

Pace Nicolino  
June 23, 1987

Interviewer  
Mary Kasamatsu

- MK This is an interview with Pace Nicolino. It begins actually before the official interview started. She is talking about some of the things she saw on a trip to Italy several years ago to her parents home communities.
- PC They could tell me that there was an old brick building right there and it was there you know. Everything seems to be restored. It is not like...I go downtown here and the store is gone and another one is up. It is just like throwing paper plates away you know. It's gone. In the town where my mother was born. Have you ever been over in Italy?
- MK No I haven't.
- PC It is the northern part of Italy next to Switzerland. This most beautiful lakes Lago Majoy. In that town Bovenno, is the Church, the cornerstone as described in Julius Ceaser's time. I mean it is so interesting to find things like that you know.
- MK I know it. I had a friend who was part of an exchange student program in college and she went to Amsterdam for a couple of months and was so thunderstruck by this country being so young here by comparison. It is a very common place to find 600 year old buildings. Here a 200 year old house is real special.
- PC It is real special and they get rid of them. They don't restore them you know. Of course over there they are built with stone and mortar and so forth and so it is easier to do it. My mother's brothers were both artists, carvers and so forth. But, on my mother's house on the outside was painted a picture of Jesus. When I went there in 1971, that was to settle the estate after 50 years by the time we did it. We sold the place and when I went back 7 years later, that had all been restored by the painting was still there. It had been refinished somewhat, but it was still there the same and that makes it so...you just feel a part of it you know.
- MK Well just let me get a quick voice level while you are here, real quick like and see whether you...got a level set on you very nicely here. I will just put a little bit of a tag at the top so we know what I am doing here before I get around to labeling. I am with Mrs. Pace Nicolino in Barre on the 23rd of June. This is an interview for Green Mountain Chronicles. Before we get to far along I wanted to ask you what was your maiden name?
- PN Cardini (she says and spells it) and if you want to know where I got that name and no other one with it. No

middle name because my father, I think he was the original draft dodger of the 1900's, so he named me Pace which means peace. And there was no other name to go with it. That was it. That's the name I have carried all my life which was quite difficult when I was growing up as a little girl. Boy it was difficult with teachers because they would say what! One of them even said oh what a name to name a child. So I went home and told my father and he said... he never really...the teachers were respected and we could never say a word against the teachers because they respected teachers. But he said that teacher is ignorant. She doesn't know what that means. But it was difficult. I guess maybe I didn't really appreciate the name until years later when at a banquet and I guess I was our age perhaps 20, about 27 years old and down the line was a note that came to me from she was a Jewish woman, sent this note down and she said what a lovely name you have. I would like to talk to you about it. Then I began to think well it must have been something to. Of course then as the years went on and all the things that happened you know I realized it is quite a nice name to have especially with the background I came from. My father belonging to the anti-fascist league at a time when America was pro-Mussolini. He was a socialist political face. That was rough growing up.

MK That was here in Barre?

PN Yes. It was rough growing up yup, with that sort of a background. I think the years, the '20's, until the depression were really very pleasant years. My father was quite ????. At that time was when he was active with the Sacco-Vanzetti case. That is what you mainly wanted to talk about wasn't it? As a little girl I always remember my mother and father being quite active, very active in fact, but my mother did most of the writing for my father. He would write and my mother would correct it. She was much more of a scholar having attended higher schools than he did. There was always so much writing going on, so many letters coming, so much stuff coming in about Sacco-Vanzetti case. I can remember a Mrs. Donovan who is active in the Sacco-Vanzetti case being at our home. I remember her specifically because I don't know she just seemed to take a lot time with my sister and I talking to us. But there were always groups in the house in connection with the case and they would put on even dinners or dances you know for the cause to send money to them.

MK Send money for the defense.

PN To raise money for the defense. I was not at all at that time aware that it was such an international case until I

went to Italy in 1971. Then my aunt told me that on the day that Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted the they called them ??? would be the police came to my grandmother's house and searched her house for any evidence of my father. I was very surprised then. Then of course after reading about it, I realized that it was an international case and had been written up all over the world. Of course my sister and I were very young. We were 9 and 10 I guess at the time of the funeral when my father took us down there. My mother didn't go. I think she was sick at the time. He took us down there. It was such a I can recall the night evidently there was a wake yes as I remember and people were so sad and everything was so quiet. It was just such a feeling of sadness I guess amongst all these people. There were an awful lot of people around as I remember. I just cannot remember where we spent the night. I can't remember that. I do remember somebody taking my sister and I and leading us to food, I remember that. But the next day was the day of the funeral which there was a parade. There were horses. It was a little confusion there when I know that somewhat a little riot. I guess the horses were going through or something. What I recall mostly was the deep sadness that there was amongst these people. And of course so many of them had worked for years and years for the case. It was really a terrible loss to them as much as I can remember. That's what I remember. I don't remember anything in the line of violence or anything like that or any loud voices. There was crying I remember. Just deep sadness about it all. That's about it.

MK Did your father talk with you about the case a lot as you were growing up?

PN Oh yes, as we were growing up he talked a lot about the case. Of course, there are two sides to the case, you know. Naturally the one thing that was uppermost was that someone had to pay the penalty for the crime and so obviously these two were in a position to be picked for it obviously, you know from things I have read. Of course then you have the other side of the story. But I don't know if they have ever had any complete evidence. That they had any witnesses that really saw the crime being committed. I mean I was 9, I was 10 years old, my sister was 9.

MK You said it was difficult growing up in Barre back then.

PN It was difficult growing up because some people don't want to get involved you know at all in anything. But during those years of course then we had the depression. That was difficult. In some ways it was, in other ways I can say that the depression

but we always had enough to eat. You know, nothing elaborate. Clothing wasn't elaborate, but I was going to high school. When I would complain, my father would say it is no disgrace to be poor, but it is a great inconvenience. So we got through that, but my father died in 1936 and my mother a year after. All through life there had been so many strikes here, labor strikes in the granite that my father always worked for the striking parties. He worked for years for the dust prevention machines in the sheds which were not installed until the year he died. At that time these stonecutters only lived 42, 44, 45, that's about it.

MK Was your father a stonecutter?

PN Yes, he was a stonecutter. He died at 54. At a meeting at a library not too long ago, probably a year ago, I know there were some granite manufacturers there and they had to admit that they did not install those devices until the state forced them to. I think perhaps I really felt very good to hear that. They lowered their heads and said yes. But I just feel very good that at last they had done it you know and that made the difference in the granite industry in the sanitorium which is right up here. You can't see from here which was built by the state purposely for the tuberculosis victims, you know, the occupational hazard is now a monastery because they don't need it anymore. And they had, the people in Barre had many dances that they used to hold for the benefit of these widows whose husbands would pass away with occupational disease. It was quite an era. Barre was quite a political ??? in fact I had someone ask me if I knew any anarchists who could get together and just....any children anarchists. I tried to talk to a few people. Some won't talk about it anyway. They wouldn't. Their names, their first names are such that you know that their father was an anarchist, but I tried to find some, some don't want to talk about it and others don't recall anything at all, so I wrote back to this fellow and I said I think they are all gone from Barre. I think you will find them all in Washington, D.C. now.

MK Some in Florida

PN There is quite a bit of anarchy in Washington, D.C. right now. But of course those are the times and you were threatening the, I mean the alien population was threatening the ones that had settled here first you know, so they built up the areas against them I guess. It was a matter of growing up I guess. That's what it is.

MK Were there different ethnic communities? Did they ban together when for instance with the Italian community in Barre?

PN Yes they did, they did until of course the power of money is strong you know. And when that happens some people lose their ideals. What I find today amongst a lot of the young people I think they are much more idealistic now than they have been. So I just wonder what will happen in the next few years. Will they hold onto those ideals that they have or will they give them up for money or power, political power, monetary gains, etc.

MK I think about that a lot. A mother of two small children. What is the world going to be like? What is the climate of the era going to be like when my kids are ready to leave high school for instance? It does seem to change. I mean I went through high school in the 1960's and we saw another wave of ??? and I was appalled a few years ago to read how college students felt Ronald Reagan was their hero. I said oh what's happening, what's going on you know.

PN I don't know how that is now, whether it has changed or not. He never was my hero and there are many people now who are beginning that I talk with who are beginning to say well I guess you were right. Because I have always said he was an actor and that's what he is. He is an actor. These things that are being done perhaps are not of his wanting maybe, but he has to do them. There is a power greater than the man that is up there. Those things which my father taught me a long time ago. I don't know, I do think some men live long before their time and can tell you what is going to happen, just as my father told me that we were going to have that second world war when he was sick and dying of TB and he told me what was happening, the reasons why and you know your just a young kid you had some clouds and what's this all about you know. It will probably be the same with my kids. They haven't gotten too much involved in anything like that. I had one boy who went to Vietnam. He would never have gone if his grandfather had been living I am sure. I am sure of that. His grandfather would never have allowed him to go and he has had a rough time. It's not pretty, but the ones that don't come back can't tell you about it. The ones that do come back don't talk about it. Not too much you know. Such is that. That's the way it is I guess.

MK Is there a lot of...I have just seen some ???

PN This is one that I found. I had some stuff around here. It is 1927. I probably had a lot of...but after my parents

died, I don't know, I guess I was just 19 or 20 and we were just tired I guess. We just crawled into a shell. We were tired of all this conflict you know and being girls. We probably threw out a lot of very valuable materials and papers. I gave the library the bags my father had when he attended the anti-fascist league in New York. They have that and they have some other materials that I have had.

MK Have you been in touch with Karen Lane?

PN Oh yes.

MK What did Karen talk...maybe Jean talked to Karen, maybe that's what happened.

PN Probably. Karen is always volunteering.

MK Laughing.

PN But really you know I really believe Barre has such an interesting history with all the different nationalities here and once you get involved. It is just like the anarchists. There was a shooting here. Of course you know all about it. Lee ??? was shot and his monument is up there is very well known. I mean I have heard that story over and over and over again, but it is not anything I know, it is just something I have heard.

MK Actually, would you tell the story so we can get it on tape?

PN Oh that one, that story was, let's see if I can just what has been told to me. Well I read there was an anarchist and a socialist meeting. I think they were meeting together and some speaker was coming evidently and he was getting there and it began to get a little unruly and this man as I understand it just shot in the air to disperse the crowd you know and he shot this ??? who was one of the most competent carvers in the city. I think his brother is the one who did his monument which is just a beautiful replica of him. I did and a number of years ago bring, oh what is his name, Arthur Ryder, who wanted to write a book about Barre. I brought him up to meet this ???'s daughter, although she was in Italy at the time this happened. She was just a little girl. This is interesting, because I think she showed him photographs of the family and she said I wasn't here so I can't tell you very much, but she said that's me that my father is rubbing my head because I didn't want to have my picture taken. And the writer says, that's just the sort of thing I want to know, things like that. I said

a book over there somewhere, I wish I could think of his name. So Barre is just full of interesting stories and I keep thinking I should write some down and I don't do it. Time is flying away you know. This was a very interesting area. Right up above here was what they call Thompson's Woods and they used to have picnics there. They usually had a wagon, horse and buggy or something. They would load up all the food on there and then the people would walk up there and they would cook chickens and dance and play games and drink wine and by the end of the day the wives would all be mad and the men would all be happy you see.

MK How long ago was that?

PN That, well let's see. I was a little girl and I am just 39 now you know, but it has got to be at least 60 years ago.

MK Another era, another time.

PN Another era in the time is right. I was trying to think of... Oh there were...Barre's fame is so well known all over the world I guess that. Let's see it was two years ago there were three fellows that came from a television crew in Switzerland who came here to Barre and did a documentary on the Italian workmen who had come here and worked here. They would have had to talk to grandchildren right. So they took pictures, televised pictures. They were here on my porch. They came over to Peacham Pond where we have a cottage and where these old stonecutters used to go and hunt rabbit and so forth. They wanted to see it. They had heard about that over there and they wanted to see those places. So they did a documentary on that. One of my cousins, I had written to them, but they had not seen it or it was too late or something, but anyway, someone else that had written to someone here in America saying they had seen me on this documentary over there. It is a small world.

MK And you never got to see it.

PN I never got to see it. They did send it, but something went wrong with it. Then Karen, I know Karen Lane took it back and said she would send it back, but I have never heard anything from Karen about it. She is busy now with Nicaragua. I don't know there was someone I thought of this morning that I might know. She is 90, but she is pretty alert. I don't know rather again if she is someone who would want to let sleeping dogs lie and doesn't want to talk. I am going to try her out one of these days.

MK I was wondering. I had a chance to look through a couple of the comments that newspapers have in the editorial pages, some

of the comments that have been written after the electrocution of Sacco-Vanzetti. I was wondering whether all the ones that I came up against were negative, none were very anti-immigrant, anti-communist and ??? Did those kind of editorials intensify the difficulties at the time or did people pay much attention to those things? Or did feelings seem to intensify or polarize more after the deaths?

PN I really can't say about that. I mean of course if you are reading one that's the affirmative your feeling really good about it, if you see the other your not going to pay any attention to it, I just wonder what the...if there was an editorial in this paper. I guess not.

MK The ones I had come up against, well I guess the ones that I ??? Springfield Reporters, Bellows Falls Times, Bennington Banner...

PN Well of course in here, you know, the Vermont being a very republican state until Hoff got in there and messed it up a bit more. Your going to edit all this I am sure, but that was their opportunity to do something and those were bad years actually.

MK All years were bad years.

PN Yea, I think they were. You know, I think they could have done as long as they had gotten in they could have done a lot better, but. I remember at the time I had someone who was high up in and I don't know where they have gone to, but they were high up in Hoff's administration, but they had a child who was emotionally disturbed and I had him in my class and I knew then that it was just kind of like they were all leading in this Hoff administration and it was affecting the child you know. But Vermont being the republican state that it is and the kind of republican, I said my father was a republican and I am a republican you know. What is going on there now is something else too with our judges, but so what else is new. All over the country. I don't know, I think. Now when they talk of anarchists and socialists as far as these men are concerned, I mean they gave them a bad name, but they were really very just very honest men who wanted to do good and it was not what they try to tell us an anarchy was or what socialism was or even what communism is because in theory even communism and socialism is good. It is man who ruins it all. The same as man has ruined democracy. I wouldn't say that there isn't quite a bit of anarchy in todays democracy, supposedly democracy. So where are we at. ??? That's the way I look at it at this point in my life.



MK Did your father ever meet Sacco and Vanzetti? Did he ever go to visit them in prison?

PN I don't know. I don't know if he did or not. I really don't remember that at all. I know he had a wide circle of friends in Boston that knew them. He might have, I don't know, but not that I know of because he was back and forth from New York, Boston. He never gave up his ideals in working for the you know common man. He never did.

MK What was his name?

PN Natalie which means Christmas. He was born on Christmas day. I am sure that if he and my mother had stayed in Italy, they would have had a much wealthier life than here in the United States because working for the oppressed and the sick. You don't get wealthy. He was the union leader, but in those days union leaders weren't paid any money. Today they become fabulously wealthy.

MK Depending on the union.

PN Well most of your unions, even your teachers union is pretty rough, pretty strong. I don't know. Are you a teacher by any chance?

MK No.

PN Pretty strong. They work for themselves not for the cause. Oh, I will end up in jail.

MK Before we turned this on, you were telling me a little bit of background, but I wanted to get this on tape. When did your parents come to this country? Were you born here or were you born in Italy?

PN No I was born here. My father came I think to avoid the draft originally. He went back and then he married my mother. Then he came back down again and my mother came down later and then we were born here.

MK When did he come over?

PN I think it was 1910 or 1911 or somewhere around there. Over there he did work in the granite shed for a time, but then he was an agent for the Singer Sewing Machine Co. and he had his own bicycle with the trade name on it you know. I have a Singer Sewing Machine receipt of some kind. I don't know if it was the bicycle somewhere, but I don't know just where it is. As I say, I must get this stuff all together and put

it in a book. Then he came to America and went into the granite shed to work. That is where he started originally. Of course, when you work for the union as a labor leader and you are working in a shed and you are watching out whether or not these employees are using the right precautions for their men. If you speak up about it, then you lose your job. Is that called blowing the whistle today? Well today there is a different, I notice these young fellows when they get to be 45 - 50, the companies find a way of getting rid of them by giving them this that or the other. Times don't change too much.

MK ????. Did your father experience a number of times of being fired because of speaking out?

PN Oh yes. That happened, yes. Of course, you have the other angle too where I think my father was a very honest man in working with the union and officials and so forth. If they felt that there was a strike and they felt they should settle for a certain amount, they were quite reasonable in respect to the manufacturer too who has all the problems of the business of course and they would see that they settled. Then there would be those rabid ones who were angry because you settled and would turn against you because you settled the problem. So you are dealing with people. People are what they are. That's it I guess and I guess maybe things haven't changed too much in many ways. We only have more money to deal with which is, well we do have so much more today. We expect so much more.

MK Expectations.

PN In expectations. When I was growing up, I guess we knew our place in life. We knew that this is what we had, this is what we would have and we didn't expect anymore than that. Maybe that's called not being too ambitious, I don't know, but I think it was in another way a very caring time when there are hardships I think people are apt to be more caring you know and help each other out. Today everyone goes their own way.

MK That's true. One thing that I had read about, I think it is just the day before the funeral or just before the funeral of Sacco-Vanzetti that the granite sheds in Montpelier closed and there were some walkouts, either there were walkouts in Montpelier or Barre and sheds in one of the other communities closed. Do you remember that?

PN I remember my father being home from work and other people joining him at the house. Again that very solemn and sad

feeling that they had about it all. I guess they were really convinced that they were innocent so naturally that would be the feeling.

MK Do you know whether your father or any of his friends had ever thought that the chance was really good of getting them to reprieve?

PN Reprieved? Oh I remember the night before. Again there was groups together and when it came through that..I can remember the feeling, terrible feeling they had when that came through that when Governor Fuller had not granted a reprieve. So that they hated that name Fuller forever. It is so long ago. When you are quite young you know you're just sort of on the side lines, but the one feeling I do always remember is that deep sadness that sorrowful manners that they had about it all. The feeling of defeat you know.

MK Were there memorial services here afterwards?

PN No, I just remember going to the funeral. I don't remember anything else here.

MK Did you drive down?

PN We drove down yes. We had a ford. Yea, we had a new ford, I think it was. \$629 because I remember when we bought it that we had to make the decision whether we wanted the wooden spokes in the tires or the wire spokes. We chose the wire ones. I remember that. That was quite an event you know, a new car. That was quite a thing.

MK How long did it take to drive down to was it Braintree?

PN I think it was. I don't know, but it seems to me that it was an all day trip. It was an all day trip. I remember that.

MK Was that just your father, you and your sister who drove.

PN Yea. As I recall, it was just us that went. I don't know if anyone else went from Barre or not. I don't remember any of that. You know if they had lived longer, we might have talked more about it you know and remembered more things, but they. We were 19 and 20. You know when you are growing up years your not concerned with any of that stuff.

MK Also when you were 9 or 10, at the time of the execution, you had basically all of your childhood had been spent growing up hearing that.

PN Hearing that. Oh yea.

MK It probably wasn't something that you would look as critically as if you had been older and it had been something that had just sort of happened in a shorter space of time ???

PN No it was just part of our life and I guess when you are getting to be 9 or 10 and you are moving uphill, you got more interesting things to just think about.

MK Do you remember what was made of the whole Sacco-Vanzetti case in the schools?

PN No, I don't remember anything about that or whether or if anything was said then. No I don't remember hearing anything in the schools about it. You know if it was, if they said anything, they might not of said it in the classroom or maybe other teachers might have talked about it, but nothing that I recall was ever said about it. No I think it was a pretty quiet issue after you know.

MK That's interesting in itself. It was a big international issue.

PN Yea. I don't know if Dick Bottomini, do you know who he is? He used to be an editor for the Barre-Times. But he is my age, so whether or not he would know anything about it. He has written a lot about the older days. In fact he had just one in recently, I think it was on bootleggers, if I am not mistaken. But he has written a lot about the older things that have happened in the years past. It is hard to find anyone who even wants to talk about it you know.

MK When the depression came along, that would have only been a couple of years later, the start of the depression. One thing we are interested in for this series looking at just the differences in the way people in urban communities were affected by the depression vs. people who had been on the farms who had always been sort of used to kind of hard times ??? farming and that really didn't change much during the depression, but we were wondering whether some of the depending on the industry, some of the folks who lived down in the town were dependent on an industry for jobs, their experiences might have been very different.

PN During the depression the sheds, some of the sheds would hire men for two days and some for three days and give each one an equal opportunity to work. But many of them. I don't know I guess maybe they used what few savings they had and I don't ever remember going really without, but

you know my mother was a good cook, that could stretch her meals and she sewed for us so you know we got along. There was still monies around I guess because some people were able to still even go out and drink. Of course then you get into the prohibition years where many of them sold liquor and made a few dollars. Then of course they would in 19??, let's see it was 1935, 1936, it was beginning to pick up you know, but those are the years when...the prohibition was 1932 when it was repealed I think, but before that they sold, this area was a great area. In fact, the yellow house over, where you turn here, this big yellow house over there, those people are dead and gone, but they always sold booze as we called it. And the story was that there was a tunnel they had built in the side of the bank there. It was covered with a wooden and when of course in those days the cops would come and warn you that there was going to be a raid, because they only raided when somebody made complaint. It usually would be a wife of somebody whose husband was drinking and leaving his money there. So they would hide their liquor in there. It wasn't until probably 20 years ago that we went looking for that and we found it. It was there. The wooden cover over this tunnel where they used to hide their liquor. This area was really all the way down through there was really quite a place. Of course we were kids and when we knew someone was going to be raided, we kids would all be around there waiting for the big raid which never came off because they had been tipped off. Then we would read in the paper the next day where so many gallons of wine were poured down the sinks of the police station. Of course your father and mother would laugh and they would say that will be the day. They probably just kept it. But some of them really were really greedy and would you know would sell to these men until they were just so drunk and then take their pay from them. I had a friend who was Irish and their mother had died during the flu, so the older sister was bringing them up and so their father used to like to drink, so I can always remember. This one time he says now you go and meet Pa at the shed before he gets in one of those booze places. We never made it. Pa was already in the booze place. Then he would go to church and take the oath of abstinence you know and that would last about a week and Pa would be back in the...So many interesting stories to tell. That's how most of your granite manufacturers got their start and the names now are probably different anyway because. They would make a few dollars selling booze and then they would start a shed and then they would build a house up on mortgage alley which we call mortgage alley which was the Camp Street area. But the French people who came

in in 1922 as strikebreakers, because they hated the French. They hated them with a passion. You dare not go out with a French boy or marry a French boy or otherwise you got kicked out of the house as so many did. But they have really contributed a lot to the community now. There are some of the wealthiest granite manufacturers and talented too. I mean it just...what they did was wrong according to one party, but they wanted to feed their families. So, what can you do.

MK How long did that kind ??

PN Feeling?

MK Yea, how long did that last?

PN Sometimes it is still here. You still hear some people say "Those damn frogs". I mean it never leaves. Some of them still have that feeling the same as the Scotch and the English have against the other nationalities. Oh he is a lovely boy, but I don't want my daughter to marry him. But they did. So it is all mixed up now. My kids have married French, Indian, American-Indian, Sweedish, not one married an Italian. So the line has been broken.

MK Did your husband care?

PN No, he used to kid with our youngest daughter who was really our second family. We have three; two boys and a girl and then we had her seven years later. He would kid with her and he says well, you know Claudia, there is Kenny, there is Claude, there is Louie and he says and you would not break that line and become mongreled you know. She would say Dad I will pick out my own. So she married a Sweedish fellow. Barre has been quite a town. Did you ever read Marie Tomasi's book? You have. That tells it quite clearly except for the Catholicism because they did not, let me tell you, they did not belong to the Catholic Church once they got here. Although they, the Tomasi's, have always been strong Catholics and still are to this day, I guess, but that book really is if you have read it, that's it. In fact Marie Tomasi at that time she was writing the book, I worked for the Granite Manufacturer's and Granite Workers Mutual Benefit Association who would pay a granite worker taken ill with silicosis or any illness, \$10 a week for a year and would be an additional year if you developed silicosis. She came to see me and talk to me about the book she was writing and my association with these people you know. But I told her that they had been come in and put the application on the table and say here is my birth certificate and then she wrote to me later and she asked if she could use that in the book. But she didn't

use it in those words, but I was inferred you know. That was my association with Marie Tomasi. And from that we had a discussion on the book, like Lesser Gods, with Professor Rosa from University of Vermont and who was the other one from Barre. There was another person from Barre at the Library. So one day I get a call from this Helen Baralini who was writing a book about American, Italian American writers who had never been recognized as writers that much. So she had gone to see Professor Rosa after hearing about this discussion at the Library. He said well, he did not know much about her at all, but he referred her to me. So she came to see me and so while she was here and talking she said what do you do? Do you do anything outside of. Oh I says I dabble around in paints. I write a little poetry. So she said, let me see some of your work. So I showed her some, so she picked out two and she published a book and I have two poems in that book. One is called "Dandelion Wine". The other one is called "Hello and Goodbye". And this Spring, they had a, oh, what did they call it. It was held in New York. I was invited, but I didn't go. They hoped to do an off-show Broadway off-show on the book. I haven't heard anymore about that. But she has written a book "Oh Betina", which she left with me at the time about Italy. She was born here and went to Italy and married an Italian poet over there. Somehow I feel that this book might be an autobiography. I ??? poet, I am not sure. I don't know if it is. I just had the feeling that it might be. So.

MK What is the title of the book?

PN "Dream Book".

MK "Dream Book".

PN I think I have it right here. That's "Oh Betina", that's the one that she left with me. I think that was her first novel. Everyone was sending me stuff that was in papers about her book. Do you want to read my poems?

MK I would love to.

PN You might like to read the whole book. It is interesting.

MK It is wonderful. ??? writing poetry.

PN I don't know. Well I used to in high school. This is the thing. There was really a lot of discrimination because we had a box where we could submit poems, drawings for the central school paper. They were never accepted. I just gave up. I guess I just didn't do anymore. I guess I perhaps didn't start in until I was about I don't know.

I had the kids. I was probably 35 - 40 when I started to write again. So then, the other thing I remember being in the sophomore French class and we had a contest to read French. She wanted to find out who had the best French pronunciation and when we got done, she said that I had the best French pronunciation, but really would have to give the first honor credit to Merlin Dodge, because I was Italian and could twist my tongue around better. And I thought I was to meek and mild to say I may be Italian, I may have an Italian name, but you don't know whether I can talk Italian. But I didn't dare say anything. Then again, looking for a job, I remember down at the state looking for a job and the person who interviewed me, I had put down that I knew English, French, Italian and she said, well you don't know them fluently. I was just, didn't have the courage to say yes I can. There was the discrimination yea. Many people changed their names you know. I could have changed my to ??? and drop the i and i. But I think you can do it if you are a strong character maybe. We just weren't. And haven't been through enough socialism and Sacco-Vanzetti stuff that you are like the leader, the union labor leader. You just begin to feel set yourself away in a shell and don't come out until finally you realize heh! what's this all about. That's life. Maybe it makes you stronger. I know that some of these people were supposedly big wheels are now crumbling. So I think well maybe they didn't have enough of the stuff to keep them going.

MK Character building.

PN Character building. I didn't go into ??? degree in teaching, but I got that. Let's see, I had had my children and then I was asked to substitute at a nursery for retarded children which supposedly was the first in the country. I went there. I said I will come if I can bring my two year old. I did and I remained there for 22 years because I began to work with the children. That's when they began to realize that you could do more with these children. You know some could attain at least a little education. Yea, I stayed there for 22 years and I retired. When public law 94142 where two came in and you had to have a masters degree in order to do that. And I said to myself, I have had it. But I had built up a program so that they were sending students from Trinity College, UVM, Vermont College, Goddard College. So the head one at the State Department said we got to do something about this. So I had to take a few courses. So I was training these girls. I had to take a few courses and write a few term papers, but I got a degree that way doing that. But at that time, I had Goddard Students were the ones most interested in working with these kids and the ones who gave more of their



time and did a really terrific job at it. But even the classes were held in the Methodist Church, but even the people in that Church resented Goddard students being in there. It was terrible. So I got a lot of flack there too. But these students were really, I mean I could tell right away when they came in that they were going to be dedicated or not. You know I made the choice, but we had a terrific program going there. So then they went into the 10 year plan which in my last term paper I wrote all negative things about it and I would say when they got to the 10 years they would start going backwards which I got an A in and a message is said. A good paper, but I don't believe in your philosophy. But now they are going backwards. The 10 year plan is done so we are sliding backwards on it.

MK What is the name of the nursery school?

PN The nursery school was Green Mountain Nursery School. They also had the Green Mountain School in Montpelier and they would go from my group either to Green Mountain School. There were two who went into public school and more often others would stay with you or they would go to Brandon Training School.

MK Is this part of the Washington County Mental Health?

PN No, absolutely not.

MK I wondered because there is a Green Mountain work force.

PN Absolutely not. They did get in and get their own...they came in under very suspicious reasons I thought, but the head one said well I will allow them. They want to do this and they wanted to have a mothers group there and all this. But then after they got all the names of the children you had and others coming in then they formed their own up at the Washington County Mental Health. Then that went out of existence see so. Washington County Mental Health doesn't impress me to much either in that line. Then I was on with a group when we had 4 C's. Were you ever familiar with 4 C's, Community to Co-ordinate Child Care which would oversee the daycare centers. After I got started, I think I was kind of a radical the same as my father. Community Co-ordinated Child Care, they had offices in Barre, Montpelier, Bradford.

MK ???

PN I was on one of the committees. Washington County Mental Health would put up matching funds and then the government gave you the other funds. They were to oversee the daycare

centers. Well nothing was happening in the daycare centers. We went along for a year. Then this friend of mine who was from Woodbury; we decided we didn't like what was going on so we wrote to Health, Education & Welfare in Washington and said we were concerned that nothing was sifting down to the children. It was all going into administration and salaries and so forth and so on. We got called into the office of Child Development in a big room with these people around questioning you. So they asked me why I had written a letter and I said just what well I was concerned about the daycare centers nothing is sifting down to the children. I went on and on. And then they asked the other gal and finally she says well the straw that broke the camels back was the night that you kept the meeting going to 1:30 in the morning and on your way out you said Huh Huh, we put it over. This was Dr. Strauss up there. Oh he says you misinterpreted we didn't mean anything by that. That was the end of C.C.C.C. because the government cut off the funds and that was the end of that. I guess maybe I am one of those...

MK Is that when the state took over regulating daycares?

PN I don't know just when. I guess maybe the state. Well, just when it happened I don't know. I mean I didn't keep up with it after that you know. I don't know. But I have seen some things happening. There wasn't anything. The daycare centers around here, I mean it was really a sad situation with what was happening. Even now I don't know what I...

MK There is a terrible shortage of daycare.

PN There is a terrible shortage of daycare, but I notice like Rowan Court up here has now started a daycare and National Life didn't. They should.

MK They should. Because they were recently in the paper because of changing the work hours at National Life and their employees can't...the daycare centers that employees use that are close by close before the employees can get there. What are we supposed to do ???

PN Yea. Right. Right. Well the schools perhaps should too. At least these union schools. My daughter is a speech pathologist for the Barre Town schools. I mean she has two children and it costs her and she has a reasonable price. It costs her \$80 a week.

MK That is reasonable.

PN That is reasonable in comparison to what some other people pay you know. But I don't see why the school couldn't

have one. It would be good training for some of those kids to to come down and help out. I think that perhaps that America is way behind. I mean, I know in Italy even my mother worked in a kindergarten for children way back then. And they have always had what they call a kindergarten for working mothers over there. And they do now. Their benefits are terrific. If you have a baby, I mean you can stay home for a certain period for money, a certain percentage of your salary. It's a lot different than here. So I don't know. Yea, I think I have blown the whistle on a lot of things to. I guess maybe some of it, maybe I got some of it you know. Well..

MK I was just curious about when the Green Mountain Nursery. You started that or that grew out of...

PN That grew out of Green Mountain School. Green Mountain School was a school for retarded which is in Montpelier.

MK Is that still in existence?

PN No, that is where the Culinary Institute is now.

MK Okay.

PN No that went out when Public Law 94142 came in where all children must be educated in the public schools. And that is a pain in the neck now because...

MK Some children can't be educated in public schools.

PN Some children can't, but they have situation where now the you have V.A.L.D. (Vermont Association for Learning Disabilities) which I can understand that a child with a learning disability does need, you know they can make it in the public school, but they're really unreal when they come in with their lawyers, psychiatrists and I am not kidding you. My daughter gets some of them. They come in with lawyers and psychiatrists you know and ask you why you don't let this child keep his feet up on the table. I don't teach that way. Well if he is going to learn that way, then honest stuff like this. It has gone to such an extreme you know that, I don't know. The teaching profession is something too that not all teachers should be in there teaching. Are your children in school?

MK No, they are not yet ????. Why I am especially interested in daycare. They go to a home daycare in East Montpelier.

PN Would you like a cup of tea?

Pace Nicolino  
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MK Sure.

PN I am getting dry. We have been talking.