Peterson, he is nowhere near an Italian. That I know. There is another -- oh, yeah, wait a minute. They must have passed that because two of them. One of them is a very close friend of mine. I forget their names now, but I saw the both of them. In fact, this person who is a very close friend of mine from boyhood, you might as well say, he's Polish. All Polish. No Italian in him, yet he belongs to the Lodge. So, they must have.

J. MORAN: They got in a couple non-Italians at least that you know of.

FEDO: Yeah. But at first it was just Italians. Then they says well one fourth Italian or one half Italian or one third Italian or as long as there is a little Italian blood in you, let them in. I don't know who dropped out, but there's only 81. I don't know if that will go the way of the old Italian Lodge.

J. MORAN: These are not even 81 active members. In other words, like you, they may not attend the meetings.

FEDO: No, I really believe it could be possible that they are maybe, not too much all of them, but I think that the majority of them do attend meetings.

J. MORAN: Have you heard -- there were some people around town who said that they thought there was a lot of quarreling, a lot of arguing, bickering back and forth within the club. Have you felt anything of that at all?

FEDO: There is a little bit, yes.

J. MORAN: Do you feel there's a certain clique that's responsible for this?

FEDO: Yes. Yes.

J. MORAN: Most people think so.

FEDO: Exactly. In fact, I'll tell you, I don't want to mention names, but we had a band up there this time. This friend of mine, who I was having conversations with practically throughout the night, he says, "Can you imagine that? See that band over there?" I say, "Yeah." Like I say, I know him real well. I played in that band with him, the Italian band. He's a musician today. He says that even though we cannot afford it, we have to have no less than a four piece band, and I think that's wrong.

J. MORAN: Of course it might that not be a union regulation, a musician union regulation?

FEDO: Well, it could be. Even if it is in the union regulation, they shouldn't hire out for less than -- but what about me? If I got married today, like when I got married, I hired one man. What if a wedding comes along and they want to hire music? Do they have to have a four piece band? I don't think so. I don't think it's fair. I can see if it's like a dance hall, a public dance

hall or something like that from that order where they're making money, selling tickets, you know, what I mean, just for that. Maybe I believe in that. But, when it comes to the Italian American Club, we can't afford it.

J. MORAN: Do you feel then that there's maybe one small group that makes this kind of decisions?

FEDO: There has to be.

J. MORAN: And the rest has no say.

FEDO: Yeah. And another thing, too. [00:25:00] No matter what you go to, even it was in our old Italian Lodge, we had in there, too, a few -- two or three of them -- that they feel they're smarter than the other guys. Maybe if I go to them, they would consider me as an underdog. Whatever they say, they believe that they are right. But, if I said something, they'd have to vote on it. You understand now how I'm getting at it? I believe there is in this because I do know...

J. MORAN: Now, we were talking about a small clique that may be in control of the Italian American Club. Do you think this situation still exists?

FEDO: As of right now, I do not know for sure. I do not attend meetings except occasionally, but which I intend to from now on. I just didn't have the time or whatever. I couldn't attend the meetings or the weather has a lot to do with it, too. But I will.

J. MORAN: But do you feel that if you...

FEDO: I feel -- from what I heard this last time, there has to be a clique. There has to be.

J. MORAN: Could it be, though, that other people are not showing up to attend the meetings and so necessarily one small group who does attend regularly takes control?

FEDO: They take control. Yes, it could be possible that you are right that if people do not attend, that members do not attend the meetings, naturally there's only a few, we'll say the die-hards, that wish that things have to run practically their way, well, then they have no competition. Whereas, if

all the members would attend, there would be many, many more that would stand up and speak for what they believe is right.

J. MORAN: Just to briefly conclude about The Italian American Club, you feel, however though, in view of the decreasing numbers, that the club is becoming less successful than it was at first glance.

FEDO: I believe so. I believe that if there is a decline in membership -- that they drop out -- it's just like building a home or something. If you don't put a good support, it won't last long, will it? Well, that goes to show that's about the same thing with The Italian American Club. If there isn't enough members and you let only a few -- the smarter ones -- control it, then it's no fun no more. It's no pleasure even attending meetings because, like I say, if you want to speak up, maybe these people won't even listen to you. They make-believe they are, but they probably don't even listen to you. I don't know. I really believe that the membership could make a beautiful -- what do you call it -- club out of it, but the more the better, the less, the toughest.

J. MORAN: How many children did you have?

FEDO: I have three children.

J. MORAN: You have just three.

FEDO: Two boys and one girl.

J. MORAN: Your grandson, Jon Fedo, is presently Mayor of Duluth. What did his father do for a living?

FEDO: His father was working for the Northern Pacific Railway to begin with. He worked there for 10 years. Then, he became a car salesman. Now, today, he is working -- at which he's been working practically for the last 10 years -- for the Northern Natural Gas Company. He's a number one mechanic. He is, too. He's very, very good.

J. MORAN: Would you have thought back in let's say 1920 that someday the grandson of an Italian immigrant might become mayor of this city? Would it have seemed improbable to you back then?

FEDO: I never thought, although I have been active in politics for many, many years. I've worked for them. That's the only way I have been with politics; working for them. In fact, I even worked for what they used to call today the city counselors. They used to be city commissioners. I worked for a man by the name of Pharaoh. That must have been in early sometime early 1940s or late 1930s. I got my start there. Then, from then on, after I belonged to our Amalgamated Garment Workers of America. They do a lot for politicians who they see what they think are going to help the ordinary working people. So, they asked me to attend caucuses, attend meetings, do this, do that and I have done it. [00:30:06] One of my closest friends in politics is John [Graffi]. I worked for him a time.

J. MORAN: You've been a Democrat.

FEDO: What's that?

J. MORAN: You can say that you've been a Democrat.

FEDO: I have been a Democrat all my life, I believe. I believe as a Democrat and I vote Democrat. Like the last election, there was something I didn't like about some of our Democrats. It isn't that I voted Republican. I did not vote Republican; I just failed to vote for those posts. Like, for instance, our Senator and our Governor. I did vote for our Governor because I thought he was a good man, but I left the others off.

J. MORAN: But now was there a time that you felt there would have been public discrimination or public antagonism to a man who was, number one, a Catholic and, number two, an Italian American?

FEDO: I believe that there was at one time, but that's a long time ago. Like, for instance, I myself, being that I have been with the politicians for so many years, I never believed that our wonderful man, John Kennedy, would ever become a President. Never would I have believed because there was -- whether there is today, I don't know -- but there was that a Catholic didn't belong in high positions in our government. That was one of my biggest surprises was to see John Kennedy become our President of the United States.

J. MORAN: Thank you.