

THE ITALIAN-CANADIAN EXPERIENCE IN A CHANGING HAMILTON

THE ITALIAN-CANADIAN EXPERIENCE IN A CHANGING HAMILTON

BY

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ABSTRACT

Italians make up 16% of Hamilton's population. These Italians have come to Hamilton for the most part after the second world war. Since then, they have concentrated in a few areas around the city. The areas with the greatest concentration are Jamesville, an old immigrant reception area located in Central Hamilton, and Stoney Creek, a wealthy suburb located to the east of Hamilton.

The initial purpose of the thesis was to look at how larger economic trends affected ethnicity. Since the early 1960's there has been a shift from manufacturing oriented employment, which is labour intensive, to the service-oriented sector, which is less labour intensive and comprised of part-time labour. The thesis also investigated how the Italian-Canadians perceived their lives in Hamilton since their arrival. The data for this study was collected through lengthy, semi-structured interviews from both areas. Thirty-two families were interviewed.

It was found that the immigrants who arrived after the second world war (in both areas) were not affected by the restructuring of Hamilton's economy. The male immigrants had since establishing themselves in Hamilton found employment in either the steel industry or in the construction sector. Male workers in Jamesville were for the most part retired. The female immigrants worked only in a minor role in Canada. They entered the work force after they had raised their families, usually in part-time positions.

Friends, the church, and associational groups were of little importance in the lives of Italians in both study areas. For many, the central focus was on the family. Life for the immigrant was characterized as a life of sacrifice, pain and sorrow. In general the quality of life of the immigrant was very poor.

A case study of a prominent family was conducted through the life history method. Life for those interviewed in the study, appeared to be more fulfilling. The family came to Hamilton in the early 1900's and used education as a path to their success. A strong matriarchal figure was also essential to their success. In the study, twelve members of the family were interviewed. Many of the parents had instilled values of hard work, education and success in their children.

From the interviews it became clear that the shift in economic sectors had little impact on Italians. The research continued because I was fascinated with the accounts of these individuals. The most stunning outcome of all the research is that for the most part the immigrant is full of pain and discontentment. Life in Canada for many of them was an unfulfilled promise.

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TI AMO!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF MAPS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	viii

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. METHODS	5
SUMMARY	15
3. LITERATURE REVIEW	16
STRUCTURATION THEORY	16
PHENOMENOLOGY	18
RESTRUCTURING: THEORY AND REALITY	20
ETHNICITY	23
BOUNDARY FORMATION	25
SOCIAL CLOSURE	27
ASSIMILATION	29
DISSIMILATION	32
SUMMARY	33
4. ITALIANS IN ITALY AND HAMILTON	34
THE HISTORY OF ITALIANS IN HAMILTON	39
GENERAL INFORMATION ON ITALIANS IN HAMILTON	44
SUMMARY	50

5. THE ITALIAN CANADIAN EXPERIENCE IN JAMESVILLE	51
INTRODUCTION	51
SETTING THE SCENE: JAMESVILLE	52
EMPLOYMENT IN ITALY	55
EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA	57
EMPLOYMENT THROUGH THE YEARS	60
HOUSING AND MOBILITY	65
FIRST HOUSING IN HAMILTON	65
FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN JAMESVILLE AREA	69
QUALITY OF LIFE IN JAMESVILLE	70
FAMILY LIFE IN JAMESVILLE	74
SUMMARY	79
6. THE ITALIAN-CANADIAN EXPERIENCE IN STONEY CREEK.	80
SETTING THE SCENE: STONEY CREEK	80
EMPLOYMENT IN ITALY	82
EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA	83
EMPLOYMENT THROUGH THE YEARS	85
HOUSING AND MOBILITY	86
QUALITY OF LIFE	88
FAMILY LIFE IN STONEY CREEK	91
SUMMARY	94
7. CASE STUDY OF AN ITALIAN-CANADIAN FAMILY	95
LIFE HISTORY OF THE NINNI FAMILY	95
COMMENTARY AND CONCLUSION	112
8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	115
AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	119
APPENDIX A	120
BIBLIOGRAPHY	121

LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
1. Continuum of Free-Flowing Existence to Controlled Observations	9
2. Provincial Origins of Toronto's Italians based on Marriage Records (1908-1935)	36
3. Persons Cancelled from Italian Population Registers with Destination Canada (1955-1980)	37

LIST OF MAPS

1. Italy: Regions and Principal Towns	35
2. Hamilton: 1976 Census Metropolitan Area by Census Tracts. Italian Mother Tongue, 1976.	45
3. Hamilton: 1981 Census Metropolitan Area. Italian Mother Tongue as a Percentage of the Total Population, 1981.	47

LIST OF TABLES

1. The Field Work Situation of Observation	7
2. Hamilton Data - Industry - Labour Force (1951-1986)	24
3. Destinations of Italian Emigrants in Periods (1876-1976)	40

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"Italians in North America" is not a World War II phenomenon. Italians began coming to the Americas as early as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; Amerigo Vespucci, Cristofolo Colombo and Giovanni Caboto were all Italians. These early Italians brought to the new world invention, food, silk and many other amenities. For the next three to four hundred years, the flow of immigrants was slow and, in many cases, non-existent. It was not until the late 1800's that Italian communities had begun to emerge in the landscapes of both the United States and Canada. The purpose of this thesis is not to present an historical account of Italian life in North America, but instead to show how immigrants lives and their perceptions of life have changed since arriving to Canada.

My father Francesco Perri came to Canada, more precisely to Toronto, on May 2, 1954. This date has been forever embedded in my memory. He came to Canada as a poor peasant *giornaliere* (day-worker) from the southern region of Calabria. His hometown was San Fili, Cosenza. He was unskilled, ignorant of Canadian life and language, and was for all purposes uneducated, reaching a grade 5 level of education in Italy. His 36 years in Canada have been recounted as living a life of sacrifice and pain. Despite the pain and suffering, he now owns a large, two-storey home, north of Toronto and is well established.

At this point I would like to establish my ethnic background. As the author of this thesis, it is important for me to note that I too, like my father, am Italian. I have visited Italy once, in 1972 and I speak and read the language fluently, these being important considerations in undertaking this work. My research covers many aspects of Italians in Canada. In particular post-World War II Italian immigration to Hamilton, specifically in two areas in Hamilton; Jamesville and Stoney Creek. Numerous processes have been involved in shaping today's Italian community. Factors such as discrimination, assimilation and social mobility, are only a few of these processes.

There have been many authors that have written about Italians in Canada. They have written about chain migration (Sturino, 1978), family (Nelli, 1983; Jansen, 1988), social mobility (Bagnell, 1989) and other aspects of immigrant life. They have also written accounts of Italian immigration to various cities in Canada; Montreal (Ramirez, 1981), Toronto (Zucci, 1988), Vancouver (Jansen, 1981), and even Hamilton (Symposium 1977). This last report was published in 1977. Since then, very little published work exists about Italians in Hamilton. My aim is to add to this account.

This is a story of Italian Canadians in Hamilton. It is very difficult to study all aspects of a given ethnic group in one particular area. There is a need to focus on key issues and themes that appear to be the most appropriate ones. The key theme in this thesis was meant to be the importance of the immigrants lives in an ever changing context particularly through: employment of immigrants over time, their family life and values, and their quality of life. This is created by an integration of social theory and reality to better understand social life. Hence several objectives were established. The objectives were as follows: To address the question of Italian-Canadians in the context of a

changing Hamilton. To describe changes in perceptions, lifestyles and attitudes of the Italian immigrant over time. To note changes in employment history in the Italian community with larger national trends. To apply qualitative methods in geography. To examine the usefulness of the ethnicity literature. To add to the literature of Italian immigration in both the Jamesville and Stoney Creek areas of Hamilton. And finally to understand the explanation of social life provided in the theories of structuration (including phenomenology) and restructuring.

To aid in the realization of these objectives, certain key questions were asked by the research, namely: How do these immigrants view themselves and life in Hamilton? Has employment of the Italians in Hamilton changed over time? Have the effects of the larger economic situation in Hamilton had any impacts on Italians? Are qualitative methods an effective way of analyzing ethnic groups? And finally, do social theories aid us to understand peoples motives and behaviour?

Given the methods that I chose to use, it became difficult to answer all the questions and objectives that I had initially set out. In-depth interviews and qualitative methods made it impossible to answer questions about restructuring and its impact on peoples lives. A much larger sample and qualitative methods would have been needed to address this particular issue. Regardless of this setback, I did learn more about the attitudes, changes, and perceptions of the immigrants lives. The document, because of this, began to evolve and it soon had a life and a direction of its own. Eventually there were questions about peoples lives, perceptions, attitudes and quality of life that the methods could better address.

The thesis is divided into seven more chapters. Chapter two looks at methods employed and Chapter three the literature connected. Chapter four is an historical account of life in Italy and Canada in the late 1800's to the

present. Chapter five deals with my research of Italians in Jamesville. Chapter six deals with my research of Italians in Stoney Creek. Chapter seven is a case study of an Italian-Canadian family in Hamilton. Finally, chapter eight addresses conclusions and possible avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODS

As a human geographer, I have always been interested in studying people and how they interact within a given space. To truly understand these processes and patterns that occur as a result of these interactions in a given space (gentrification, assimilation, immigration), I have always believed in research that deals directly with those under study. Rather than using secondary sources and quantitative data, I opted to speak and spend time with those that I studied, hence my attraction to qualitative methods.

Qualitative methods, according to Eyles (Johnston, 1986), are "ways of examining the social world whereby central importance is given to the actor's definitions and behaviour". The term covers a wide variety of approaches and is used interchangeably with field research, ethnography fieldwork and interpretive research. Regardless of what aspect of qualitative methodology is employed, its main purpose is to try to shed light on understanding how people act and how they give meaning to their life. The researcher must understand how his/her subjects interpret and define their reality and how they relate that to their behaviour (ibid). In many instances, these realities are shared with others. To fully understand this definition the research must be able to see the world as the actors see it (ibid). This is done as Blumer (1969) suggests by, "getting close to the people involved in it, seeing it in a variety of situations they meet, noting

their problems and observing how they handle them, being party to their conversations and watching their way of life as it flows along". The goal of qualitative methods as Malinowski (1922) suggests is "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of the world".

Some of the greatest works in qualitative sociology came from the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920's, when Znaniecki (1974) studied the Polish peasant experience in North America, Zorbaugh (1929) *The Near North Side*, Anderson (1961) *The Hobo*, and Louis Wirth (1928), *The Ghetto*. In all these cases the researcher took on the roles of those being studied and ventured into their communities to understand how actors viewed their society. Zorbaugh entered the slum and Anderson became a hobo and travelled the continental United States. In later work, Whyte (1942) entered the Italian slum and became a gang member.

For my research I adopted similar methods. The methods were observation, in-depth interviews and the life history approach. With observation, I spent many hours in the area with the respondents making detailed fieldnotes. Observation according to Douglas (1976) is the "primary basis of all truth". The more one sees the more one knows. There is though a danger of bias, but as observations increase the amount of bias may decrease (*ibid*). And finally the more observations one makes the more the final conclusions can be tested in more ways than is common in other forms of research (*ibid*).

Observation in social science is an interactive process (see Table 1). The task of the researcher and observer includes: " learning what information in society is needed for his/her social science (3); learning from people in society (2); what social role as observer will permit him/her to get from them (by interviews and other observations of behaviour) the relevant information in

society; getting in, staying in (surviving as a role of observer), and easing out" (Junker, 1960). Observations gave me a "feel" for the area which enhanced the knowledge I obtained through statistical sources.

The in-depth interviews were used to justify and further test my initial observations. In-depth semi structured interviews were also used so people had the opportunity to pursue interests and issues that were important to them. In-depth interviews help us to better understand ourselves. "The amount of information people can tell us, quite simply and reliably, about their past experience is very great; and it is only in light of that information, I would maintain, that we can frequently understand their behaviours in the 'here and now' that the participant observer is so close to" (Trow,1956).

Douglas (1976) establishes a continuum of existence to observation (see Figure 1). In this continuum he introduces methods used in social science and places them in an order, controlled/uncontrolled observations. The further down the continuum, the more we find observations that are controlled. These controlled observations are more and more the result of preconceived methods of observations, and less and less the kinds of observations that are done in our everyday natural situations (ibid). Note that in-depth interviews fall near the bottom, or controlled end of observations.

The life history approach is simply an account of a life, completed or ongoing (Mendelbaum 1973). The life history emphasizes the experiences and requirements of the individual, i.e. how a person copes with society rather than how society copes with the streams of individuals. Life is seen as a concrete experience and as an emergent perspective, a web of negotiations. It shows how lives are in constant states of becoming (Eyles, 1990). I employed the life history

FIGURE 1

**THE CONTINUUM OF FREE - FLOWING EXISTENCE
TO CONTROLLED OBSERVATIONS**

**EVERYDAY LIFE SOCIAL
EXPERIENCE AND THOUGHT**

Unconscious Experience
Subconscious Experience
Dreams
Conscious Experience
Practical Thought and Action
Diaries and Memoirs
Travelogues
On-Site Field visits and Reports

**EMERGENT SYSTEMATIC
THOUGHT**

Systematic Reflection
Philosophical Thought

FIELD RESEARCH

Participant Field Research

Depth-Probe Field Research
Investigative Reporting,
Detective Work
Covert Field Research
Overt Journalism and Police Work
Overt Field Research

Non-Participant Field Research

Discussion (free-flowing),
In-Depth Interviews
In-Depth Interviews with Flex-
ible Checklists of Questions

**CONTROLLED EXPERIMENTAL
RESEARCH**

Natural Experiments
Pre-programmed Interviews
(statistical)
Official-data and Business
Analysis Reports
Judicial Investigations (operat-
ing under Rules of Evidence)
Business Studies (Statistical)
Panel (test and retest) Studies
Laboratory Experiments
Questionnaires and Polls
Computer Simulation Studies
Mathematical Models

SOURCE: Douglas (1976)

approach because it tells us a story, a comprehensive story, and helps us grasp the experiences of ones life when dealing with particular issues.

Where does one begin with a project such as mine? Being new to Hamilton there was an immediate need for me to familiarize myself with the Italian population of the Hamilton-Wentworth area. Italians make up 16% of Hamilton's population (Statistics Canada, 1986). I had to first locate where Italians lived in the area. I spoke to a professor in the department and he directed me to a few areas in the city. He directed me to James and Barton, the Mountain and Stoney Creek. I had also taken a field methods course in Sociology in the first semester and had decided to study an ethnic neighbourhood in the city centre. I then selected two areas of the city that had larger than normal Italian populations (ibid) and found two census tracts. The census tract in Stoney Creek had approximately 28% of its inhabitants that claimed their ethnic origin/mother tongue as Italian. The census tract in Jamesville was approximately made of 35% that claimed their ethnic origin/mother tongue as Italian. I selected only one census tract in each area because census tracts are quite large and difficult to cover on foot.

At this point I had selected the areas but I had as of yet not selected the people I was going to speak to. I then went to the city directory for 1989 and selected a short list of fifteen Italians that lived in each area. The city directory listed people in alphabetical street order and it also showed the number of years they lived at the residence. I selected names that appeared Italian, ending in an 'i' or 'zzi' or 'otti'.

After selecting the names I proceeded to select the proper tools a researcher needed to enter the field; comfortable shoes, T-shirt, pens, pencils, a tape recorder and numerous notepads. I also made a mental list of topics and

questions that needed to be covered in my interviews. The list was taken from Eyles' research on the Sense of Place (1985). I then entered the field. It sounds so simple. It was not like that at all. It took approximately three months to enter the field. Initially it was because I thought I was not prepared, so I prepared. Then it was fear, then it was too hot, or cold, or rainy. I made every possible excuse, not to enter the field. Then finally one warm July afternoon I entered the field. I selected the Jamesville area first because it was the closest area to my home.

I knocked on the first door and after a few minutes an elderly woman opened the door and said, "I speak no English". Suddenly I tried my best to speak to the woman in my best Italian dialect. It failed -- she had no time. My first response was a NO! That afternoon I knocked on twelve doors from the names on my list and only one woman agreed to an interview. The woman was eighty-years old. That interview, like many of them, was carried out in Italian and lasted approximately ninety minutes. It was tape-recorded, as were all forty-four of them, except for one. The interviews were semi-structured, open-ended and in many cases, extremely emotionally exhausting. In ninety minutes, I would have sat through an entire life of an individual, listening to the painful memories of war, death, loss of a loved one, family tragedies, sickness and love.

After the first day in the field I came home to quickly transcribe my interview. The transcription was not a complete word for word account. The material was then categorized. I gathered information on employment, housing, quality of life and family. As the days went on, the transcriptions did not follow the interview, and the categorization did not occur until the very end of the research.

The initial purpose of my research was to study the impact of restructuring or economic change on the lives of the Italians that lived in Stoney Creek and Jamesville. I got this information through the story telling of one's life. But the project grew. People told me more than their employment history. And because of this I became interested in the full lives and the histories of these Italians.

I quickly got through all the names of the first list of fifteen. I was hoping that after one interview, I would be given other names of willing participants for my study. This process is known as snowball sampling. It did not occur. I went back to the assessment rolls and selected another fifty names from each area. Back I went into the field.

It was horrendous. There were days in August 1989 that I would come home after knocking on ten to twelve doors without getting a single yes. It was difficult for me to handle. I went to the study area in the morning, late at night, on weekends and weeknights. Nothing seemed to work. I spoke in English and then entirely in Italian. Some would say yes, they would set up a time and then they would not show up, or their spouse would disagree to the idea of being interviewed. Then I resorted to what many researchers do as a last resort, I begged. I suppose it worked initially. More people would say yes, but for some it was so painful to agree to be interviewed. Then I met a key member of the community and he directed me to a few others and yes, for a brief moment, a snowball sampling was occurring. At the end of the first stage of research, sixteen people had agreed to be interviewed in Jamesville, and eighteen people had rejected.

Stoney Creek the other study area was much further away from my home. It took about one and a half hours to get there by public transportation. I had

made a list of all the names and quickly entered the field. This area was in the suburbs and anyone that looked suspicious was not welcomed. The rejection continued to a larger scale. It was very discouraging and I needed the help of a few of my colleagues to keep my spirits up. I made it!!

The interviews occurred in many interesting areas. They took place on front porches, during dinner, at social clubs, in dark dingy basements, in kitchens and even in living rooms that had not been used in years. The interviews were usually conducted in Italian and in many cases both spouses were present.

Regardless of the locations of these interviews, the people in Stoney Creek were much more colder. The rejection rates were much higher. Of sixty-six people approached, only sixteen agreed to be interviewed, 24% agreed and 76% declined. The people in this area were more suspicious and it was extremely difficult for a snowball sampling to occur. I would complete an interview and then I would ask if they knew of anybody else that would help me out. They would say, "try so and so". Then I would ask if I could tell them that they sent me -- "Oh no, no. Don't go", was the response. Regardless of this lack of guidance or direction, they truly treated me with great respect and admiration. They would serve me alcohol, coffee, fed me cake and cookies, made spaghetti with lobster, and even wanted me to continue to call and visit them.

But the research itself was difficult. It started in July 1989 and ended sometime in November 1989. I was forced to do three to four interviews per day to complete this phase of my work. I would go to Stoney Creek at 9:00 a.m. and in some cases get home at 1:30 a.m. Going door to door was not successful. There were many rejections and therefore the need for new lists. I therefore opted to call people on the phone to tell them a little bit about myself and my research. The conversations were conducted in Italian and the response was very

good. I now realize that if I did not speak Italian, this research could have never been completed. I should have called people earlier -- well you learn. I did learn when I conducted my case study. I contacted a member of a prominent Italian family in Hamilton. It was through him that I was able to gather key informants of this family. In total, I spoke to twelve family members; six males, six females - - six in the first generation and six in the second generation. The purpose of this was to give a particular form to the Italian-Canadian migration experience.

The transcriptions and categorization were completed by mid-February. I went through all the data and selected key passages and insights that I was to use. I placed these materials aside and tried to link it with material written on ethnicity, Italians in Hamilton, and a few very interesting things came up. After this point, I was collecting anything that contained the word Italian in it. I gathered data from census tracts from 1971, spoke to professors, read articles, books, spoke to people at planning boards, Ethnocultural Data Base and checked bibliographies. Through all of this, I collected hundreds of pieces of data. The main reason for this was to show what I was finding did make sense and that the data in these areas were not anomalies. In doing so, I think that I relived the techniques and exhaustive nature in which the Chicago School of the 1920's conducted their research. That there is a "great need to utilize multiple methods to discover social actions, interactions and meanings is also recognized by social anthropologists. Thus, Malinowski (1922) recognized that statistical documentation (for tribal organization), detailed observation (for life and behaviour patterns) and statements and utterances (for a "feel" of mentality) were required" (Johnston, 1986).

SUMMARY

Numerous techniques were used to gather information on Italian-Canadians in Hamilton. The census, observations, in-depth interviews, and life histories were used as methods in collecting the data sets so some initial questions had to remain unanswered. With quantitative methods, the nature of the process tends to change the research questions themselves. But to interpret these questions the literature on migrants and other pertinent theories will be addressed.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will place the study in the context of existing literature and relevant theory. Due to the nature of the material, no one theory is all encompassing and can explain all facets of Italian ethnicity or how they perceive their environment. This chapter is broken down into three distinct and separate areas. The first section will address issues in social theory: Phenomenology and Structuration. Social theory will help the reader make "sense" and give an explanation of social life. Its main emphasis is on the interplay between structure and agency. Part two will address concepts in restructuring. Restructuring will help set the framework and processes that emerge from an economic shift and the impacts of them. And finally the last section will review theories on ethnicity; assimilation, social closure and boundary formation. Ethnic literature will help to place the immigrant in some context within the mainstream society.

STRUCTURATION THEORY

Structuration theory is defined by Johnston (1986) as an "approach to social theory concerned with the interactions between knowledgeable and capable

human agents and wider social systems and social structures in which they are necessarily implicated". To understand how the theory of structuration works, one must firstly understand these four concepts: agency, social system, structure and duality of structure.

Agency describes the repetitive practices that individuals engage in over time and across space. Human agency is reflexive and routinized. The term does not imply the intentions people have to perform an act in a given time and space, but to the capabilities they possess. Giddens (1984) believes that the term implies power. Individuals have total control over agency in the sense that they act from a previous state of knowledge. This knowledge may stem from either discursive (expressed) consciousness or practical (occurring through routine but is not expressed) consciousness (ibid).

Social systems are the activities of human agents reproduced across time and space. They are regarded as "relations of interdependence, involving the situated activities of human subjects and existing syntagmatically in the flow of time" (Ibid). The social system is the ongoing and shifting pattern of human agency. Conversely, structure refers to the rules and resources of social systems which allow for continuity across time and space. To summarize these concepts: agency refers to practices which occur over time and across space, structures refer to the rules and resources which contain those practices within certain limits of continuity, and system refers to the historical pattern which the human activity produces. If this is the case, then "structures are processes and as such are continually being modified as the action which constitutes them changes" (Duncan, 1985). This is the duality of structure, in which agency produces structure produces agency produces structure to an infinity. Giddens defines the concept in this fashion "By the duality of structure, I refer to the essential

recursive character of social life: the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems" (Giddens, 1982).

In summary, structuration theory conceptualizes changes in social systems as a result of a recursive interaction between social structure and human agency.

PHENOMENOLOGY

Each successive generation is taught how to conceive things through acculturation and socialization. Socialization is also concerned with how we perceive and interpret events in our lives. It is through socialization that phenomenology begins. In everyday life we interpret events continually: This is a book, that is a dog, pigs roll in mud, etc. We interpret as such for we were brought up in this fashion. We think nothing of these events. Wolff (1978) refers to the attitude we take as a 'natural' attitude.

Phenomenology asks us to question these notions and not accept things as given or taken for granted. A chair is a chair, but why is it a chair? Phenomenology continually is questioning all facets in life, in short, our culture. How do we question things?

The work of Alfred Schutz helps answer the question of how to question things. The key to Schutz's phenomenology is intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity is "how we understand each other and how we come to have similar perceptions and conceptions of the world" (Mennell, 1974). Schutz begins his analysis through defining the life world, everyday world, the taken for granted world. He defines it as "the sphere of physical and social objects within which men live,

work, meet and pursue routine activities" (ibid). In short, our life worlds are the way we perform our activities in any given day. In this world, the life world, people are not concerned with interpretations of all events that would take place within it. Instead we try to make our ways through it. A chair is a chair, so we sit on it. We don't stop and ask why? or how it came to be? In this sense, we are content that things came to be in our world before we came into it. Things were in place before us. As mentioned earlier, it is through knowledge of events (socialization) that we make our way through the world.

This previous knowledge comes from our biographical situation. Schutz refers to it as everything we were born with and had. In most cases, a biographical situation is comprised of a family raised by parents and so on. It is in these situations that each individual acquires his/her stock of knowledge. Schutz believes that it is impossible that two people know exactly the same things and that no one person knows everything about everything. Everybody's stock of knowledge is different. Even though we don't share the same knowledge, we have the reciprocity of perspectives. That is that we have the ability to see things as others do (ibid). In other words, we can understand that the world is meaningful to others. This meaningfulness may be seen in Schutz's idea of typifications. Typifications are simply categories or classifications that we make to understand the world and in general, reality. He argues that these typifications are handed down to us by successive generation. This also includes "efficient recipes for the use of typical means for bringing about typified ends in typical solutions" (Schutz, 1964). The isolation of typifications can help us understand why the social world is meaningful to a particular individual or group. The social scientist may do this by isolating his/her own second order typifications or constructs (Eyles and Donovan, 1986). Phenomenology is therefore

useful in placing the meaningfulness of others at centre stage and allowing us to realize the importance of scientific interpretation.

RESTRUCTURING: THEORY AND REALITY

The term is a complex one. In the most general sense, restructuring "encompasses the study of production, distribution and accumulation of surface capital, the determination of wages, prices and employment and the efficacy of political arrangements" (Johnston, 1986). In advanced countries such as Canada, the economy is shifting from basic manufacturing industries that are both labour and cost intensive to service sector activity; information systems, specialized, high technology production and low level, low-paying part-time retail trades. The consequences of this shift in economic sectors are numerous; uneven regional development, unemployment, plant shut-downs, and community disintegration (Straudohar, 1983). On the larger international scale, developing countries, Mexico, Brazil and Korea have become manufacturing centres for developed countries such as Canada and the United States. This is occurring due to less government control in both developed and developing countries which have lower wages and less union representation.

Lovering (1989) sees the approach of restructuring as lying in Marxist analysis and dealing entirely with the fact that economies are organized on a capitalist basis.

Capital in developed countries is able to move freely. There is very little government intervention on where and when firms are to locate. Capital is thus able to move between industries and national boundaries. There are numerous

ways how capital moves. According to Harrison and Bluestone (1984), there are five ways:

- (1) Redirect Profits - send profits to other firms with new profits.
- (2) Redirect Profits and depreciation - let plant run down, etc.
- (3) Remove Physical Capital - sell machines, inventories, etc.
- (4) Shutdown or Bankruptcy - close old facility
- (5) Actual physical relocation of the facility to a new site.

Holmes (1988) believes that restructuring is an attempt to re-establish or create conditions under which profitable accumulation can occur once again. Restructuring occurs when there is a crisis in accumulation. A crisis would entail lower returns to shareholders, expensive overhead costs, or crises as different phases of capitalist development occur.

Restructuring can also be broken down into these three component parts in the existing literature. It refers to:

- (1) the way capitalist enterprises respond to changing competition by altering their products or services and the way production and distribution are organized.
- (2) the way these changes result in consequential changes in the way economic activity is organized across geographical space, through the creation and destruction of spatial division of labour. (Peet, 1983; Massey, 1984)
- (3) or is concerned to explicate some of the limbs between the spatial division of labour and the geographical pattern of social relations (Lovering, 1989).

Restructuring is primarily an issue of the last twenty years. Bluestone (1984) sees the phenomenon as staggering. In a study that he conducted in the decade of the 1970's in the United States, he concluded that between 32 to 38 million jobs had disappeared. The losses occurred in plant closings and interstate and overseas movement of business establishments. Many were shut down not because they were losing profits, but because they were not profitable enough.

Firms are more or less able to locate where they see fit. In many cases, local governments would give tax breaks to these firms. Workers would be pitted against workers in other areas. Firms would threaten to leave unless their employees would take a cut in their wages. Employees had no choice but to accept the decrease in pay. In doing so, restructuring has an impact of lessening labour cohesiveness; it fragments labour protests. In doing so, it can further take advantage of the labour these people possess.

In another study, Bluestone (ibid) realized that workers were shifting down the occupational spectrum. From 1957 to 1975, 833,000 workers in the New England's old-mill based industries (apparel, textile, shoes, rubber goods) were employed. In 1975, 674,000 people no longer worked in this sector. Firms had shut down and relocated to South Korea and Singapore. Only 3% of these people went to the high technology industries, 16% went into retail trade and low wage service jobs like those at McDonald's and K-Mart. Many others were unable to find work in the region and left to find work elsewhere with mixed success.

In sum for the developed world, restructuring involves a shift from manufacturing to service sector employment. In this transition, high paying jobs are substituted for lower paying ones often only offered as part-time work. The real data on plant closure is hardly ever made public. A paper submitted by the Planning and Development Department of Regional Municipality of the Hamilton-Wentworth in 1988 showed that there was an increase of 27% of those employed in the service sector. The participation rate in this period jumped from 56% to 61% for women. In actual numbers, it jumped from 76,600 to 97,200. The service industry provides jobs in the education, health, personal and business services. The paper also shows that employment in Hamilton increased from 77,800 to 79,500 in 1987. Not all the industries showed increases in numbers.

In another report titled, "Job Losses \ Job Gains", published by the Social Planning Department of Hamilton-Wentworth (1988), showed that between 1986 and 1987, 2,979 jobs were created in the region. It showed that 60% of the new jobs were created in the service sector from 142 new firms. It also showed that 2,500 jobs were lost. It did not report where the jobs were lost, but it is evident that the majority of the jobs were from the manufacturing sector. The report did not count the number of lost jobs from these manufacturing firms: Robinson Cone, Reid Dominion, Kiwi Polish Company, Canadian Cannery Slacan and numerous others.

There has been a shift in sectors in the Hamilton economy in the last twenty five years. There has been an increase of 18% in services and a decrease of 23% in manufacturing (see Table 2).

Restructuring causes a change in economic circumstances which will impact differently on different groups. How have the Italian Canadians been affected by these shifts and the more turbulent national economy? Do Italians work in the service sector? Are they employed in the manufacturing sector? Have they recently lost their jobs due to this shift from one sector to the other? Or are they unaffected? These questions will be addressed further on in this thesis. Thus, we are not concerned with the theory of the causes of restructuring but instead the outcomes of it in the Hamilton area.

ETHNICITY

All groups are in some way "special", and the effects of restructuring and how they cope will be affected by their characteristics. Important for the

TABLE 2

LABOUR FORCE BY INDUSTRY, METROPOLITAN HAMILTON, 1951 - 1986

INDUSTRY GROUP	1951		1961		1971		1981		1986	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Primary Industries	1,698	2	4,501	3	3,935	2	5,380	2	6,065	2
Manufacturing	59,553	52	61,090	40	73,295	35	89,320	32	80,970	29
Construction	7,246	7	10,585	7	13,390	6	16,285	6	16,875	6
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities	6,939	6	9,374	6	10,380	5	14,770	5	15,085	5
Wholesale, Retail Trade	16,240	14	24,028	16	32,195	15	46,290	17	52,460	18
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	2,775	2	4,969	3	8,410	4	13,630	5	15,980	5
Community, Business, and Personal services	15,242	13	28,830	19	49,520	23	78,770	28	91,145	31
Public Administration and Defence	3,385	3	5,438	4	7,960	4	11,045	4	12,195	4
Unspecified	905	1	2,822	2	13,575	6	3,255	1	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	113,393	100	151,637	100	212,660	100	278,745	100	290,775	100

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Burghardt and Peace (1988)

Italian-Canadians is their ethnicity. The major themes of which are: assimilation, segregation, congregation, boundary formation, social closure, and various theories of ethnicity. The first major hurdle to clear is one of definition. What does it mean to be ethnic? There are many definitions that can be found throughout all of the literature. All seem to possess a few key characteristics. Weber (Isajiw, 1979) attributes four key themes to the concept of ethnicity: common ancestral origin, same culture, religion, language. The definition I chose to use is one that is found in the Dictionary of Human Geography (Johnson, 1986). Johnston believes that ethnicity is a "distinct category of a larger population whose culture is usually different from its own. The members of such a group are or feel themselves to be, or thought to be, bound together by common ties of race, nationality, religion or culture". The key concepts in the term are separateness and distinctiveness.

BOUNDARY FORMATION

Ethnicity is not only dependent on individuals seeing themselves as being different from the mainstream culture, but others must identify these ethnics as being different. Barth (Migliore, 1988) believes that "ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristics of organization and interaction between people". It is through this process of on going interactions that people create boundaries. As interactions between groups continue, so are the (ethnic) boundaries formed. These boundaries are constantly being defined and redefined by the actors involved. These boundaries are set up by both the individual and the containing society.

Boundaries separate the 'we' group from the 'they' group. Wallman (1986) believes that these boundaries arise because of "some kind of 'us' -- consciousness arises as soon as the actor encounters difference and since in cities he encounters different kinds of difference, ethnic boundaries soon come to be recognized as a problematic feature of the immigrant's experience of poly-ethnic urban life".

Migliore (1988) gives us an example of how these boundaries are maintained. He uses the case of the Sicilians in Hamilton and uses their religious festival of the Feast of the Madonna della Monte to indicate how boundaries are maintained. The feast takes place annually in Hamilton and it involves the Sicilians of Hamilton paying homage and respect to the patron saint of the village of Racalmuto. The festival makes Sicilians and in particular the Racalmutese different and very much apart from other people in Hamilton. The feast is only recognized by the people in the Jamesville parish of All Souls and thus attended primarily by members of its' congregation. Migliore believes that individuals make use of various key symbols to express their cultural identity and to identify themselves as members of a particular ethnic group (ibid). Other examples of this are FestItalia in Hamilton, Chin picnic in Toronto and the many religious festivals throughout all of Ontario.

Wallman (1986) discusses different types of systems and boundaries. She develops two types of systems, an open system and a closed system. The open system is heterogeneous. It consists of different people working in different jobs and interacting with numerous individuals. The boundary for such a community is easy to penetrate. It is easy for an individual to enter within an area of such. By finding employment in this type of a community, the boundary has been crossed. Conversely, the closed system is such where individuals work together,

live together, drink together, interact with each other and even marry each others daughters. Jamesville can be seen to be a good example of a semi-closed, somewhat static system. Membership in this community is ascribed by birth or marriage and entrance into this system is difficult.

These boundaries are formed throughout many parts of the city but are most evident in parts of the city where the concentration of ethnic groups is the highest. In many respects, certain ethnic groups have little choice as to where they locate in the city. Burgess (1928) and Park (1952) outline this concept in their ecological approach to the city that was devised in Chicago in the 1920's. In their approach, they stated that immigrants settled in areas of the city that were located near the central business district. They named this zone the "zone of transition". Immigrants lived in rooming homes that were run down and very close to the cities industries. Jamesville in the 1950's would be a prime example of a zone of transition. And for the Italian-Canadians today, it is vital to look for the importance of 'we' and boundaries in enhancing or inhibiting responses to the outside world.

SOCIAL CLOSURE

Social closure according to Parkin (1979) is a "process by which social collectives seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles". The limited circle of eligibles for this research would be the dominant culture. The way in which the dominant culture maximizes its rewards is through exclusionary closure. Exclusionary closure is the attempt by one group to secure for itself a privileged position at

the expense of some other group through a process of subordination (ibid). In this respect, power is exerted in a downward fashion. The dominant culture excludes subordinate cultures through: (1) institution of property and (2) credentials.

The dominant culture prevents or excludes minorities from owning property. They do this according to Parkin to control the means of production. An individual would remain subordinate if property is never purchased. The second item of exclusionary closure is one of credentials. The dominant culture places an extreme importance on academic and professional credentials. In doing so, they could monitor the entrance of key positions in the division of labour. As an example, one can look to any large corporation and an important position within this firm becomes available. In all cases, a university degree is needed to gain access to these positions. Ethnic groups including the Italians do not aspire to educational heights. The reason for this is that education is still not highly valued amongst these groups. Yet, over years these rigid forms of exclusionary closure disappear and ethnic communities gain access. This appears to be the present trend. There are now more ethnic individuals that are pursuing educational achievements and because of this, they are achieving better employment and in turn begin to purchase property and land. Regardless of these trends, social closure still exists. According to Parkin, social closure exists because it is based on liberal ideology and is "grounded in genuine and uncompromising individualism" (ibid). These notions will be examined with the Italian-Canadians in Hamilton with respect to their values.

ASSIMILATION

Over time, social closure becomes less evident and ethnic groups appear to dissipate. The term that describes this is assimilation. Assimilation is a process of boundary reduction that can occur when members of two or more societies or of smaller groups meet. Seen as a complete process it is the blending into one of formerly distinguishable socio-cultural groups (Yinger, 1981). Assimilation is also a function of four processes: amalgamation, identification, acculturation and integration.

Acculturation is a process of change toward greater cultural similarity brought about by contact between two or more groups (ibid). When an immigrant enters a new community, she/he is in constant interaction with the dominant culture. She/he becomes accustomed to the mainstream cultures way of life and begins to act more like them. This is the stage of identification: a stage of two worlds. Marginalization is possible as migrants do not know what identity to choose, Italian or Canadian. Eventually, the migrant's children may select the Canadian way of life. Yinger defines the next stage, integration, as a process of structural assimilation of persons from two or more formerly separate sub-societies into a set of shared interactions, which intensify as a result of common interests and language. Finally, amalgamation occurs with intermarriage and race and biology become mixed.

Glaser's (1958) model posits similarly four stages, i.e.: segregating stage, marginal stage, desegregating stage and assimilation.

In stage one, the segregating stage, immigrants look to each other for social and emotional support and identity. The immigrants feel distinct, are

ethnocentric and want to insulate themselves as much as possible. They want to keep their ethnic identity.

In stage two, the marginal stage, the individual is uncertain. There is a certain amount of assimilation already felt. Members of the group relate to others outside their group. The immigrant is lost and torn between two societies. Some anxiety is felt.

The third stage, the desegregating stage, the immigrant avoids all connections with his/her ethnic group. The individual is critical of his/her own ethnic group. The stigma of being an immigrant is lessened and slowly the individual feels a part of the mainstream and wants to be accepted by the mainstream. The immigrant starts to think in the "Canadian way".

The final stage is total assimilation. Glaser argues that very few people get to this stage. He believes that if one is totally assimilated, one does not categorize others according to ascribed features of ethnicity but normally is oriented toward the acceptance of others on the basis of individual qualities. It may be hypothesized that Italian-Canadians are at the desegregating stage.

In fact, attention has been focused on this stage of identity change. According to Andrew Greeley (1971), ethnic identity changes occur in a six phase process. The first stage is named cultural shock. Let us assume that an immigrant enters a foreign land. She/He quickly is disoriented, disorganized and extremely fearful. The importance for the immigrant here is to just survive. The Italian immigrant entering Canada would not speak the language. This is cultural shock.

Greeley names the second stage as organization and emerging self consciousness. In this stage, leadership emerges among ethnic enclaves. This would be in the form of clergy, journalists, fraternities and political

organizations. The immigrants learn the language and their children attend schools. There is upward occupational and social mobility. The immigrants moves from the unskilled to the skilled, students to professors, and they begin to accumulate wealth. They also begin to get involved in politics and achieve political positions.

The third stage is the assimilation of the elite. It is the elite-community leaders- that assimilate firstly. They struggle to win acceptance and climb to be members of the lower-middle class. Some break out of ethnic mobility pyramids by shunning their ethnic backgrounds.

The next stage is the militancy stage. The ethnic group evolves into the middle class (some are already in upper class). Members develop and maintain their own cultural and social institutions modelled after those in the wider society. The militancy is that they try to outdo Canadian institutions. They hold elaborate balls, dances and very expensive weddings, these being examples of militancy.

Stage five is the self-hatred and anti-militancy. Many more of the ethnic group has assimilated or accepted into mainstream society. The new generation is now embarrassed by the strident and abrasive thrusts of the militant people and groups of their respective ethnic communities. The new elites are now alienating themselves from their ethnicity. This is so because more of them are being accepted by the macro-society. This reason being that their values and ideals are more like the wider Canadian culture. They become extremely critical of their own culture and ethnicity.

The final stage is one of emerging adjustment. In this stage the new generation has no zealous pride and yet no shame about its ethnic heritage. The

people in this stage (second generation immigrant children) want to know about their past, but are happy to remain entrenched in the Canadian mainstream. These stages will be explored with some of the material from the Hamilton case study.

DISSIMILATION

The last two sections dealt with assimilation, but not all ethnic groups assimilate. Some groups remain very distinct groups within society. Yinger (1981) refers to this process as dissimilation and he gives three reasons why this occurs. The first reason is due to primordial attachments. In this case one affirms that "these are my people", and "this is my culture and heritage". The second reason for the re-emergence of ethnicity is that many individuals have a difficult time in identifying with a large heterogeneous, rapidly changing society. This is what is known as anomie, alienation and universality and it is evident throughout all of society. In this case, individuals believe that "ethnicity helps one to preserve some sense of community, to know who one is, to overcome the feeling of being a "cipher" in an anonymous world" (ibid). The final reason is the one that Yinger believes is the key. He believes that ethnicity is renewed because it is useful in the struggle for power, status and income. This occurs because the individual is not fully accepted in the host society. In most cases the individuals (immigrants) have acquired advancements in education and occupation, but they lack economic and political strength. Ethnic groups use their ethnicity to achieve these last two items. The re-emergence of ethnicity becomes an instrument for opposing this status inconsistency created by their rejection into mainstream society.

SUMMARY

Three sets of theories were used to help understand how Italian-Canadians made sense of their "world". They explain how individuals give meaning and order to their lives. The theory of restructuring allows us to note the affects of this outcome on peoples lives. Finally the ethnicity literature helps us to understand how Italian-Canadians cope with these outcomes and changes. Qualitative methods appear best to allow us to examine how individuals cope with their daily lives. The next chapter will address some background information needed to place the research into context.

CHAPTER FOUR

ITALIANS IN ITALY AND HAMILTON

To fully understand Italians in Canada it is important to understand how Italians lived in Italy. Italy is made up of two very distinct and diverse economic areas, the North and the South. The people who were fortunate to live in the northern regions (north of Rome, see Map 1) lived mainly in areas of industry, fertile lands and temperate climates. Because of this, there was an abundance of jobs and a good quality of life. The area of the south, from Rome to Sicily, also known as the mezzogiorno (middle day), was an area of unemployment, poverty, famine and misery (Nelli, 1972). Because of this, the South experienced the greatest migration (see Figures 2 and 3). According to Nelli the only resource of this region was the people.

The discrepancy between regions had always existed in Italy, but after unification in 1861, the discrepancy became greater. After unification, the entire southern region became heavily taxed. This made life in the south even more unbearable. The north had always supported the south and it was now time for the southern region to pull its own. This was impossible. The southern region, had very few industries and hence employment in factories was minimal. The region relied heavily on the contadino (land owner) and the giorniliere (day labourer) as the means for existence. Coupled with the lack of industry, the

MAP 1

ITALY: REGIONS AND PRINCIPAL TOWNS



SOURCE: Jansen (1988)

FIGURE 2

**PROVINCIAL ORIGINS OF TORONTO'S ITALIANS
BASED ON MARRIAGE RECORDS (1908 - 1935)**

(In Order of Importance)

PROVINCE	REGION	AREA	% OF TOTAL
Trapani	Sicily	South	7.6
Foggia	Puglia	South	6.8
Cosenza	Calabria	South	6.7
Palermo	Sicily	South	6.1
Campobasso	Molise	South	6.0
Udine	Friuli	North	5.2
Chieti	Abruzzi	South	4.8
Siracusa	Sicily	South	4.7
Bari	Puglia	South	4.2
Teramo	Abruzzi	South	4.2
Matera	Basilicata	South	3.9
Caserta	Campania	South	3.7
Reggio	Calabria	South	3.3
Roma	Lazio	Central	3.3
Frosinone	Lazio	Central	3.0
Potenza	Basilicata	South	2.3
Torino	Piemonte	North	2.2
Aquila	Abruzzi	South	2.1

SOURCE: Jansen (1988)

FIGURE 3

**PERSONS CANCELLED FROM THE ITALIAN POPULATION
REGISTERS WITH DESTINATION CANADA (1955 - 1980)**

(In Order of Importance)

PROVINCE	REGION	AREA	% OF TOTAL
Campobasso	Molise	South	9.9
Cosenza	Calabria	South	7.4
Catanzaro	Calabria	South	6.9
Frosinone	Lazio	Central	6.4
Udine	Friuli	North	5.2
Bari	Puglia	South	5.0
Treviso	Veneto	North	4.0
Agrigento	Sicily	South	3.8
L'Aquila	Abruzzi	South	3.8
Reggio	Calabria	South	3.4
Siracusa	Sicily	South	3.2
Chieti	Abruzzi	South	3.0
Foggia	Puglia	South	2.8
Pescara	Abruzzi	South	2.3
Caserta	Campania	South	2.0
Trapani	Sicily	South	2.0
Latina	Lazio	Central	2.0

SOURCE: Jansen (1988)

region had experienced numerous natural disasters during the pre 1900's. The region could not support its' population.

The people of the south were generally uneducated, unskilled, peasant farmers. In most cases, they lived in deplorable conditions. The peasant house consisted of only "one room that served as kitchen, bedroom and usually as quarters for the barnyard animals as well, unless there happened to be an outhouse" (ibid). In many cases, the one room dwelling slept the entire family and at times, only a curtain separated the livestock from the beds.

The region itself, and the people within it, were closed to the outside world. Society was static. Life for many southerners was confined to the commune (village). The commune formed the social centre and circumscribed the social horizon of most southern Italians. Depending mainly on its own resources for economic support and restricting marriage largely to members of its own group, it was almost a complete entity in itself (Williams, 1938). This regionalization was termed as campanilismo; meaning that which is within sound of the village bell (ibid). Because of this narrow mindedness and rigid social system, upward mobility was impossible for the regions' people. To further complicate matters, interactions in the south were very limited. The south was a "very hostile and impersonal one and trust was given only to the nuclear family" (Nelli, 1972). Envy, jealousy and suspicion, typified contacts with an attitude toward the wider family group and society (ibid).

Thus emigration was, or soon became, a vital safety valve for dissatisfaction and discontent. The government looked upon massive emigration as the easiest and most convenient means of relieving potentially disruptive socioeconomic and political pressures in the south (ibid). Hence began the first wave of a succession of waves of Italian emigration. The main reason for this

exodus was the fact that the Italians wanted to escape the wretched poverty and vicious system of taxation that fell squarely on the shoulders of the poor peasant. Other reasons for their departures were: (i) destitution, (ii) lack of work, (iii) a natural desire to improve their conditions.

The initial emigration of Italians was directed to areas in Europe; Austria, Germany, France and Belgium (see Table 3). It was in these areas that Italians worked in salt and coal mines and construction. Other immigrants ventured to Australia, Brazil and Argentina. Finally, a few of them ventured to the United States and fewer still to Canada. Any place was better than what they left at home. In spite of their home situations, the intentions of these early immigrants were to stay in these foreign countries for short periods of time. In the majority of the cases, single males emigrated first; in six to eight months they would earn as much money as they could and go back to their villages and purchase their own parcels of land (Spada, 1969). The immigrant would send money to his homeland with hopes of returning to a better life. This pattern of returning to Italy occurred in some cases to those that migrated to Europe, but few returned from the journey to Canada. Many decided to stay to build a future for themselves and their families in a distant, relatively unknown land.

THE HISTORY OF ITALIANS IN HAMILTON

Hamilton's location and industry have always been magnets for immigration. At the turn of the century, the city had a population of 52,634. Of this, only 100 were of Italian extraction. Approximately 90% of the population at the time was of British descent. In the next decade, the figure for Italians was

TABLE 3

DESTINATIONS OF ITALIAN EMIGRANTS IN PERIODS (1876-1976)

DESTINATION	1876 - 1915		1916 - 1942		1946 - 1976	
	EMIGRANTS	%	EMIGRANTS	%	EMIGRANTS	%
EUROPE	6,137,250	44	2,245,660	52	5,109,860	69
U.S.A.	4,156,880	30	1,045,850	24	488,483	7
CANADA	148,565	1	47,762	1	440,796	6
S. AMERICA	3,317,170	24	826,716	19	944,518	13
OCEANIA	18,437	0	49,144	1	360,708	5
OTHER	248,798	2	140,108	3	102,965	1
TOTAL	14,027,100	100	4,355,240	100	7,447,330	100

SOURCE: Jansen (1988)

1,442; in 1921 this jumped to 3,268 or about three percent of the total city population. It became even at that time the largest non-British ethnic group (Symposium, 1977). Many of these early settlers were organ-grinders, fruit peddlers and railway-workers.

western province

* The early 1900's was also a time of great expansion in the Western provinces. Due to the advancement of industry in Hamilton, it became a centre of manufacturing goods supplying the West. Therefore, there was a need to attract large numbers of unskilled labourers that could help in the manufacturing process. It was because of this abundance of jobs, that many non-English speaking immigrants ventured to Hamilton to work and possibly to settle (Rahman, 1980). This economic attractiveness was increased by the presence of the iron and steel mills. Some figures place the number of Italians employed by the mills in the early 1920's as high as 300 (Symposium, 1977). Many of these plants were located in the North end of the city where the migrant also settled. Slowly, these areas developed numerous support services for the immigrant. Clubs, cafes and churches emerged. The housing of these immigrants was primarily in rooming homes. The immigrant was primarily male and between the ages of eighteen and twenty five.

The Italian immigrant was also unskilled, uneducated and had intentions of only working a few seasons in Hamilton and migrating back to Italy. Many soon realized that this was impossible. It was too expensive to venture back to Italy after every season of work. So instead, they stayed the winter months in boarding homes with as many as ten or twelve others. These homes had one kitchen, one bathroom and a few cots. The areas in which these homes were located in were full of disease and squalor. Alcoholism, hooliganism and prostitution were also present.

Discrimination in the early 1930's was also evident in Hamilton. Italians were restricted to living in certain areas of the city because they were deemed as undesirable. They were restricted from living in the Westdale and Scott Park areas in Hamilton (Rahman, 1980). Some deeds contained clauses such as;

★ "The lands herein described shall not be used, occupied by or let or sold to Negroes, Asiatics, Bulgarians, Austrians, Russians, Serbs, Romanians, Turks, Armenians, whether British subjects or not, or foreign born Italians, Greeks and Jews" (Symposium, 1977).

There was also name calling: WOPS, DAGO, SPAGHETTI BENDER, and discriminatory hiring practices used by employers, that Italians faced. According to Weaver (1982) many employers didn't even keep the names of their employees, they would call them 'Joe' and assign them a number.

The growth of Hamilton continued through the 1930's: its population rising to 155,000 in 1931. There was very little immigration in this era. In Canada, the depression had set in and Italy was facing political changes in their economy. The Fascists and Mussolini came to power. When the war started, the Italians in Canada or Italians in general became the enemies. For this reason immigration from Italy virtually ceased. From 1940 to 1945, there were only 478 Italian immigrants to Canada; only 48 in 1942. In Hamilton, Italians now numbered 6,294, doubling from the 1921. They now made up four percent of Hamilton's population. This increase saw more services, more churches and more clubs that developed in these areas (ibid).

During the war years, the Italians in Hamilton continued to face discrimination. Many of the immigrants were traced to connections with the fascist government in Italy. They were interned at camps north of Toronto, Camp Borden being one. The RCMP Officers abducted many of these people for no apparent reason. Entire families were ripped apart.

The trickle of immigrants preceding the war became a steady, continuous flow after it. On average, about 2,000 immigrants entered the country every year during this period. This influx of Italian immigrants made Canada's Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King endorse a new policy in 1947:

"The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration. The government will seek by legislation, regulation and vigorous administration, to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of such numbers of immigrants as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy" (ibid).

People of all nationalities were welcomed to Canada during these years. It was not due to the generosity of the Canadian government, but instead, it was due to a need for unskilled labour. After the war, Canada experienced a large economic boom. There were needs to build homes for those returning from war, roads and other infrastructural upgrading. Italians were important in this migration. Many of them took on jobs in the construction sector as manual labourers. Some took on jobs digging sewers and water trunks, building roads and others: hard physical labour (Weaver, 1982).

Regardless of the discriminatory practices, the immigration continued. Between 1956 to 1961, 152,076 Italians came into Canada with the largest number coming in 1956 (30,004). Of all those that arrived, many of them entered established areas. Many came to join friends and relatives in immigrant reception areas. In 1961, of the entire Italian population of Hamilton, 64% lived in the Jamesville area and 14% lived on the Hamilton mountain. In 1961, Italians made up 8.5% of the entire population of Hamilton, but of the 23,203, 13,527 of them were born in Italy (ibid).

The 1977 Symposium on Italians in Hamilton, in fact, summarizes the Italian experience up to the early 1970's:



"Most of the Italians who have arrived to Hamilton after the war have been manual labourers. Less than 25 years later, they built their community into one of the most important economical groups in our city.

- 75% of Italians in Hamilton buy their own homes and do their own repairs.
- Some 25% manage to grow most of their own vegetables in tiny urban gardens.
- 95% own refrigerators and washing units.
- 65% are car owners.
- Characteristically the Italian immigrant will not buy a car until he can make a down payment of at least half of its price.
- Real estate brokers have the Italians on top of their list for land and house transactions.
- The Italian labourer predominates in the construction industry.
- The Steel Company and Dofasco foundries are where iron has been forged with the sweat of these tenacious workers.

But, typically, the Italians are quick to improve themselves for zest and perserverence are in their blood.

- 44% now work in skilled occupation.
- 2% are professionals.
- 2% are managers.
- and only 2% are unskilled, while only 2% are unemployed".

GENERAL INFORMATION ON ITALIANS IN HAMILTON FROM 1976-1986.

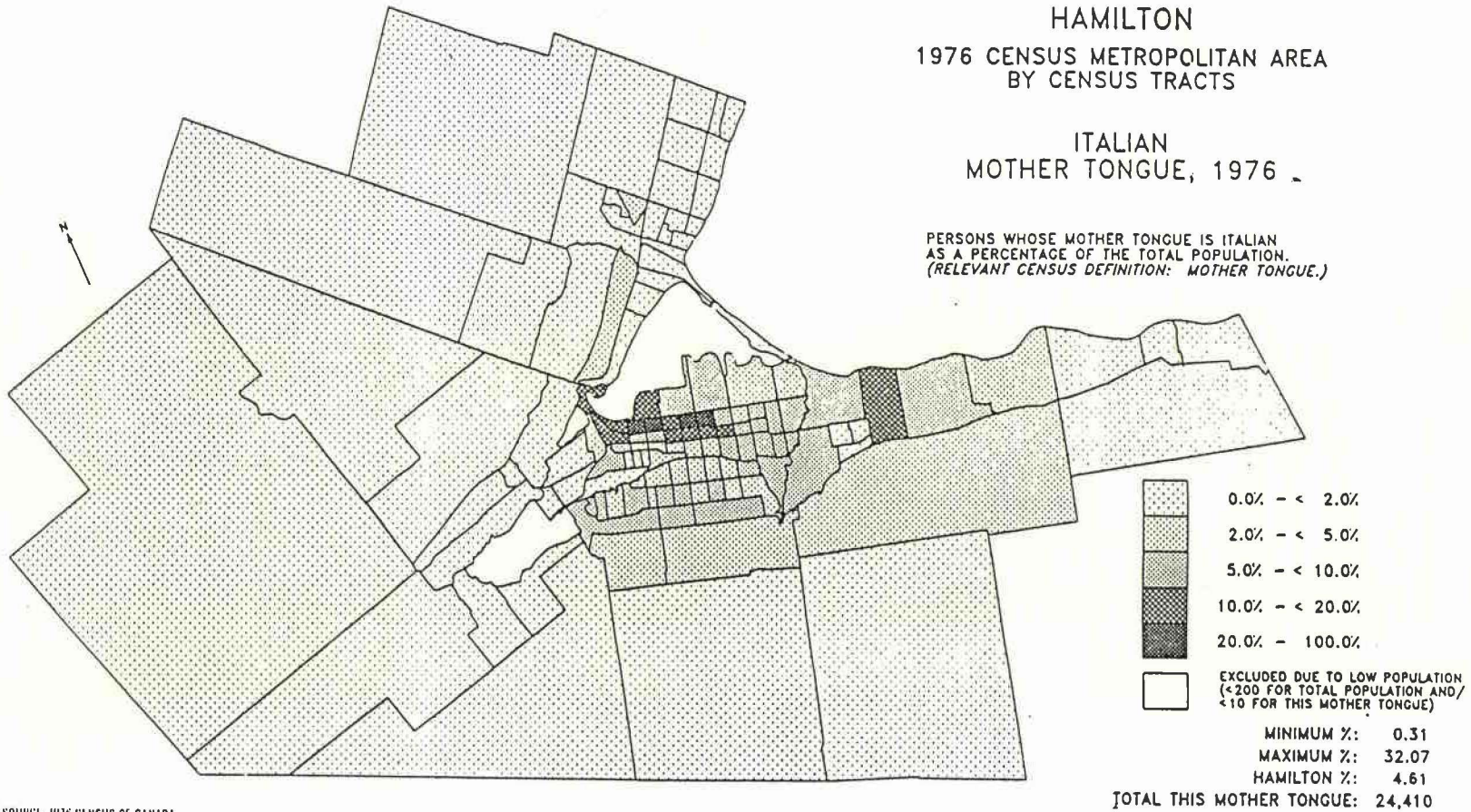
In 1976 there was a total of 24,415 people in the Hamilton Metropolitan Census area that claimed Italian as their mother tongue. That number represented 4.6% of the entire population. In 1976, the Canadian census defined mother tongue as "the language first learned and still understood." The Italians were second only to those with English as their mother tongue.

The location of Italians was spread throughout the city (see Map 2). The major concentration of them was still in the industrial areas or the immigrant reception areas along James St. and Barton. This is where the densest census tract is located, with 32% claiming Italian as their mother tongue. There is also

HAMILTON
1976 CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA
BY CENSUS TRACTS

ITALIAN
MOTHER TONGUE, 1976

PERSONS WHOSE MOTHER TONGUE IS ITALIAN
AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION.
(RELEVANT CENSUS DEFINITION: MOTHER TONGUE.)



SOURCE: 1976 CENSUS OF CANADA

a new pattern developing. Italians are beginning to move eastward towards Stoney Creek. The lowest concentration of Italians was in Flamborough at 0.3% and overall on average, there were 4.6% Italians in each area.

The Italians having settled in the Hamilton area most recently as the 1950's had very little education in their homeland; the census exhibits this. But it also shows that the trend is toward higher education. Approximately, 63% of Italians in Hamilton have less than a grade eight education and over 75% have less than grade ten. As for post secondary institutions and universities, 12% fall into this group. Six percent have a college education and 6% a university education. Of these that attend university, 70% are males. This shows that Italians are still traditional. Education was becoming valued, but only for males.

The last issue to look at is one of labour force activity. In general, the numbers reflect the Hamilton average. For males, close to 80% are involved in the labour force and only 3.3% are unemployed. For the women only 40% participate in the labour force and 10% are unemployed. Approximately, 60% are not involved with the labour force at all.

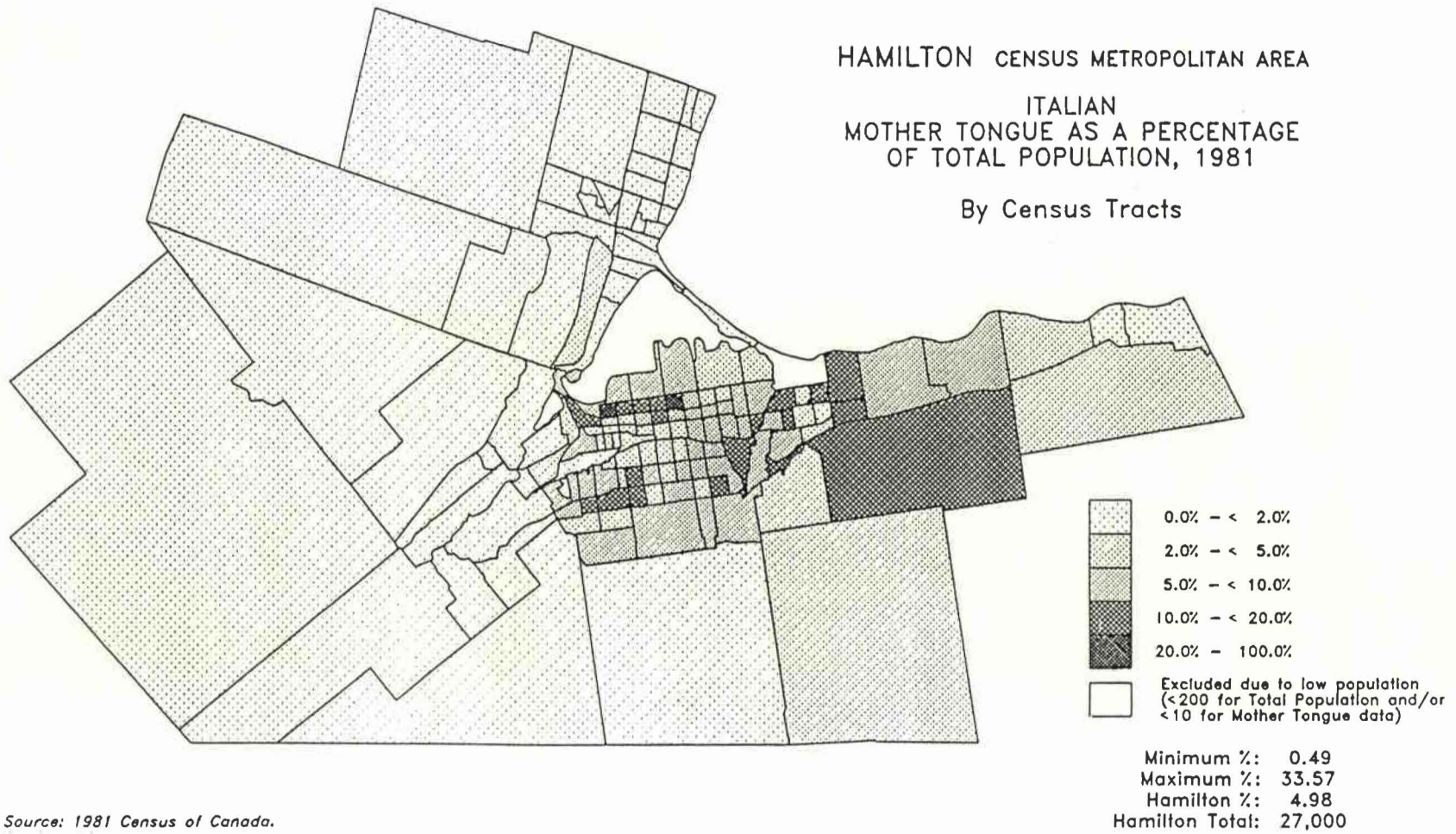
In 1981 there were a total of 26,995 Italians or about 5% of the entire population. Once again it was the highest represented groups after the English. There was an increase of over 2,500 in five years. A reason for this sudden increase could be due to the new definition employed by the census collectors. The definition changed to read as such: mother tongue is the language first learned (as opposed to spoken) and still understood.

The location of Italians had significantly changed over the last five years (see Map 3). The Italian concentration was moving through different areas in the city. The concentrated areas were along; Barton St. out towards Stoney Creek,

HAMILTON CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA

ITALIAN
MOTHER TONGUE AS A PERCENTAGE
OF TOTAL POPULATION, 1981

By Census Tracts



Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

Jamesville the inner core areas, and areas on the mountain. The most densely concentrated area was still Jamesville at 34%.

Education changes only in a minor way. There were now only 62% of Italians that had below a grade ten education. That was a decrease of 13% over the 1976 figure. There was still over 52% that had less than grade eight. This was a decline of 10% over 1976. The reason for the changes is that immigrant children were going through the education system. There was a total of 16% in post-secondary school institutions, an increase of 4% over 1976 and 7% went to university. Of the 23% that went to college and university only 36% were women and 63% were men. The traditional role of women had not been abolished. They were still under represented in universities and colleges.

With respect to labour force activity, over 83% were involved in the labour force and only 3.5% were unemployed. There was a 50% participation rate for women and 50% that did not participate in the labour force at all. This is a reduction of 10% from 1976. Could one of the reasons for this be restructuring?

Employment information was obtained for the Italians in 1981. This information showed that approximately 40% of males were involved in processing and manufacturing/handling, 14% in the service sector and 13% in construction. For the women statistics showed that 28% were involved in processing/manufacturing/ handling, 25% in clerical and 23% in the service sector.

➤ In 1986, the first noticeable difference is one of sheer numbers. There is now only 22,400 that claim Italian as their mother tongue. This is a decline of 4,290 or about 19%. Italian-Canadians in the Hamilton-Wentworth region now make up only 4% of its population. Where have these people gone? The answer in all probability is that they are still here but now many are older second generation Italians (immigrants' children, first generation Canadian) who are

marrying and having children and claiming that Italian is not their mother tongue, but that English is.

The education figures also show a continuation of patterns of 1981. The figures also show that immigrants are having children who have gone onto school and in turn, have had children of their own and they are presently in the school system. Fifty-one percent of Italians have less than grade eight, 60% less than grade 10. These figures remain unchanged from 1981. A new category shows that 14% are in the secondary school/post secondary school incomplete section. Of this 14%, the split is 50% male, 50% female. The next new group is that of post secondary (colleges)/non-university graduates. In this group, 65% are males and 35% females. Finally, the final group of university graduates show that only 5% of all Italians are university graduates. Of these 1,070 people, 58% are males and 42%, females. The numbers for both genders have come closer together in the last period but overall, the numbers of higher educated Italians are quite low.

The labour force activity is as was for the past ten years. Males are steady at about 80% participation rate and women are at 50%.

The figures for 1986 also show employment figures, but in this census period new employment categories were used and because of this, my comparison over time becomes impossible. Nevertheless, here are the figures. The figures show that 15% of males were involved in construction, 10% in processing, 9% in production, fabrication, assembling and repair, 6% in service, 6% in management, 6% in machining and 24% not applicable. Women on the other hand, were employed in: 12% service, 12% clerical, 6% production, fabrication, assembly and repair, 3% in processing and 49%, not applicable.

SUMMARY

Italians in general, upon arriving in Hamilton were employed in the construction and assembly fields. These jobs were labour intensive and very low paying. The immigrants of this era (1950's) were tenants, under-educated and, in many cases, unilingual (Italian only). Yet over time these patterns dissolved. Italians began to move out of the inner-city neighbourhoods, bought larger homes in the suburbs, and many started their own companies. Yet, they were still under-educated and under paid. They are still under represented in the managerial and professional sectors. Are these patterns evident for the Italian-Canadians that live in Jamesville?

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ITALIAN-CANADIAN EXPERIENCE IN JAMESVILLE

INTRODUCTION

The next two chapters will help show how immigrants see their lives presently and how life has changed for them. These sections will address the employment history of the immigrant, add to the existing literature of Italians in Hamilton, and answer the question of Italian-Canadians in the context of a changing Hamilton. Due to the nature of the research, much of the next two chapters will be in the words of those interviewed.

The Jamesville area is located in the central business district of Hamilton. The area is bounded by Queen St. on the west, Cannon St. on the south, James St. on the east and the Canadian National Railroad in the North. This area has a concentration of 34% of the residents claim Italian as their mother tongue. Jamesville has evolved over the years from an Italian slum to now an immigrant reception area for Portuguese and Filipinos.

SETTING THE SCENE: JAMESVILLE (From the 1961, 1971, and 1986 Census)

To fully understand the dynamics of an area, it is important to note changes over time. In 1961, Jamesville was mainly composed of single males. The area was heavily ethnic. Thirty percent of its population had migrated to the area between 1946 to 1951. Only 36% were of British descent. The area contained 60% Roman Catholics and only 12% Anglican. In terms of education, 50% of the residents of Jamesville had an education of grade five or less.

In terms of living conditions, 50% of the area's population lived in crowded living conditions. The city average of person per household was 3.7; in Jamesville it was 4.4. Ninety percent of the homes were built prior to 1920. Sixty-five percent of the population in the area were renters, and the average rent was sixty dollars a month. The average rent paid was fifteen dollars below that of the city's average rent. Finally 15% of all the homes in the area needed major repairs. The city's average was 3%.

The labour force was male dominated. Seventy-five percent of all males were employed and only 25% of all females were employed. Forty-five percent of the females were employed in the service sector. The average family income was approximately about 40% below that of the average family income of others in Hamilton.

These conditions clearly show that the people of Jamesville lived in 'slum' like conditions. The typical profile of an individual in the area of 1961 was a single Italian male immigrant living in crowded conditions, working in unskilled low paid manufacturing jobs.

In 1971, there was a 50% male population and a 50% female population. Fifty percent of the population was between the ages of thirty five and fifty

four. Fifty percent of the areas population was single. Fifty two percent had a mother tongue that was not English.

There was a shift to owner occupied households. Fifty-three percent of the population lived in homes that were owner occupied and only 47% were tenant occupied. The households were still overcrowded. Fifty percent of them still had over four people living in each household. Thirty percent of the families had no children, but of the families that did, 27% had children below the age of six. Forty seven percent had children from the ages of six to fourteen.

The ethnic composition had changed. Eighty percent of those in the area were born outside of Canada. Fifty three percent were now of Italian origin, and those of British descent had decreased to 37%. There were no Portuguese present in the area. Thirty-seven percent spoke Italian at home while 63% spoke English. There was now a remarkable increase in those with little education. Seventy-two percent of the population had below a grade nine level of education. Further, 42% of the occupants had lived in the area greater than ten years and 28% had lived in the area for less than one year. Ninety-eight percent of the homes had been constructed prior to 1946. Finally, the residents still participated in the labour force in approximately the same jobs, (males-unskilled, women-clerical) but their wages were still 30% lower than that of the average Hamilton wage earner.

The major difference from the census data from 1961 is that there was now a greater proportion of Italians in Jamesville. The earlier immigrant (1950 to 1960's) now had saved enough money to purchase a home (in many instances within the area) and raise a family. The more recent immigrants were still young Italian males that lived in crowded, run-down living conditions as renters. In general the immigrant worker still worked in unskilled jobs that did not need high

levels of education. The immigrants were still underpaid. The "slum" like conditions still prevailed in Jamesville.

In 1986, the male and female ratio was still one to one. Thirty percent of the area's population was between the ages of 55 and 64. The majority of the members in this group are most likely the initial (first) immigrants that came to Jamesville. An extremely high proportion of the population was in younger age cohorts. Thirty percent of the population is between the ages of 25 and 34. Only 25% of the people in Jamesville claim that Italian is their official language, down from 37% in 1971. The Portuguese have become more prominent in the area, and twelve percent of the area's population claim that Portuguese is their official language.

In terms of home ownership, there is now 60% of the population that owned their own homes and only 40% are renters. The area's population has fallen 7% from the 1971 Census. Twenty-five percent of the households have four to five people per household and 25% of the households have only one person. The average number of people per household is 2.8 persons. This is slightly above the city average of 2.7. Sixty-five percent of all households that have children below the age of fourteen and 45% have children between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. There now seems to be a dichotomy present in the Jamesville population. On the one hand there are the older Italian Canadians that have lived in Jamesville since first coming to Canada. These people should by now have established a family. In most cases, their children are in their late teens and many have married and left the area. This can explain the decrease in the number of Italians in the area. This would also reduce the size of the average household in the Jamesville area. On the other hand, there is a new immigrant group that has entered the district: the Portuguese of Jamesville have revitalized and

rejuvenated the area as an immigrant reception area. But I now look to my respondents in Jamesville for their views.

EMPLOYMENT IN ITALY

The only life that many of these people knew was one of peasants and of peasant farming. The majority of the people who remembered these early childhood years, spoke of working endlessly on pieces of land, scattered throughout the landscape. They rented the land from a signore (owner) and farmed it all year round. It was at the end of the harvest that the farmer would receive his pay. In many cases, their pay was half of what the land had produced. They would yield 120 bushels of grain per year, for example, sixty bushels would be the owners and sixty would be theirs. With the sixty bushels they would trade and barter to purchase other essentials -- clothes, shoes and home supplies. Many of them worked as far as five to six kilometres from their home. They worked long hours for little reward. The following accounts illustrate these themes:

In Italy I helped dad on the farm. We worked under owners. There was hunger. We had ten kids in our family -- dad couldn't support us . . . As a child of six, seven, I'd watch the pigs and goats. I'd feed them. At age eight I went to go live with the priests. They's give me food. I stayed there for two years. At age ten, I went back to the fields to work with my dad. I worked on the farm until I was nineteen. (J-15, See appendix A).

In Racalmuto, Sicily as a little girl I worked in the field with my parents. There was no other work. It was 1951. (J-6)

I worked on the farm from 1933 to 1949. We worked for the owner. I remember making three lira a day. (J-10)

Life on the farm was not the only option for people in Italy in the mid 1940's to the 1950's. Others had a few more opportunities to venture into other fields. In many of these instances, individuals could not aspire to higher status jobs for they lacked education. Yet some were lucky enough to escape the physically demanding work that the farm had to offer:

My father had a farm in Bari in 1939. He grew olives. I went to school to grade five. There was no money . . . Mother made me go to dress making school. I'd go to regular school and then for four hours a day to dress making school. I hated it a lot. After I realized I should have kissed her hands. In Italy it was a shame for women to work outside of the home. In Bari, women didn't work in the fields. They sew. Girls never worked --that's it. (J-8)

Some of the others, mainly males, realized that there was no hope or future for them in Italy and working as labourers on farms. They sought employment in local areas and many others had to immigrate outside of Italy to neighbouring countries:

I was twenty-four years old when I went to Belgium in 1948. There was little work in Agrigento (Sicily) and there were lots of people. The Belgian government called for people to work. I worked in the coal mines 1900 metres below the surface. I remember making 400 Francs a day. That was a lot of lira. (J-11)

I worked in the salt mines in Agrigento. Dad got me the job. We had no money for school so at fourteen, I went to work. I worked underground drilling holes some 500 feet underground. They were all Italians. I made fourteen lira a day. It was a dangerous job. People would die. There would be fires and our bosses would tell us don't worry, just work. I stayed there for two or three years. (J-3)

My parents worked on farms. I worked in town. I went to school until I was twelve. My first job in Italy was as a mechanic apprentice. I worked for 300 lira a month and I worked there for five years. I never got my papers. (J-14)

Life in Italy in this era was for many one of hard work and low pay. For many, there was no life and no future in Italy. Finally, a decision was made to leave the poverty and misfortunes and venture to America. Many knew Canada as America only. They knew of America through other friends and relatives that had settled there years before. Others knew of villagers that had made the journey. Many came to Canada through sponsorship to find their success and to send money back to those they left behind in Italy, so they could better their lives. A betterment would entail purchasing small parcels of land, or buying a new farm. At this point only single individuals came to Canada. The policy that the Canadian government employed was to have individuals only. It was only in the early 1950's that policy changes were made.

EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA

They left Italy with debts, some not having paid for their passage to Canada, a few suitcases and maybe a piece of paper with a paesanos (friends) name on it. Their voyage to Canada and their housing conditions will be addressed in later sections. Suffice to say that these individuals found shelter in the homes of friends and relatives. Then as they had settled in, it was time to find some type of employment in a land that was so new to them. It was almost impossible for some:

I came to Canada in 1958. I found work in 1960. There was no work. If I would have been alone, I would have gone back to Italy. I'd get up in the morning everyday, go to Dofasco, factories, construction places . . . NO WORK! I did go to work on farms in 1958 on weekends. I found a job picking tomatoes for 5 cents a basket, about \$3.00/day. My wife stayed home with two kids . . . I finally got a job in construction. I was

a manual labourer, a cement finisher from 1960 to 1978 for Copps and son for \$1.50/hour. I worked ten to fourteen hours a day. Saturdays and overtime was straight time. We made more money, no unions. My wife stayed home. The kids were small. She watched them herself. If we paid someone else to watch them . . . better she stay home to watch them. (J-4)

I came in 1957. For one and a half years, there was no work. I regretted then that I came to Canada. I found work in 1959. I found a job in a chemical factory, Sanimede, for \$1.75/hour near Dofasco. My wife never worked. She loved to stay at home. If you didn't speak language at work, they'd lay you off. (J-5)

The problems of finding employment continue with these accounts:

I waited one year to find a job. There were no jobs at all!! My brother worked at the Dundas-Cement factory -- he was laid off too . . . I'd go look for a job everyday, knocking on doors, walk, walk . . . Burlington St. Kenilworth, Parkdale . . . NO WORK. All the signs on the door said, "NO HELP WANTED". My parents never found work in Canada. I finally did find a job as a dishwasher in a restaurant on Barton St. and Wentworth for a Jew, for \$20/week. I was lucky to find it. I worked there for one year. (J-12)

This story is a sad one for J-12, in Italy he had a profession; he was a licensed mechanic.

Many of course did eventually find employment. The employment in many cases was related to construction. Some were carpenter helpers, some manual labourers, others, bricklayers' helpers. They took on these jobs with little previous experience, worked long hours against their will and their pay was in many cases, next to nothing.

The women also had difficulty finding employment but in most cases found employment much quicker. They found jobs in factories and on farms:

We'd look everyday. We'd go to Cotton Mill . . . NO JOBS they's say. We will call you . . . My first job was near Gage Park in a fruit factory. My cousin got me the job. It took me six months to get the job. There

were a lot of women in the factory, mainly Italian, Polish. We used to put fruits in boxes, make jams. Pay was cheap . . . I left. (J-6)

I found a job at Cornell Tailors. We made war uniforms. It was 1939. We made belts, uniforms and buttons. The wage was \$6.00 for one week. My brother worked there too. I worked so hard. I didn't handle money at all. I gave my money to my mother, now, they say this is yours, this is mine. (J-7)

In 1939, at the age of 14, I found a job at Cornell Tailors at Bay and York. In one week, I made \$6.50. I worked 54 hours/week -- Saturday 8 to 12. I worked all the time. If you went to the bathroom, the bosses would be on your back. There were no benefits. We'd trim uniforms, coats and collars. We were all immigrants; Slovaks, Italians -- 300 to 400 of us. I gave all my money to my mom. I didn't pay room or board. I got a \$1.50 allowance. (J-14)

For twenty days, I had no work at all, no money, no work. My brother worked on a horse farm in Winona. He'd kill horses seven days a week for twenty-eight dollars a week. He'd work ten to twelve hours a day. I was laid off. I hit the streets. I walked on day from Schaffe St. to Stoney Creek and back. I got home at midnight. NO WORK. My feet were bleeding. (J-15)

Some others still had to endure much more than no jobs or no homes.

They faced intense discrimination:

I went to apply to Westinghouse to make shelves. When I handed in my application, they'd say, "O, O". I didn't understand. I applied there on four different occasions. I'd go back and every time I'd get the same response, "O, O". It was because my last name ended with an "O" I was Italian, therefore I could not get a job. Oh geez, I yelled at them. I told them that they (English people) didn't give me a job and then they wanted my brother to enlist in the war. "Forget it", I said, "you enlist yourselves". I walked out. Then they wanted to give me a job. I said, "NO!" I did finally get a job at Copps. It was a factory of war coats. I'd slit collars. It was noisy, lots of Italians. I hated it. I couldn't sew for beans. It was piece work; \$6.50/week for 10 hours a day, 5.5 days a week. (J-16)

The jobs that these immigrants found were not specific to Italians solely in Jamesville. These jobs were found by all immigrants. All immigrants in general and Italians specifically found jobs in which they had no previous

experience: women in assembly line work and men in construction trades. There was great pain in the early lives of these immigrants in Canada. They spoke very little English, had little formal education and knew almost nothing of city living. It was because of this that they stayed entirely within their own people. They worked with each other, spoke amongst themselves, drank with their own people and lived virtually all together. For many of them, life in Canada was just an extension of what life was like in Italy. They pursued many of their cultural beliefs and traditions even here in Canada. They had large picnics, church festivals, weddings, made wine, olives and tomatoes. They transported their Italian way of life to Canada.

EMPLOYMENT THROUGH THE YEARS

Due to the nature of this material, it is difficult to follow each individual's employment history through their lifetimes. Therefore I will select the lives of nine of the respondents and list their jobs, rates of pay, length of employment and, in some cases, working conditions. After this section, an analysis of work history will follow.

Woman: J-11

- (1) Granada Theatre (hostess) - 1947-1950; part-time; \$6.00/week
 - (2) Hamilton Motor Products - 1950-1952; \$35.00/week
 - (3) Firestone -1952-1954; cut tires
- Marriage
- (4) Bought a butcher store with husband - 1957-1959
 - (5) Catering Truck Business - 1959-1974
 - (6) No more work after that. Children - stay at home - she and husband run a coffee shop - help out part-time.

Woman: J-13

- (1) Cambridge Sewing Machines - 1956; \$0.50/hour; 22 years (on/off)
Marriage
- (2) Cambridge - 1971; quit to raise family
- (3) Bakery on James St. - \$6.00-7.00/hour, loves people, and money.

Woman: J-7

- (1) Cornell Tailors - 1939; \$6.00/week
Marriage
- (2) Post Office - Part-time, christmas, afternoon shift
- (3) Housewife "just a housewife" - cook, clean, wash, make meals while husband worked.
- (4) Supervisor for lunch at St. Mary's one hour/day - 1986

Woman: J-14

- (1) Cornell Tailors - 1939-1944; \$10.00/week
 - (2) Hamilton Cotton - \$47.00 every two weeks
 - (3) Westinghouse - 1944
 - (4) Cotton Mill - 1945-1949
 - (5) Stelco - 1949-1979
- Retired - Never married

The women worked upon arrival to Canada because there was a financial need for them to do so. Money was needed to provide food and essentials for all those at home. Everybody had to "pull their own weight". Shortly thereafter came a point when these working women married and had families. At this point, they stayed home to raise the family. Some, as the children grew up, eventually found themselves back in the work force but some did not make the move. Here is a reason why they did not re-enter the work force.

No need for my wife to work . . . I wanted her to stay home. My wife didn't like work . . . I didn't like it . . . no need. I didn't want her to work. It was enough that I worked. Why to pay for babysitter. My wife stayed home. (J-5)

When the women did re-enter the work force in the early to mid 1970's to the early 1980's, they entered in part-time positions. They did not want full time work and the money, for them, was extra spending money. Restructuring theorists attribute this part-time re-entry into the work force as an effect of restructuring. It is difficult to conclude that these part-time jobs are outcomes of the process. So are Italians different from others? It is possible, because of the nature of male employment and the effects on family. The men of Jamesville's employment history is much more diversified than those of the women. What follows are five accounts of employment history of the men of Jamesville.

Man: J-5

- (1) 1958 - worked on farms picking tomatoes; \$5.00/basket, \$3.00/day
- (2) 1960-1978 - Cops & Sons; cement finisher; \$1.50/hour; laid off
- (3) 1979 - Dufferin Construction; cement finisher; laid off
- (4) 1980 - King Paving, Oakville
- (5) 1981 - Dufferin Construction again
- (6) 1981-1983 - hurt himself, Workmen's Compensation Board
- (7) 1985 - hurt again; went back to work
- (8) 1986 - Bono Construction; cement finisher; \$18.00/four; off hurt back again; on Workmen's Compensation Board

Man: J-8

- (1) 1956-1988 - Dofasco; 32 years; retired

Man: J-15

- (1) 1951 - Horse Farm, Winona; part-time; \$28.00/week
- (2) 1951-1979 - Dundas Rendering Company; retired

Man: J-9

- (1) 1950 - Age 10; Beer Store; open doors \$0.05-0.10
- (2) 1955 - Age 15/16; deliver bread; Hamilton Bakery; \$0.25-0.50/day
- (3) 1958 - Cotton Mill - greased machines; dirty; \$50.00-60.00/week
- (4) 1959 - Robinson Cone; money to mom
- (5) 1959-1973 - Diamond Beverage; deliver pop
- (6) 1975 - Harvester; laid off after 1 year
- (7) 1976 - Stelco; Water Mill; \$6.25/hour; left it
- (8) 1977 - hurt back; on Workmen's Compensation Board; work cash on the side

Man: J-12

- (1) 1958 - Dishwasher; \$20.00/week
- (2) 1959 - Clothes Cleaner; \$20.00-25.00/week
- (3) 1961 - New Hamburg; Nickel Factory; \$50.00/week
- (4) 1961-1963 - floor cleaner
- (5) 1963-1965 - deliver bread
- (6) 1965-1974 - deliver milk
- (7) 1974 - Slater Steel; Burlington; \$10.00/hour; shift work, still there.

As can be seen from the selected passages, men, in general had more job changes over time. There were also a few of them that found employment with one firm and stayed there for their entire work life. It appears that numerous shifts from firm to firm were evident in the first few years in Canada, but eventually the immigrant found his niche, remaining employed with the firm for the last ten to fifteen years. Once again the impact of restructuring is difficult to judge given the small number of people. We should note, that they remain in industry however. Further, the jobs that the immigrants did find were found from networks of friends and relatives. If someone was in need of a job the first place or person to ask would be a close friend or relative. These family networks would have insulated them against some outside changes. But, the immigrant always had very little choice in what job was given or selected. They

took nearly everything that was given to them. In many instances they were given the lowest paying, heavier, dirty jobs:

Immigrants, Italians always had to do the heavy jobs. The English bastards got the easy jobs. (J-6)

I cried for six months because I couldn't find a job. My brother told me not to worry. I was his kid sister and he went out and bought me a pink dress. (J-10)

It was loud, noisy and dirty. I quit the next day. (J-9)

In spite of the type of work that the immigrant was given, anything was better than nothing. Anything was better than farm life in Italy. An important point to make here is that not all those interviewed were first generation Italians (actual immigrants). Some were second generation (first generation Canadian born). Regardless, the similarities in work experiences were evident. If one of the immigrants had work, they had life. Work was everything to the immigrant. If they had no work, it was grounds for public ridicule. Unemployment for some was a disgrace:

I never claimed fuckin' poge. I am proud of that like you wouldn't believe. (J-15)

Work was an integral part of all their lives:

Life in Canada was debt, house, church and work. (J-1)

If I could work, I would. I always loved it. (J-10)

I always loved work. I was never allergic to it, not like some people today. (J-14)

Work, work, work. Now pension. I am happy. I still love the company very much. (J-15)

HOUSING AND MOBILITY

Jamesville is an immigrant reception area. The homes in the neighbourhood are small, detached, but built very close together. The outside of many of these homes are well repaired. The gardens are well kept with roses scattered throughout the properties. There are religious symbols on doors, on porches, and even shrines of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the yards of a few.

FIRST HOUSING IN HAMILTON

Prior to discussing conditions in Hamilton, it is important to discuss housing conditions in Italy. Many of the immigrants lived in small farmhouses in very crowded conditions, "in Bari, there were SHITTY living conditions. There were ten of us in a small two room house." (J-13) All of those interviewed had lived in unpleasant quarters in Italy. Therefore their expectations of their new housing stock was quite low. What follows is several accounts of the respondents first house in Hamilton:

Sample Q We came from Italy and we rented a house on Caroline St. For \$19.00/month. It was a dump. There was no cellar. There were eight of us and a boarder in the house. My dad was a widower. The neighbourhood was great. The people were all poor but they helped each other -- they shared. Today people are selfish. My mom would make bread for everybody in the area. There was a lot of togetherness. There was always an empty chair for someone at the dinner table. All of us were Italian. It felt like a community. We lived sixty-two years in this house. (J-14)

When I came to Canada, we rented from our in-laws on Cannon and Park. There were lots of Italians. The house we lived in was small. We were lucky we paid no rent for six months. We had a room, kitchen, three families in the house and about eleven of us. We stayed there for two years. (J-5)

I rented with my brother at Bay and Barton. It was in 1957. I can't remember the rent but I do remember that it was an apartment, two bedroom, that had about eight people living in it. It was crowded and terrible. (J-12)

I came to Hamilton from Montreal with my two daughters. I rented a house on Catherine and Simcoe for \$30.00/month. There were a lot of Italians in the area. After seven months I bought a house on Barton St. and I have been here for 33 years. (J-2)

Why did you move to Jamesville? I asked:

I was directed here by real estate agents, the church was near by and there were lots of Italians here. (J-2)

Jamesville as mentioned by J-2 was a popular area for immigrants. There were affordable living conditions in the area. The first Italian parish was started in the area in the 1930's: All Souls Church, at the corner of James St. and Barton. There were also numerous cafes, meeting places and clubs in the area. Because of these factors, the area drew the majority of Italian immigrants to Hamilton.

Over time, there was a need by many of those that settled in the area to move out. They had acquired wealth and sought larger homes. They wanted to escape the stigma of an immigrant reception area. They relocated in the suburbs, Stoney Creek and the mountain. But here too they settled with other people like themselves. They moved into the suburbs with the people they lived with in Jamesville. But not all of them decided to move. Some stayed in the area for years:

If I move, there would be more taxes and more expenses. Here there is no water meter. In 1971, we bought furniture, fixed up the house. There are lots of Italians still left in the area . . . The big shots have left, they have new homes, cars. A lot of them have to work two jobs, Saturday and Sunday. I don't know why. They kill themselves,

worrying about taxes and mortgages. Thirty years ago, ten people lived in a house. Now there are three and they want a big house that they can't own . . . I don't show off. The neighbourhood is close to the church, central to everything, we walk. The neighbourhood is okay. All places are the same all over. It's safe here in Jamesville, now a double lock. Before garage door open now closed. I love the area. (J-13)

Like I said before, it was close to everything, church, schools, and the market. I couldn't move even if I wanted to I had a large family with seven kids. Here nobody bothers me. I stay in my house. But the area has changed a lot. Now you can't be on the streets after 9:00 p.m. There are Portuguese and Chinese in the area now. They have three or four families that live in a house just like the Italians used to. They are hungry bastards, worse than Italians. Today it is difficult to buy a house. People pay rent in apartments . . . Maybe that parents help them to buy a house. (J-10)

I love my city. I love where I am. There is nothing like home . . . I'm independent and not a burden on anybody . . . The neighbourhood has changed over years. Everybody helped out before. All the doors were left open, no screens. We respected other peoples property. Today, if you lay in a gutter, people walk over you . . . I'm not a cellar dweller. I live on the first floor. When I die, I'll be underground . . . I spent \$17,000 on the house to fix it up. I'm very happy here. (J-14)

I love the area. I fixed up all my house. I put in ceramics, bathroom, garden and made a basement. The area is close to everything. It's tough to move. My kids want to stay here. They went to school here, so they want to stay here . . . The next move I make will be to York St. (cemetery). . . I'd never move to Stoney Creek. They all have bad neighbours. All young people with large mortgages. Here on James St., there's coffee places, cards, clubs. In Stoney Creek, they work and have a house. In Jamesville, we have friends, market, house and work . . . It's great here. (J-4)

As can be seen from these passages, the residents of Jamesville are content with their quality of life. All of those interviewed were forced to find housing in the area in the early 1950's close to their jobs. By the early 1970's, most of those interviewed had paid off their mortgages. With the money they had accumulated, they opted to refurbish the interiors of their homes, rather than moving to other parts of the city. They were happy with the area and had no intentions of moving out. They look at those that moved out to wealthier areas as SNOBS and SHOWOFFS.

It is interesting to note here how Italians view themselves in a changing society. In the early days very little was mentioned of envy and jealousy. As Italian-Canadians now move up the social-economic ladder, differences in ways of life are associated with this move. Peoples' perceptions have changed over time.

Ownership is important. To own a home is a great accomplishment for anybody. But for Italians, it was everything. All those that I spoke with said that to own a house, one had to SACRIFICE, for the security it gave to the family, in particular:

I never took a vacation for thirty years until my house was paid off. I never ate out at restaurants -- too expensive. (J-9)

I lived in Jamesville and I didn't buy a car for fifteen years after I got married. I walked everywhere to save money. (J-5)

I worked two jobs, two shifts, so did my wife. (J-9)

We rented a flat in a house for five years to save money. (J-10)

I paid my house, I die at home. I have a house in Canada. (J-14)

As can be seen from these passages a home meant a great deal to all these individuals. A home for many meant security and privacy. These two items were not available to the immigrants in Italy. In owning a home, it meant that you (the immigrant) had finally achieved a wealth and status. A house meant security for yourself and most importantly your family.

FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN THE JAMESVILLE AREA

Family, but not friends, were mentioned a great deal. Indeed, when Italians settled in Jamesville the network of friends was quite limited. Over time the network expanded and eventually it appeared that everybody was a paesani or friend, a relative, a villager. There would be walks in the neighbourhood, gatherings at clubs, churches. there would be festivals at churches, at picnics, at local parks:

We were all Italians from All Souls. We all grew up together. We had gatherings, picnics, dances at the Racalmutese Society. Many of us lived in one house. There weren't many Italians in the area. We stayed together. We helped one another more than today. We were all going through the same things: discrimination, no money, no work. We had unity. A community. Now things are different. One has to be better than someone else, run one another over. (J-11)

Friends always helped me to find homes and jobs. We were all very close but eventually family members would stab your back. (J-14)

Now we can enjoy ourselves, I love my friends. Only now can we go to dinner and dances. Before, I couldn't afford it. (J-10)

I had only a few friends in Canada. I knew absolutely nobody. Slowly, I developed some friends. The neighbourhood got closer. Slowly, the network of friends grew. They helped find jobs . . . Friends had friends. Gave you more. I'd visit friends weekly. (J-5)

Many of these individuals found strength in their friends, particularly in shared ethnicity and heritage. The importance of friends in later years is hardly noticed or mentioned. The visits to friends' homes are now limited. Those interviewed hardly mention this departure from friends. A few of them see such things happening:

Relatives, as time progresses, begin to disappear. They knife you as quick as they look at you. It's greed and money. (J-14)

Friends and relatives, well everybody has a family and in-laws. You work, go home, you get home at 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. There is little time for friends and relatives. (J-16)

Before family and friends were always around here. I'd fill in forms and interpret things for them. Now everybody is settled in. They aren't coming around as much. We are not as tight since grandma passed away. Now they come at Christmas. It's nice. All our friends have since moved away. (J-11)

Initially, friends and relative acted as a support unit and gave us strength. Over time, friends diminished in importance and the family became the most important thing in one's life. Now there are only a few visits. We visit only at weddings and at funerals. We don't visit now. We are all tired. We have our own family. (J-15)

Family is extremely important to Italians in Hamilton and elsewhere. In all the cases the immediate family assisted in finding employment, support, advice, and financial matters. This tight closely knit relationship made the Italian-Canadians insular.

QUALITY OF LIFE IN JAMESVILLE

Life in Italy was hard, but life in Canada was perceived variably:

There were bad times in Italy. We had just enough to eat. We couldn't save money, had no money to go to school. We lived like pigs in Italy. There was no future, couldn't save money. Time were always going to stay bad. We lived just to live. When we came to live here in Canada, we lived bad, poorly, but even still, it was one hundred times better than in Sicily. (J-10)

There were very few immigrants when I came in 1951. It was tough to find a place to live or a place to work . . . I rented to save and buy a house. I had two jobs. We all worked in the house to help pay it off. We were discriminated against. We needed English. Italians at the steel mill got all the dirty jobs . . . All my life I had a mortgage. (J-4)

For six months I found no work. Happiness in the mid 1950's was equated to having a job or not. When I came here, I hated it. It was very cold, houses were very small, no work, no money. If I had the money, I would have gone back to Italy. I finally got a job. I worked 14 hours a day, 6 days a week STRAIGHT TIME. There were no benefits . . . I hated the Conservatives! The conservatives ruined everything. In 1958, that fucking Diefenbaker wanted to send all the Italians home. (J-5)

In Canada 1951, no work, just heavy work. It was overcrowded living conditions. There were no washing machines, no television, only one hour of Italian on the radio. Once and a while, I'd go to a show or wedding with a good friend. In Canada Angela suffered - tears - I stayed home and did nothing. My father was 65 when he came. (J-7)

At this point the father interrupts and continues:

...If I wanted to come to Canada, I'd come when I was young. My brother was here, I didn't want to come. If it was good or bad, I had to stay... I sold everything in Italy. It was too cold here. I worked so hard in Italy. I'm 89, my back still hurts. Life in Italy was so natural, fruit in Italy. Here it's all fake. We don't know what we eat here. (J-6)

Other people had these recollections:

My first impression about Canada . . . Shit, it's cold. What the heck am I doing here. It was cold, foggy and cloudy. I hated it. I came in 1957. I came to stay regardless. I couldn't go back. In Canada, I was so free, but as time passed on, I wanted to go back to Italy. But couldn't. I had no money and I had no family left in Sicily. (J-12)

The nuns at St. Mary's hated all the Italians. The Irish kids hated us. The nuns would slap our hands. The anglos got away with everything. I only had one dress, one skirt. They were clean all the time. My mother paid \$0.50 at a sale. Mom was a penny pincher. She'd buy a ball of wool for \$0.10 and knit us everything. Our socks were black oxfords. They were welfare socks. Everybody knew you were on welfare if you wore those socks. Our parents worked so hard for everything they gave us. (J-14)

I had not even a penny. If I had money, I would have gone back to Sicily. Hamilton was a desert. I was \$25.00 short to pay for my trip back to Italy. If I had money, I would have gone back. I had no money, so I decided to stay. Italians were hated in the 1950's. The english called us names: WOP, DP, DAGO. They hated us because we took their jobs. Italians were like the Portuguese of today. Give them a little, they are happy and work hard. (J-15)

and
 Life in Hamilton has been one of contentment. We were considered poor by others but we were middle class. As a youngster, life was difficult being Italian. There were a lot of racist name callers. Yet family life was fun. We were happy with a little. During the depression, you made your own good times. We ate bread pudding and lots of chicken. (J-16)

and
 Many men wanted to go back to Italy, but they had very little if anything to go back to. The immigrants at this point in time had no place to call home. Italy was still their motherland, but not their home. In Canada, they did not just quite "fit in". They sensed anomie and helplessness. They continued. The only remedy for their ailment would be time.

According to Glaser model (1958), these people were in the marginal stage. The immigrant has assimilated somewhat into the society, but they still lack total assimilation. The immigrants relate to some others outside their group, but the immigrant is lost and torn between two societies. Much anxiety is felt by the immigrant.

With time comes the move to other stages in assimilation and to greater contentment:

I am a very sick woman. I have had hemorrhages, infections, a bursting appendix and my insides are full of tumours. In Canada, I worked as a cleaning woman who just cleaned and washed. I toiled, saved, worked and sweat. My husband dies and my entire life goes down . . . He left me with a mortgage and on welfare. I paid everything off. Today, I'm on six pills a day. I want help from someone. I lead a difficult life; long and alone. Now to make it worse, I'm sick. I go backwards instead of forwards. One day, I'll die at home. Life has been work, house and church. (J-1)

Even though J-1 has experienced great hardships she has no regrets.

I wouldn't change a thing. I wouldn't even change the colour of my hair. I lead a good life in Canada, better than the life I would have led in Italy. At least, I have a house and no debts! (J-1)

I'm, retired. I have asthma. I receive \$1,400.00 per month from my pension and all my benefits are paid . . . At first I feared life here in Canada because it was unknown. Now I have no worries. Life for me in Canada was WORK,SACRIFICE, EAT, PAY HOUSE. For me it was okay. (J-4)

Today people want bigger cars and bigger houses. We were happy with less. We worked hard, saved money, lived life day to day. We sacrificed for our children, so did my parents. But today, kids want too much. People in general are never happy. I'm happy and content . . . I never suffered in my life. We never wanted more than we had. We were content. I'm happy with what I have. . . pension,family, grandchildren. My kids won't let me starve. (J-9)

The financial stuff was hard a bit, but it all worked out. If I stayed in Italy I don't know how my life would have turned out. I made a good decision to stay here. I'll never change. When the kids marry, I'll spend more time with my wife at the cottage at PORT DOVER. (J-13)



We spoiled our kids. We sacrificed to give them the best. I never enjoyed my life. But Hamilton and life in Hamilton was good. Thank God I didn't go back to Italy. Life is good here. A few sacrifices, but we got what we wanted; a house. We worked like dogs to get it. We walked every where to save money. Nobody helped us. We helped the kids too much. Kids don't understand to save money. We tell them we did this and that. They don't want to hear. It was a tough life, but we loved it. We have enough. Thank God I'm so happy. (J-8)

My mother buried four kids. She worked to pay the undertaken. We were damn poor, but we were happy. You know what, today material things come before children . . .Problem is that both parents want a career. Children don't know how to give love. Things will only get worse in the future. . . I love my city. I love where I am. There is nothing like home . . . Money doesn't buy happiness. If we could go back to difficult times, people would see it. It would be better. There is too much greed just to keep up with the Jones ... Old age is ugly. I'm happy here . . . I've had a good life. But remember this . . . Life is a bowl of cherries, but people forget there are pits in the cherries. (J-14)

The variation in contentment and happiness come of course from variable home circumstances and values. But the role of family and financial security stand out in positive and negative accounts.

Many of those interviewed were in general, extremely disappointed with their quality of life. Yet much of the immigrant research would indicate that many immigrants are very successful, have money, cars, contributes in his/her

community, are involved with politics and are loved by everyone. This is not the case:

Life in Canada in the 1960's was first work, eat and sleep. There was no time for anything else. In 1981, I hurt myself and life suddenly becomes miserable! I have had many problems with the Workman's Compensation Board . . . I retired at sixty. Why work until one hundred. I will not break my back for my kids. They are young and want it all. They must work for it. No work, no money. Parents spoil their kids. We remember what it was like to live in misery. Our kids don't know it. When you die you don't bring your money with you. Why should you kill yourself for your kids? Why leave them \$100 when you can leave them \$50? We Italians are never happy . . . NO RESPECT - GOODBYE JACK. (J-5)

If life in Italy was like it was now here when I was eighteen, I would have never left to come to Canada. In Italy, they think only of today. I'm happy to live in Canada. My health is full of pain, pills and doctors. Life always gets worse. Life was tough; before with seven kids, now I'm going to have a good life. If I had a smaller family, life would have been better. KIDS WERE EXPENSIVE . . . Mother and father (me and my wife) suffer for the family . . . This is respect. (J-10)

Life was full of sacrifices. Live for the kids to be more happy. We had a happy life before. We were poor, but happy. If the life I left in Sicily was like now, I wouldn't leave. They have a better life in Sicily than here. There they live day to day. I seek good luck in Canada. It was tough to find. First we needed luck to find work, then have had other pains. We are tired of this life. We need rest. We have no rest. We are not happy; need respect. We even sacrifice in death. (J-5)

FAMILY LIFE IN JAMESVILLE

The cohesiveness of the Italian family is well documented (Sturino, 1978; Jansen, 1981; Bagnell, 1989). In Italy, there were traditional gender roles. The father was the head of the household and all men were seen to be superior to women. Women played only minor roles in the economic advancements of the

family. The women played vital roles in the organization of the home and domestic labour around the home.

When fathers passed away, in most cases, their sons or male relatives took over as the patriarch:

I remember when I came to Canada my brother took me in. He took me aside and told me . . . "If you want somebody, I'm responsible. I love you. Don't walk around the street with somebody so people talk. Tell me. Let him come." I had no friends, just family. Respect comes from your family.
(J-13)

The family was the central unit for saving money, socialization, finding marriage partners and so on. They love their families so much. Yet in Canada, there was somewhat of a change in attitudes about family. They realized that they were very different from their children and that their children were not as respectful as they were towards their parents. The parents (the initial immigrants) wanted to raise their children as if they were in Italy. They wanted control of their female daughters. They just told their children to listen to them. This caused many problems:

Our children have it too good. We give so much to them. They take all. They never give back. If I have money to give my kids, I'll give it to them. But I make \$100 in this country, they could make \$300 to \$400. If there is no respect, good bye Jack! (J-5)

All the children today want one house, two cars, two women and to work a little and earn a lot. Money walks here in Canada. My daughter is divorced. This is tough on us. My son-in-law fell in love with another woman. Sacrifices even now for my kids . . . We must sacrifice to stay united. If it hurts, my kids, it hurts me. I live for my kids to be happy. (J-10)

There is no trust, no communication with our children. To have respect, you need to give it. (J-3)

There appears to be a consensus that children are spoiled and that there is no respect shown towards parents. But the parents want to make life as easy as they possibly could for their children. But they failed to realize that it is this generosity, this openness, that has destroyed many families. Many Italian youths have opted for lives of crime and drugs because of this spoiled attitude that exists (Bagnell, 1989). There are generational differences:

My parents struggled a great deal. They were frugal and knew how to stretch a dollar. There was no credit; it was on honour. They had no money, there were no presents at Christmas, but we had respect; we never answered back. I always learned to help them out . . . Today, the children take everything for granted . . . In the past women were treated like women, respect for them. Today, kids don't open doors for elderly women or give up their seats in buses . . . I babysit my greatniece whose mother is divorced. I try to instill in her values, but the niece is brought up by three or four families . . . The family is very important but its importance has diminished over time. The family doesn't come around as much, only maybe at mass and at Christmas. The parents drew the family together. They always lived for their children. (J-14)

Another woman saw things in a somewhat different fashion:

My parents were happy, hard-workers that held their money tight. The family was large and times were difficult. For us money is looser, our homes are furnished. We have a business. Nobody helped us. Our kids have done well. Education is the key. They have good jobs and good husbands. They have the same values as us and they are family oriented. (J-12)

There was a yearning for traditional values and roles in the family:

Women have changed. Women used to be subordinate to men. Before men used to abuse their wives. Today women have too much freedom. They must learn to be patient. (J-7)

There is divorce because there is no collaboration. You tell your wife to stay in, you'd go out, o.k., not now. The women go out to 2:00 to 3:00 a.m. My wife doesn't. Women cook some say you cook!! It is easy to

find a bad wife. Where you go, I go!! Women and kids need to be watched. Wife must stay at home they want too much freedom. Now men fear marriage. (J-6)

In the 1950's, the average woman had no education, married, stayed home with kids. Today's women want too much. They don't have to work, want two holidays a year, extra money, more work she wants it. Women need to be stronger, women will have more control. (J-16)

I love the traditional family. They should reinforce the women to stay at home. Children learn better with the mother at home. If mother works she becomes a stranger. Children stay close if mother is home, if not stress . . . everything collapses. (J-8)

While these views may be wishful thinking, they suggest the significance of a cultural reality that is disappearing. The "old ways" are still important and help define the individual in the group for him/herself. As with the cohesiveness of the family so too with the cohesiveness of the group. Italian-Canadians exemplified this in attachments to language, religion, and ethnic associational life:

To be Italian and speak it is an honour. Italians have a different ambience, a different way of life. Eventually, Italians marry english, marry Polish . . . One day there will only be one language spoken and understood. That will be bad for us. (J-5)

Italians are clever, inventive, loving, hard working and family oriented. I'm proud to speak and be Italian. I am not ashamed. Remember an Italian found America, but it takes a good Jew to run it. (J-16)

I always spoke Italian as a youngster at home, but as I grew up, Italian wasn't that important. We never spoke Italian at home when I got married. My kids don't understand it at all. But the neighbourhood was always Italian and my children grew up with all Italian kids. It's really fascinating that my youngest son wants to change his name back to the Italian version. (J-8)

This is a fascinating concept. Many authors classify this as a re-emergence of ethnicity and culture (Krammer, 1970). The third generation have since settled into mainstream culture and they realize that there has got to be

more to life than just "being like everyone else". This explains the going back to redefine their heritage and cultural roots. Some would take Italian speaking courses, some would learn to cook and others, trace their family trees. Each successive generation takes with it only what it needs to function in society.

Finally, by the third generation, all is lost and only the last name remains (ibid).

Religion is central to the lives of these individuals:

I believe in the system. I never ever missed a service on Sunday. I go to pilgrimages to St. Anne in Montreal, Fatima Shrine in New York and San Gabriel in Toronto with church social groups. Prayers are very important. I always pray. I feel content when I'm in church. I forget about a lot of things. Church is very important. (J-7)

I'm Catholic born and I stay. No people change me. I die Catholic. I tell protestants to FUCK OFF. When they came to my door. Mom and dad go to church, so do the kids every Sunday. We'd go. We'd even go to the feste, spaghetti dinners... To hear the priest is a good thing. Its the right thing. (J-4)

Religion was extremely important to my family. In Italy, if you didn't go to church, there was no food for you. You woke up at 8:00 a.m. to shine your shoes. In Canada, every Sunday, my brother gave me money to put in the basket. He gave me \$0.20, \$0.10 for two times the basket came around. I met my boyfriend at church . . . We eat and drink like animal, anything different. We need church. We learn something from church. You can never have enough church. You should always give thanks to the lord. We have everything. Thank God. (J-13)

Associational life is evident in these accounts:

I was first involved with the ICC, but for the last 25 years I have been involved with the Racalmutese Club. I'm the past president. I used to go two or three days a week. Now I'm retired and I go everyday. I live close by.. There are about 160 members . . . The president wants to fix the club up. He is retired and has nothing to do. He wants to put in ceramic tiles, bocci courts and more card tables. It's a good idea. There are no young kids in the club. The youngest members are 45 to 50 years old. The kids never came. They never wanted to and never will. Eventually these clubs will all close down. We will all be dead. (J-10)

Mother was involved in clubs. She was involved with the Mutual Benevolent Italian Society, Marconi Ladies Italian Club. They met once a month, spoke Italian and gossiped. I guess it kept the community together. . . I was involved with the Christian Youth Organization Women's league. Not many young people were involved. The youngest was forty. A lot of the old members are dead. (J-9)

When my husband came to Canada, he wasn't involved with clubs. We had no money no need for them ever. Just recently, my husband started to go to the YMCA. He goes every night to exercise and chat with friends. He loves friends and family and just sitting down having coffee. (J-13)

SUMMARY

The people that I spoke to were retired older immigrants that had lived in Jamesville all their Canadian lives. Many of the men were employed in construction and a few others at Stelco and Dofasco. Many of the women were housewives. In general these people claimed not to having enjoyed their lives in Canada. In Jamesville, cohesiveness of the family and ethnicity based on traditional values and ways helps define identity and enhances coping in a changing world. Are things the same in Stoney Creek?

CHAPTER 6

THE ITALIAN-CANADIAN EXPERIENCE IN STONEY CREEK

The area is a suburb on the eastern boundary of Hamilton. It is bounded by Greens Road on the east, Millen Road on the west, King Street on the south, and Lake Ontario to the north. This area has a large concentration of Italians. Twenty-eight percent of the residents claim Italian as their ethnic origin. The homes in the area are large, two-storey homes, on large lots.

The area was selected for its high concentration of Italians, but also because a comparison could be drawn between the lives of immigrants in this area and Jamesville. Do the people in Stoney Creek work in construction? Are they retired? Do they speak Italian at home? How do they perceive their lives? These questions will be answered in this section.

SETTING THE SCENE: STONEY CREEK (From the 1976, 1981, and 1986 Census)

In 1976 the entire Stoney Creek area was one census tract. It contained only 11% Italians. Upon speaking to the early arrivals to the area, they had mentioned to me that there were only a few homes in the area. The area was comprised of farms and open spaces. There were no services for the residents of the area.

In 1981 due to an increase in population, Stoney Creek was divided into two census tracts. The population was 16% Italian. The average residence was made up of four to five individuals, with two children at home between the ages of six and fourteen. Sixty percent of the immigrants in the area arrived between 1945 and 1964, 36% arrived between 1965 and 1978. Of all the immigrants, 57% were twenty or older when coming to Canada and 20% had less than a grade nine education. The occupations of the male immigrants were as follows: 9% in managerial and administration, 9% in sales, 6% in services, 13% in processing, 11% in construction, and 24% in machining. The occupations of the female immigrants were as follows: 7% in machining, 11% in sales, 15% in services, and 38% in clerical. The average family income was \$22,609.00, well below the Hamilton average.

In 1986 there were 28% that claimed Italian as their ethnic origin. Thirty-three percent of the residents of Stoney-Creek had less than a grade nine education, and only 4% had a university degree. As for employment figures, the participation rate for males was 77% and for females 59%. Forty percent of the males were employed in the manufacturing sector, 25% in service sector, and 15% in trades. Note the increase in both the manufacturing and service sectors. This is the case because in the 1986 Census employment areas were merged. Manufacturing in 1986 included machining, processing, and fabrication. The women were employed as follow: clerical 30%, service sector 18%, and machining 12%. And finally only 39% of the women were employed full-time. The figure rises to 58% for the men. The remaining men and women were employed as part-time labourers.

EMPLOYMENT IN ITALY

The work experiences of women are very diverse:

My father was an immigrant. He lived in Belgium and my mother and I lived by ourselves in Calabria. He worked in the coal mines. He'd send us money home every month. My mom and I were alone and I never worked while I was in Italy. I didn't work even when I got married. (S-7)

In Italy I was a little girl I was carefree. I helped on the farms here and there, but the farms were so far apart. (S-9)

My family was very large. I couldn't go to school there. We had nine kids in our family. I stayed home. Mom worked in a factory in town and dad was a farmer. I stayed home to watch the kids. I stayed there until I was 20, then I went to Pescara and found a job at Pasta Dicceco, making pasta. I worked there six days a week, making 600 lira a day and I'd send all the money back home. (S-14)

I always worked on the farm. My mother was a seamstress and had a small shop. My father worked on the farm. We always had to work to eat . . . I went to school until I was eight, then I continued to work. I started to sew, not in factories because there were no jobs but people paid me to make their clothes. I was married in 1954 and I went to France. There I worked in a factory making fur coats for 600 francs per day. (S-13)

Mens' employment was more varied:

Father owned a piece of land. I went to grade four then father told me to stay home and work for the family. We didn't have money to pay for school. There were no factories. People worked on their lands growing grapes, corn, wheat and chestnuts. They worked from sunrise to sunset . . . My brother and father went off to war. I controlled the farm. I too was called to go to war and then spent five years as a prisoner of war in Pretoria. I came back in 1949 to work the fields with my brother and father . . . In 1948 I went to Belgium to work the coal mines. It was terrible. I emigrated there with papers to find work. I stayed there for three years. It was a dangerous job. There were fires, collapse. It was a bad life. I dug the dead two or three times! (S-4)

My dad had a farm in Italy. He worked on it . . . In my town there were lots of factories and small industries. They paid very little, but it

was enough to survive. I decided to go to carpentry school; the government paid for it. I then became a mechanic adjuster and eventually an apprentice. (S-10)

As a youngster, I worked on the farm and went to school there were no jobs in the 1930's. My first job after grade five was working on a farm cutting wood. I made 213 lira a day. After that, I left and went to construction as a labourer and made 5 lira a day. Then in 1940, I was called to go to war. There they gave me one lira a day. (S-11)

I always worked as a youngster in Italy, usually on the farm for 10 lira a day. After grade five, I worked in a brickyard lime factory. It paid very little . . . I gave all my money to my parents. It was always like that. I then went into the army voluntarily. I went there because it was a better life. Where was no work in Italy, so I went to war. After I came back I went back to crushing bricks. I then went to Belgium. I immigrated to change life, make money. Life in Italy was too tough. The Belgium government found us jobs in their coal mines. They paid very little and conditions were horrible. It was dangerous and we worked nights always. (S-6)

The work history of these people vary from those in Jamesville. In general the Jamesville people were forced to work on the farm. Those from Stoney Creek, being born in the 1930's to 1940's were younger, and had the option of migrating to other countries in Europe first.

EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA

In Canada, people faced the same problems as those of the Jamesville area: no jobs, discrimination, poor living conditions and little pay:

I found a job in 1957 at Westinghouse from \$1.30 to 2.25 per hour. I just applied. Everybody said that Italian weren't hired there . . . I got married in 1959 and I never worked after that while my first husband was alive. He didn't want me to work. (S-3)

I found my first job in a chocolate factory on King St. in 1968. It only took me one week to find the job. I made candies . . . I worked 40

hours per week at \$0.95 per hour and I worked Saturdays cleaning bathrooms. (S-7)

When I came over, I didn't find work. I'd cry all the time. My dad told me not to worry. . . Not to many people worked in January 1954. My first job was to pick strawberries and that was day to day for \$5.00 a day . . . All my money went to my parents. It was always to be that way. (S-9)

Here are a few interesting accounts of the immigrants first jobs in Canada:

I found my first job on May 1, 1968. I found it after six weeks in Canada. My friend found me a job at the foundry. . . It was close to home and I was making \$3.00 to \$4.00 an hour. I worked there for two and a half days and on the third day, I broke my leg; a piece of steel fell on it. (S-2)

I came over in 1958. There was no work at all. My dad worked in a restaurant, my brother was a barber. I couldn't find a job. I wanted to go back, but I had no money. I had nothing to do in Italy. I finally found a job on a farm from August to November. I also at the same time worked in a foam factory on MacNab and York St. I'd package foam, eight hours for \$35.00 per week. (S-4)

My first job in Canada was in 1967. I made soles at Susan Shoes, working on a machine. There were lots of Italians and Yugoslavians. They paid us \$1.00 per hour. It was heavy piece work and my friends found me my work. (S-15)

In general, those in Stoney Creek had an easier time in finding employment than those in Jamesville. They came later and could as some of the accounts attest, rely on family and fellow Italians to help find employment.

EMPLOYMENT THROUGH THE YEARS

Over the years many of the residents found employment through friends and relatives at various employment opportunities such as Dofasco, Stelco, Westinghouse, and Inglis. The people that found employment in these secure positions maintained their employment over long periods of time. Some could not find jobs in these areas and they moved into the construction field. In doing so they protected themselves from the more general Hamilton economy and strengthened their family ties.

For those arriving after 1965 steady and secure employment was difficult to find. As was the case with the other immigrants upon arrival to Canada numerous job changes occur, and then after a period of three to five years a long term job is found. This did not happen to those that came after 1965. If the same scenario follows, then these people would have found employment in the early 1970's to mid 1970's. This was a time of recession and stagnation in Hamilton. Some found jobs but were forced to leave due to plant closure, Inglis. There is also numerous job changes for these individuals. The job changes continue until; 1) a family member finds them a job at Stelco or Dofasco, 2) they open up their own company. The later was the case for many post 1965 immigrants. For the few that have not done so, are still searching for well paying, secure employment.

Further many are content with their employment and have stayed with their employers for considerable periods, again minimizing the effects of industrial change.

HOUSING AND MOBILITY

Like their fellow country people elsewhere, the Stoney Creek residents had similar housing experiences in Italy and in Canada. In most cases, they lived with friends and relatives and soon thereafter, ventured off on their own:

My father shifted back and forth to find work and because of this, we lived with relatives for one, two or three years. Eventually, my father did settle in Hamilton at Barton & Wentworth. He bought his first house in 1960. (S-1)

I was directed to Hamilton by the consulate in Italy. I arrived in Hamilton and had no place to go. A taxi-driver brought me to a house on James and Murray St. There were no places there, so they sent me to a place at Barton and Ontario. It was the industrial zone. I was a boarder paying \$16 per week. (S-3)

It was at 64 Cannon St. Rent was \$60 per month in 1968. My mother lived with us. It was a small place; two rooms in a house, kitchen, one bathroom. You couldn't breathe. It was small there. There wasn't even enough room to die. There were two rooms with eight people living in them. There were a lot of Italians. I stayed there for six months. (S-8)

I came to Canada in 1951. My friend said there were a lot of opportunities, so I applied. He gave me a piece of paper with an address on it. I got to Hamilton and was directed to the Parkdale and Barton area. I rented a home for about three months. (S-6)

I rented a room in my brother's house on William St. in the Barton and Wentworth area. It was in 1959. He made me pay \$15 per month. (S-10)

Significance of family and friends within the culture are again important.

But Stoney Creek is a fairly recent housing subdivision. Why did people move there?

I didn't like the area at Woodward and Barton. There were a lot of troubles with robberies, kids and people would call us wops. A snowball broke my window. That's it! I moved . . . There are a lot of Vietnamese and Portuguese people that live in the area. There are so

many of them that live in one house, like we used to . . . The house on Woodward and Baron was small; 35 by 100 and had an underground garage. There was no room for my daughters' cars . . . I sold the place to a Spanish guy . . . I like Stoney Creek. It's big. But here I have only a few friends. I know nobody. There are a few services, but I like it here. When my kids marry, they can live with me. (S-4)

We had four cars, there was no parking. I paid thousands of dollars in fines, so I moved . . . There were beautiful people in that zone, but it was so old. When I moved here, there were only fourteen houses in all the area. I bought the lot; it was 50 feet by 140 feet for \$25,000. I built a 2,500 square foot home for \$50,000. . . I fixed it all up. I did the carpentry, ceramics and insulation. It took four months to build . . . There were no buses, only dirt roads and no services. Contractors came in bought homes and now lots of people live in the area. In general, the zone is good, but ragazzi take drugs, steal money. I've never been robbed. (S-5)

It was a nice, quiet zone. I left Parkdale because of gangs and bums. It was a bad area. I did it for the kids, but I realized it was worse here. The second kid found bad company . . . Now there are lots of Italians; here, you can call Stoney Creek, Italy . . . In subdivisions, neighbours are not as tight. The people are jealous here. . . I have more and I want more; new verandas, new kitchens. I didn't think like this when I came from Italy. (S-8)

The area was good. It was close to work, church and clubs, but the zone changed. All the Italians left the area to go to the mountain and here to Stoney Creek. I was the only Italian left on Kensington. I fixed the whole house up. I'm retired. I love this house . . . It's close to the bus, clubs and it's a beautiful house. There was no room in my house on Kensington for my nephews. It's tough to find a house like this. (S-11 was 72 years old when he bought the house in Stoney Creek.)

There is concern with youths and with envious, jealous neighbours. The suburb provides good conditions for family life, but it is not the rural idyll for which people hoped.

QUALITY OF LIFE

The residents of Stoney Creek expressed similar views as the residents of Jamesville did regarding the quality of life in Italy. For example:

Life in Italy was miserable.. We were poor. There was not a lot of food or clothes. We worked from sunrise to sunset.. My mother died when I was 16. There were few doctors, little medicine. She died because there was no medicine for her asthma.. My brother and father went to war, I lived by myself for four years. Life alone was terrible. If I had food I ate it if not I'd go to bed on an empty stomach. In 1940 I joined the army. The food was good, it was better than the food on the farm.. In the war from 1940-47 I had no fear of death. I volunteered for General Romul the Desert Fox.. I saw lots of people die in front of my eyes. I never injured nothing.. After the war the government gave us 7000 lira. When I got to Campobasso I couldn't even buy a sandwich with the money. I left Italy and the miserable life in 1948 to go to Belgium-It was worse there (S-2).

The early responses and reactions to life in Canada were mainly uncomplimentary:

I came to Canada in 1958. I was lonely, it was a strange land, I had no friends, I hated the temperature. I didn't like it. There was no work. I wanted to go back to Italy right away but I had nothing to go back to. (S-4)

In 1956 I came to Canada. If I would have stayed in Italy for just six more months I'd never come to Canada.. I suffered 20 years to buy a house. It was difficult in the early days to find work. You relied on your friends. No English, no jobs, there was a lot of discrimination. They'd call us WOPS, DAGOS! In 1956 If I had money I would have gone back then. I had no money so I had to stay. (S-5)

Canada was ugly! I was alone, cold, had no language. I lived in Canada for 20 years, I never went anywhere. I always had the idea to go back to Italy.

Why?

My husband can't earn enough money as a breadman. The kids are in school.. But life was always tough. In general it was better if we stayed in Italy. Italy is my homeland.

Why don't you go when your kids are married?

Kids marry, I can't leave them here. It's bad to live without parents. (S-7)

I came to Canada in December 1951 it was so cold everyone had snowshoes I had a hole in my shoe.. I never worked overtime at Pickett because I wasn't English, because I never bought the boss whisky.. Italy was poor it gave us no work, if they'd give us work we would have stayed in Italy. We came to try Canada. There was opportunity to buy housed and land. Canada was like a magnet once you were here you couldn't let go, or go back. (S-12)

Over the years, contentment increased, although there is great variation in responses:

I need to find work. I can only look one day at a time.. I'd love to travel but I can't. I don't go to clubs and all my friends have disappeared.. I have no family here.. I've been discriminated against at work. They make fun of Italian women with black dresses and statues of Lions on lawns. I strike back. I say Canadians are lazy and on welfare.. If I could go back to Italy I would. Look Italians don't immigrate now. I'm very disappointed with life in Canada. (If I could do it all over again I would not have come. If I stayed in Italy maybe I would have had more opportunity. (S-2)

We sacrifice our lives for our kids then we die. We took life hard, like stupids.. I've been in Canada for 22 years and only one time did I go to the show. I'm ashamed of it. I never ate in a restaurant it was dirty, expensive. I ate at home. It was cheaper and I could see my food.

What enjoyment did you get in of from your life?

We spent our lives Zappanno (digging). Our life is tight. If you want to spend money you can't, you'll regret it later.

What about your future?

More sacrifices, I'll watch my kids and their kids.

Do you have any regrets in your life?

I would have never come to Canada. Who do you love your mother or your mother-in-law. Your mother of course. Our land is Italy, I became a Canadian citizen for my children. What do I do? Leave my kids here to start all over in Italy? It would be harder.. Life in Canada was better when Trudeau was here. There was work from 1972-1982, he left, Inglis closed.. Liberals were good the Conservatives are good for the capitalists. If I had money I'd go out more.. Listen to this, now my shower is broken and will cost me \$3,000.00 to fix, so we take baths now. (S-7)

Canada is the land of opportunity.. You pick the right road.. you have got to have a good head. Need desires. Not all could do it. It depends on the individual. You suffer today to enjoy it tomorrow.. I love Italy it is my homeland but Canada is in my heart. (Wife interjects) "Canada is my homeland, we made our bread here, old age, stay well. Thanks God. I've liked it here. This is our land we must die here. As the days pass we get older.. Today we must be happy with what we did. We have to say God let us enjoy it. Life in Canada #1". (S-11)

In general I'm happy with this country. We had nothing when we came over. In the last ten years there has been refugees, PAKIS and SIKHS that have come over and government officials give them jobs, and pay for their schooling. We never had that. We had job discrimination, not now, they have beards and commissions.. No more Italians are coming now. Life is good there. Italy is America of the West.. One could live a good life, but its up to the individual. If one works hard, makes money, be happy. (S-10)

I never went to Florida. But the last four years I have been going.. A father could support ten kids but ten kids couldn't support a father.. A woman should stay at home just because it's got to be that way.. I still don't go to restaurants. I don't trust them it's to dark and if you go all the time you'd be broke! (S-7)

Thank God I did well. I worked for 35 years, I am happy, I have a house, family, I married my young one, this is it. We are happy with what little we have.. If you buy a big house \$500,000.00 you throw away your life, you never finish paying it. FIRST pay off the house, be loyal to your family and then after you pay off your house then enjoy life. (S-13)

Now it's my time. I never had a car, now I have my own car. I love my new life. I have money in my pocket and I'm independent. Life was tough at first now it's a good time. It was tough, the kids were small, no money, no language, no car. Now I'm more independent. I don't like to be dependent on anybody (husband interjects) "She talks like this but she won't change. She has traditional ideas.. About life in Canada we heard in the 1960's that in America people made money with shovels. We were surprised it wasn't like that when we came". (S-8)

Even if content, people talk of struggles and sacrifices for achievements. They strive for independence, for themselves, their families but question whether success can be used to define that identity. Much is done in the name of family.

FAMILY LIFE IN STONEY CREEK

The family is seen by many as lost but there is regret at the passing of its popular traditional form:

We were all very, very close growing up. I'm a Canadian, I speak Italian but my children don't. If they want to learn it they could take it at school. There is no need for them to know it.. My parents are proud of all of us, and I of them. My parents gave me family, which means values, church and to work hard. I'll never forget that.. When Grandma died I lost part of my past. Being Italian is not important, I still use the values. (S-1)

I have always been part of a tight family. I lived with my brother for years. My brother found me work, gave me a job and fed me. He meant everything.. I want to do the same for my family. When my kids get married I want them to live with me to save money. I don't think this will happen. In our days children were more educated, we were poor but had respect. Now kids don't give a shit.. I don't understand..

Collaboration is needed in the family, help one another. How can we have collaboration when people waste themselves stealing, taking drugs going to jail.. Practise with ZOPPO, ZOPPO too.. We sacrifice for our kids. We have enough money (house, car), all our money goes to our kids anyway. (S-4)

Family helped all the time. As a father you think for your kids. The family must always stay united. If the children leave home it's very sad.. Collaboration is the key.. If you are good with me I'm good with you. I need respect. This is what family is (S-5)

We were always tight. We are both retired (wife and I) and we babysit our grandchildren. We love it. I love my kids a lot. I gave my kids all. They live at their own house and my door is open to them, I don't have their key.. We gave our kids all as we didn't want them to suffer like we did.. I will help them until I die. (S-6)

My children don't pay rent. I sacrifice myself. I eat less so my kids don't pay rent. We try to help our kids. Our life is bad. We work for money, put money in the bank, buy a house, no problem, but if my children would leave the house I'd go crazy. What is more important than family? Nothing! (S-7)

I love my family. In Italy we were so close. I had 15 aunts and uncles and I loved them all.. There has to be respect in family. If my kids are late they call me.. I love my kids and family. They have education, better jobs, more money, who can complain? I'd do anything for them. I cook, clean, wash, I work too. All I want for my kids is good health and for them to get married. The responsibilities of a mother are never over. (S-13)

Finally this extended conversation of generational/ethnic views and on the meaning of family. Sergio and Mary are married with 2 children and fast approaching middle age. Sergio is a second generation Italian and Mary a third generation Scottish.

Sergio: The next generation will be totally different. They are going to want to do it all, have it all, and even want us to buy them a house. Our children will get ZILCH!! They will know that we are here for them.. Education is the key! We want all the best for them. We want to give them the things we never had. They expect the parents to do it.

Mary: BMW for my daughter at 18, no way. The kids will learn to value it first. They must understand the value of what it takes to bring it in.

Sergio: This is easy to say. Let them work for it, but it will be hard for us.. I'm 40+ I'm not allowed to run the show yet. Let them make their decisions. It's hard for parents to let go. We could do that.

The conversation continues and the questions of parents comes up next.

Mary: Sergio's parents are never happy with what they have. My parents are poor but they worked so hard. Dad is 75, he's happy, they travel. We never see them. Geez in Sergio's family there is no communication. They need it. It's sad they give you the silent treatment. Sergio's parents are so miserable they have so much animosity between them. (S-16)

There is then a near sanctifying of the family and regret to its changing.

In Stoney Creek, in particular, the passing of traditional ways is lamented.

Success does not replace family and ethnicity. Here are a few examples:

When I came to Canada I knew no English. Nobody met me at the airport. I was lost. I lived with other immigrants.. I interacted with Italians only. But if you spoke no English you wouldn't get a job. My children don't speak Italian. My son failed Kindergarten so we stopped speaking Italian at home.. When you meet Italians speak it, people will feel proud. I'm very proud to be Italian. (S-2)

All my daughters married Canadians. All my grandchildren speak English. It bothers me but the world changes. My husband went to night school for 3 years to learn it, you need English. I didn't go to school. (S-3)

I went to Italy when I was 27 to marry an Italian. I found her in 4 months.. I still feel Italian. My kids speak it a little they understand it too. They help us make wine and sausages. But they don't understand, they do things the Canadian way. There is no brotherhood here in Canada. (S-4)

Language is missing here. Nobody speaks Italian, everyone is embarrassed. It was worse in the mid 1970's to early 1980's. It changed when Italy won the World Cup in 1982. Then you were proud to be

Italian.. I remember going to buy a dress just a few months ago and spoke Italian to the saleslady who was I'm positive Italian. She answered me in English. Our blood is Italian. (S-7)

My children speak it, my grandchildren NO! The third generation is lost. They are really alla mancha cake.. It hurts a bit but it has to finish. We can't keep Italian forever. It hurts but what are you going to do.. There is no Italian culture here in Hamilton like Toronto. There is nothing here.. Nobody watches channel 11. We need somebody or something, people here don't speak it. They are embarrassed. In Toronto they have more opportunities to reunite youth and people. They have Umberto Mancha, and Johnny Lombardi. (S-12)

SUMMARY

Those interviewed in Stoney Creek were younger and more affluent. Many of them built their own homes. Like those in Jamesville, they too relied heavily on family for support. There was resentment to the changes that family had been put through. They had few friends, religion played a minor role in their lives, and they did not frequent clubs/associational groups.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CASE STUDY OF AN ITALIAN-CANADIAN FAMILY

THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE NINNI FAMILY

The purpose of this life history is mainly to explore the lives of Italian-Canadians in an industrial city through several periods. Thus I have chosen to look at the impacts of industrial and employment change on individuals and their adjustments to that change. I wish to explore how the changes affect a particular family which has held a central role in its community for a lengthy period of time. Also, I was interested to see how the ethnic identity questions might be related to the economic sphere. In other words, I wanted members of what I regard as a key informant family to tell their stories; because I believe that this approach is an important one to elicit meanings and experiences in context, the adjustments, coping and negotiations that people make and the contexts themselves. In all of this, we see the scientists having an interpretive role to organize, order and comment on the life-history material.

The story that will follow is the story of an Italian immigrant family that came to Canada in the early 1900's from a small village in Sicily, Racalmuto. This life history will follow the family through some ninety years in Canada.

I approached one family member and he in turn introduced me to the other family members. In total twelve men and women, from two generations were interviewed. The interviews were conducted over a two month period and lasted in duration from one hour to two hours. Because of the nature of the data the family name has be changed.

Fred Ninni was born in a small village of about 12,000 people: Racalmuto, in the rural province of Agrigento in Sicily. Fred was born in 1891. He later worked in the Salt mines in Racalmuto as a labourer. Fred was unsatisfied with his employment and earnings in Italy. Fred saw no future for himself in Sicily. His attention was drawn to America where employment and money were abundant. He knew of other villagers that made the journey to Canada, in particular Hamilton and the news was promising.

He arrived in Hamilton in 1911, finding employment with the phone company. He worked as a labourer earning nine cents an hour. Once again, even in Canada he was working long hours - 12-14 hour days - for little pay. He then rented an apartment in the Caroline and Cannon area.

His future wife was Edna Mirabelli also from Racalmuto. Born in 1896, the seventh of eight children, she came to Hamilton in 1912 with her mother and grandmother. She found employment at the cotton mill on MacNab St. The cotton mill was full of Italians and other immigrants. Edna's mother found employment at Tuppett's Tobacco. Fred left the phone company to work for the railroad as a labourer. He then met Edna, and they married on the 25th of July, 1914, at St. Mary's Church in the Jamesville area. In 1914, shortly after they were married (she was 16, he was 19) they decided to rent a store at Caroline and Cannon. With the little money they had, they bought and sold fresh fruits and a few canned goods. The canned goods were received from Pasquale Brothers

on consignment. They paid for only what was sold. Fred bought the store with another partner in or about 1915. A short time later the partnership ended and Fred was the principal owner.

★ In 1915 the C.N.R. expropriated the land on which the store was located.

While the amount of the purchase is unknown Fred and Edna used the money to purchase three houses on MacNab. One of the houses was renovated into a butcher shop-grocery store. It was one of the first Italian owned stores in the area. It succeeded because of all the Italian customers. Both the Ninnis were extremely involved in their communities. Fred was involved with the Racalmutese Society and Edna the St. Mary's Women Group. The early to mid twenties was full of many hardships. The great depression took its toll of many area residents. "Dad would give out food and collect the money later." (Arthur Ninni). "He was a very generous man. He'd give bums and beggars end cuts" (George Ninni). Fred was also a driving force in the opening of Hamilton's Farmers market. "All of his friends got together and opened up the market. They pooled their resources" (Ines Ninni).

In 1915 the Ninnis started their family. Ted Ninni was born in 1915. In 1919 his brother George was born, and in 1923 Ralph was born. Edna Ninni was a family oriented person. She worked at the cotton mill until she married. After marriage, she stayed home with her family, occasionally helping at the store. The children while young, had responsibilities and duties to perform in the store: "We'd clean the vegetables. If a tomato had a spot on it, Dad would tell us to remove it. We'd stuff potatoes, deliver groceries and every Saturday morning at 5:00 a.m. we'd go to the farmer's market" (George Ninni).

In the later years three other sons were born, Arthur 1930, Barney 1932, Kenny 1937. There were also two other sons that were born in this period but

died in the early years of their lives. Later Fred wanted the children to have a greater part in the running of the store. "But it was mom that wanted us to go to school" (ibid). "Mom would speak Italian to us and she'd want us to speak English to her. She'd fool me. I'd read her something in English and she'd teach herself through me" (Arthur Ninni). Fred and Edna instilled many values in their children - hard work, ambition, pride, discipline, family, education and independence. Fred had "a driving ambition and was a hard worker" (Barney Ninni) "Mom was a very proud person and drove schooling into us" (George Ninni). Both parents believed that "schooling should not interfere with education - the ability to get along with others, share concerns and understand the needs of others" (ibid). The discipline given in the family was by Edna Ninni. "There were no spanks, no wooden spoons. She'd pretend to take off the belt. She'd always say...what a disgrace for family" (Arthur Ninni).

After the Ninnis married, Sunday was a day that brought the whole family together. Edna Ninni would cook dinner for as many as 20/25 people. Sons, wives and children were there every Sunday. It was at these dinners that Uncle Glen would enlighten the Ninni boys. Uncle Glen was a very important figure in the Ninni life history. He came to Hamilton in the early 1920's and moved in with the family on MacNab St.. Glen Ninni was a general practitioner who graduated from the University of Palermo, Catania, Racalmuto Sicily. He practised medicine in Hamilton. "Uncle Glen was a great doctor and the entire Italian community looked up to him" (Alfonso Ninni). "He was God, fun, caring. He also took great pride in the Italian culture. He loved the Opera, Voltare, and Dante. He taught us how to enjoy, and reap the fruits of life" (George Ninni).

Uncle Glen passed on many of his interests to the younger Ninni's. The Ninni boys saw him as an educator and as a catalyst to their success. "Uncle

Glen was the man. I have a shrine for him at home, he's a great legacy" (Alfonso Ninni). Despite some questioning of his medical ability, he was a great man in the Italian community. This was probably because he was one of the first Italian doctors in Hamilton. But it seems that Uncle Glen wanted total control of the Ninni boys. This did not sit well with Mrs. Ninni and hence great tension arose between the two. "Uncle Glen was also known to be of the flirtatious type. He had left a wife in Italy and messed around here with younger women" (Aileen). Regardless of these negative views he did still instill educational values in the children, and a deep love for their home culture and Italian heritage.

Ted Ninni, the first born, helped around the store delivering parcels. As he got older his interests and efforts shifted entirely to his academic pursuits. He entered Queen's University, at that time a WASPy university and he became a doctor at the age of 24. He graduated from Queen's University in 1939. All of his education and expenses were paid entirely by his parents. At school Ted was quite involved with school clubs. He formed the Newman Club, an elitist group of medical students at Queen's. In 1941 Ted Ninni went to war and became a captain in the army. After the war Ted came back to Hamilton and finished his internship at Hamilton's General Hospital. The hospital was in need of an Italian-Canadian who would serve as a link to the immigrant community. They selected Ted. He soon opened up a practice with Uncle Glen, located at Park and Barton. Mrs. Ninni owned the building and lived upstairs. "Mrs. Ninni loved Ted very deeply and always wanted to be near him. Ted would spend an hour, his lunch time, everyday with his mom. As his practice grew his mother's home got smaller" (ibid). Ted was thought to be an excellent doctor. "He was tall, attractive, sympathetic, emphatic and a great man" (ibid). Ted's son had this to say about his father: "If Dad couldn't solve a problem he'd send you to someone

else, he'd make sure that you were looked after" (Frank Ninni). "He had a very large practice, at times seeing 60 people a day. He was such a busy man, he couldn't say no to people" (Alfonso Ninni). "I was a young kid. I was riding my bike and I fell off. I sort of ripped my arm open. Uncle Ted saw me, took me in his car and rushed me to his office. There he stitched me up. He was great!" (Lorella Ninni).

In 1952 Fred Ninni died at the age of 62. At this point, the Ninni boys were still fairly young so Ted took over as the Patriarch. "Ted was the oldest brother, he ran the show, he was the pusher, he made others excel. He inspired the younger Ninnis " (ibid). Ted lived by the motto "The more I live, the more I'll learn, the more I realize the less I know" (Alfonso Ninni).

Ted Ninni married an anglo named Betty who met while working in the hospital. "Ted worshipped Betty. But Betty being a WASP, she didn't care much for the Ninnis or Italians for that matter" (Aileen). Betty did not speak Italian, or care to learn it. After the marriage to Ted, she stopped being a nurse and gave birth to four children. The first son was Betty's joy. He was born in 1951. Frank the second son, was born in 1953, while his parents were on a trip, the first child died, increasing the cultural tensions. "Betty and Ted never really understood their backgrounds" (ibid). Betty's distance and depression worsened. In 1975, she inadvertently took her life by the use of an overdose of pills. When she died, Ted was crushed and devastated. The whole family since then has blocked out the incident.

Ted continued his life with three children. Ted was still a very busy man and had little time to spend with them. His son Frank told me that he and his dad were never really close. "There would be no fishing. There was no wall, but there was no communication" (Frank Ninni). Frank left school after grade

twelve and he has always felt that his dad would have wanted him to become a doctor or continue his education.

In 1979, Ted met and married Peggy, a nutritionist at the Hospital. Peggy told me that Ted was very autocratic and authoritative. "He had to be with family, but he was very busy, his family resented that" (Aileen).

In 1980, Ted Ninni had a brain haemorrhage and died. He was 64. At the funeral, George, the next in line, delivered the eulogy. In it he said that "everybody should stick together, we are still Ninnis" (George Ninni). He (George) became the patriarch.

But as a youngster, George remembers filling baskets with potatoes, cleaning lettuce and working long hours in the family store. "In the hungry 30's dad would load up the car and sell stuff to farmers along Highway 6, life was terrible" (ibid). During school, George helped out at the store and in the summers he worked at the Dominion Foundries. In total he worked at the foundries for eight years. "There was always a job at the foundries for me" (ibid). In 1942, he decided to join the C.O.T.C. (Canadian Officer Training Corps) because he was "sick of being called names" (ibid). He was 23 when he entered, and the next year he went off to war. He became ill so he became a teacher in the army in London, and shortly thereafter a Captain.

In 1945, after the war, an army friend, Sid Stevens, convinced George to go to law school. He goes to Osgoode, University of Toronto and of his 330 fellow classmates only 100 graduate. George went on to law school because "I wanted to show them all that I never applied myself. I had something to prove" (ibid). In 1948 George Ninni married a Polish girl Lily. She too was a first generation Canadian. When asked why he did not marry an Italian, George had this to say:

"I asked an Italian girl to go to a dance. I knock on her door and her dad answers it. "What do you want?" "Tonight dance, I want to take your daughter". He grabbed me by the ear (like this) and said "send your dad". My dad met the man, and he asked me to settle my intentions now. "I told him to fuck off, I'm not ready yet".

In 1952 George Ninni opened up his own practice with Joe Smith, specializing in criminal law. Throughout the first few years of his practice, he remained good friends with Sid Stevens, who later became a judge. George remembers Sid "always giving me breaks" (ibid). In 1961, Lily died leaving three young children aged 12, 9, 6. There was pressure for George to remarry quickly, but he continued to work hard at practising law. In doing so he met up with Roseanne who after nine months he married. After marriage, they quickly had a child and two years later twins. In total George Ninni fathered six children. All of the children have followed George in or along the professional pathway. The eldest is a lawyer, the second is a legal secretary, the third is a student at the University of Toronto, the fourth (and first with Roseanne) is an architect, the fifth a mining engineer in B.C., and Ines is a student of history at McMaster.

George is now retired. He retired practising criminal law as of Jan. 1, 1989. At the age of 70, he is still extremely active. He is the Diabetic Society Chairman, Theatre Aquarius Chairman, consultant, works with the CFL players association, and until recently the Hamilton Harbour Commissioner. Within the last year he also was elected in the Gallery of Distinction in Hamilton. This award is given to prominent Hamiltonians who have brought uncommon distinction to the city. "George is a very proud man, but proud to Canadian after the Italian" (Roseanne Ninni). As a youngster of 24 he remembers the RCMP making his 82 year old grandmother sign in during the war at their headquarters in Hamilton. He went to their headquarters and demanded they stop it. "When do I

become a Canadian? I fought for Canada in the war, I protected its citizens and innocent people and yet I'm an Italo-Canadian. No! I'm a Canadian of Italian extraction" (George Ninni). He believes that through his success and the success of the Ninnis, they have given hope to other immigrants. George was a proud Canadian, yet also very loyal to his mother culture. "Italy is not a great country, it gave little to the world, we are lucky to be here" (ibid). Yet he also believes that "I am a product of hunger that my parents left in Sicily, any brother or child that denies their heritage would hurt me" (ibid).

Ralph Ninni was the only first-generation Ninni not interviewed, being very hard to reach, spending six months a year in Florida. He too went to university. Now he is a successful real estate agent and general insurance man. He owns his own company, is married, and has two sons who are both living in Europe. One son is a singer and the other a teacher. Ralph realized that he and his brothers had started a pattern of success. In realizing this he made it clear to his children that success was not everything. Their happiness was. "He was low key and less ambitious. His wife Kay wants to be English and doesn't care much about the Ninni Legacy" (Alfonso Ninni).

The fourth son Arthur was born in 1932. Arthur was the Black Sheep. As a youngster he too remembers working in the family store. In the summers he worked at Stelco, "there was always a job at Stelco" (Arthur Ninni). Arthur worked at Stelco during the war years, giving all his money to his mother. "She'd keep like eighty dollars and give me the change \$6.43" (ibid). Arthur also went to university. He received his B.A. in journalism/English at Western University in 1951. Unlike his first three brothers, after university, Arthur had no 'profession' he took on several jobs over the next 10-15 years after university. His first job was as a salesman for Geter Distributing. After that he worked at

Dofasco, tried accounting and failed, and sold real estate with his brother Ralph. "I was still searching for my niche" (ibid). He then worked as an operator at Hercules Chemical and finally in 1968 he decided to try teachers college. "I should have been teaching in the first place. My wife made me quit my job at Hercules and apply to teachers college. It was the best thing I ever did" (ibid). Not much was mentioned of his wife other than that she was a widow before marrying Arthur and that she has always been supportive. She is a mother of three and has been a nurse since 1979. Arthur and his wife have three sons, two work at Stelco and the third at the Workers' Compensation Board. Arthur's family is not typical of an Ninni family.

Many Ninnis see Arthur as an outcast. "Arthur just became a school teacher. Arthur was a middle child and was less ambitious" (Alfonso Ninni). Because he was so different he had many arguments with his family, falling out with Ted and the rest of the Ninnis in the late 1970's. Even to this day he does not attend Ninni family functions. He always sends his wife and children. "Arthur is very laid back and down to earth. He is a delightful man and is an excellent teacher" (Roseanne Ninni). Yet others believe that Arthur is an underachiever. "He didn't have the strength to keep up, he was a weaker person who didn't care for success. Now he is Joe Bloke" (Lorella Ninni). Through all of this Arthur does have one regret, "Maybe I should have worked harder. Maybe I could have become a pilot, dentist or worked in the taxation department. I could have aspired to more but you make shift" (Arthur Ninni). Arthur does though attribute his family success to being hard workers. "We were no geniuses, no great I.Q.'s, never at the top of the class, we were just hard workers" (ibid).

Arthur appears to be satisfied or reassured of his own position. "If you enjoy getting up in the morning then you found your thing, I found my niche. If you

can't be a tree, be a bush, but be the best damn bush you can be. Things always work out in the end" (ibid). Yet there is doubt, many people still say "...doctor, lawyer, real estate agent, politician, what happened to you Arthur? These people are ignorant, they rub you a little" (ibid).

The fifth Ninni brother, Barney born on June 19, 1932. Barney hated school and had no desire to complete high school or pursue university. "School was hard work. If I could avoid it I did. It really bothered my parents that I didn't go to school" (Barney Ninni). Regardless of his lack of education Barney knew from the start that he wanted to be a businessman. He was the only Ninni brother not to go to university. But he too has succeeded. His first job was at Stelco in the metallurgy lab, working there from 1952 to 1958. In those six years he married and saved enough money through working long hours to purchase a mushroom farm in Flamborough in 1955 for \$7,000. He had always had an interest in mushrooms. "As a little boy my grandfather taught me about them. I always grew my own. At the age of 16 I was growing my own in a barn on Bay St." (ibid).

Times got rough in the early 1970's. His farm was hit by disease, forcing him to sell. He moved in with his mother, and just bought - sold mushrooms. At this time, he was given the opportunity to work at the Workers' Compensation Board as an administrator. "I turned it down. I always had the desire to be in business myself. I admired my dad and the role of money" (ibid). Since the early 70's the business has grown and today he has about 70 workers and he supplies the area hospitals and Campbell's soup with mushrooms. The store grosses about 18-20 million dollars a year. His son Sam runs this branch of his empire. "Fred could cope, because he is a strong person, the business expanded quite quickly" (ibid). In the last five years Barney decided to open up a fish market. The

branch of the empire is run entirely by two daughters, Laurie and Vita. Laurie used to be a teacher but was unhappy and decided to get into the business. Vita was schooled at McGill University in Art History, but she too decided to come back home and put her efforts into the fish store. The fish store grosses 2-3 million dollars a year.

Barney has always been seen as a "shit disturber, no school, failure, welfare case, but look at him now" (Lorella Ninni). Many believe that he is the most powerful and richest Ninni. He gives a lot of credit to his wife, Joan. "She is very important, without her it wouldn't be done. I remember her with the girls in the front seat delivering mushrooms. She worked at Bell, then quit to help with the farm, raised kids, and now she keeps the books" (Barney Ninni). His daughters think that he is "smart, great, and you learn a lot from him" (Vita Ninni). He is also quick to give credit to himself. "The kids are the charcoal, we are the lighter fluid" (Barney Ninni). He is also very proud to be a Ninni. He just recently told a family member about running for municipal office. "You are a Ninni, you have to win, you mean it, Ninnis don't lose" (Alfonso Ninni).

The final brother in the family, Kenny, was in 1937. His recollections of his childhood are quite limited. He also was not as close to his oldest brothers because of the large age differences. He too was forced to go on to university, tried law school but he failed, and received his B.A. in history and geography and decided to try the Faculty of Education. Kenny, while in university, met an Italian girl (Pauline) in his neighbourhood. He married her shortly thereafter and started a family. Alfonso his son was born in 1965 and Lorella his daughter in 1968. When Kenny came back home to Hamilton, his family moved in with his mother. The children therefore grew up in the limelight. They were chauffeured to and from school, ridiculed when their father lost the mayoral race, and grew

up being strong willed individuals. Alfonso is at present a separate school board trustee and has the intentions of entering law school. Lorella, with a grade 12 general education, works with her father's insurance company. Kenny's first job was in Galt but he was not content with being just a teacher, so he tried local politics. In 1964 he ran and successfully won his alderman campaign. He was the youngest alderman to sit on council and one of the first Italian ones. He has been involved in politics ever since. In 1968 he became the Deputy Mayor, and quit teaching, politics taking too much of his time. In 1971 he became the acting mayor when Vic Copps died. After Copps' death, Kenny ran for the mayoralship and lost. The whole event was a tiring and embarrassing one. The winning candidate ran a smear campaign and linked the Ninnis and Italians to the Mafia. After his loss he realized that politics was not everything and opened up his own general insurance company.

Kenny entered politics for recognition. He knew his brothers all were established and he had to do something as well. He wanted to show them he could succeed too. According to Kenny, his childhood was a lonely one that lacked warmth:

"I was always in the shadows of my brothers, war heroes, professionals, Doc. Glen's name always came to the floor. I was always in fear of not living up to it. Oh yeah...you're Ted's brother, Uncle Glen, therefore there has always been pressure to succeed. This is the lifestyle I chose, nothing is black and white, the pressure for me worked positively, it motivated me. Now, there is a great deal of pressure on my kids to succeed. I remember it. I try to ease the pressure on them. I make them realize to live life for themselves and not to satisfy other peoples' expectations (Kenny Ninni).

These first generation Ninnis were hungry, successful, powerful individuals that excelled at all they did. They set the foundation for the next generation.

Yet not all is well. Because of the success of the first generation, the second generation is now under great pressure to follow their fathers.

There is variability in this generation caused by their own characteristics and attributes. Alfonso Ninni has followed his father's footsteps almost exactly. Alfonso was dyslexic, sought help himself and graduated from university with an English degree. He is now a separate school board trustee and aspires to be a lawyer:

"All eyes are on me. Everybody assumes I'll be successful. I'm determined to show them all what I'm made out of. I'm sorry for being flippant. I demand excellence in everything. I'm so competitive. I can compete with a tree. If I don't become a lawyer, I'll be devastated. But I'll find something else and be happy, but I'll have to be successful. Money is success."

Alfonso is only twenty-four years old and appears to be on course in becoming successful.

Ines, George's youngest daughter's views, differ greatly from Alfonso's. Ines claims "that things are never really private being a Ninni. There are pressures on us to hold up the name. You have got a name and you've got to live up to it" (Ines Ninni). Ines realizes the pressures but at this point in her life she sees herself failing. She has no direction and this obviously upsets her.

Others see no pressures at all. Both Vita and Lorella feel this way. Vita, Barney's daughter believes that "I do what I want, I don't care. I have my morals and values. I don't go out to impress people" (Vita Ninni). This may be easy for her to say as she runs her father's multi-million dollar fish empire. Lorella has a similar but more radical view along these lines. "I did what I wanted to do. Tough shit. Lorella went to grade 12 and took a few years off

school and now works with her dad selling insurance. She claims that she "wants to struggle to climb to the top" (Lorella Ninni).

Others have done some soul searching and realized that pressure is evident but pressure doesn't seem to be the problem. Ted's son Frank, the oldest second generation Ninni, realized that the key to life was happiness. "I finally realized it, not to strive to please others, but myself. This all happened when dad died. I won't be a good lawyer, or doctor, or as rich as Barney, I realize that but I try to treat these people well" (Frank Ninni). The key for Frank is internal peace, a peace with one self. These words sound like the words of Uncle Arthur, the black sheep.

The Ninnis are successful competitors, recognizing the costs and benefits of both success and competition within the family and outside it. They all want to be the biggest and the best. "Barney owns a cottage in Quebec and once a year we go up and have a family picnic. The men have a contest to see whose sauce (Italian) is the best or who catches the biggest fish" (George Ninni).

All the brothers strive for excellence and have a desire to excel. There is an intense desire to succeed that comes from within. "If an Ninni wants something, he or she will get it right away" (Roseanne Ninni). If they don't want something, they are just as quick to voice their opinions. Lorella Ninni handled the pressure in this fashion "Fuck you and the pressure, and did her own thing" (Lorella Ninni).

The Ninnis see themselves on top of it all. But they are always concerned about falling down and out of fame. "You always watch out for the people below you" (Kenny Ninni). They all seem to love Hamilton "There is no place that I'd rather be" (Barney Ninni, Kenny Ninni). I then asked Alfonso Ninni why he doesn't plan on moving to Toronto in the future. His reply "why would I

want to be a small fish in a big pond when I'm a big fish in a small pond in Hamilton?" (Alfonso Ninni).

There is security and recognition of discipline in achieving secure success. "As a Ninni, you are always in the spotlight. You try to stay out of trouble" (Frank Ninni). None of the Ninnis have had run-ins with the law. "As youngsters growing up, you messed around a bit, but you never let yourself go" (ibid). "As a Ninni, you can't go into strip joints, bars, or buy hot items" (Arthur Ninni). There is also a code of conduct for the Ninni women. "As a Ninni woman, you can't go out to bars, or dance with anybody other than your husband" (Pauline Ninni). The Ninni name carries a long way as well. "I was in Winnipeg and they knew George" (Arthur Ninni). "I feel very secure in being a Ninni. And because of this I take pride in looking successful. As soon as the media is there, I dress the part" (Alfonso Ninni).

What of being Italian? Of all the Ninnis interviewed, only three knew how to speak the language. In the first generation, the eldest Barney, George, and Arthur spoke and understood the language. The key point to note here is that all of the brothers were first generation Canadian. In the second generation, only Lorella speaks it. This is so because of the influence of her other grandparents who are Italian as well. "I wish all the second generation knew the language, it's a shame to lose it, recipes are gone, it's a shame" (Barney Ninni). Other Ninni's are even more upset of their language loss. "Yes, I'm a Canadian but don't forget what is in the veins" (Kenny Ninni). Our mother culture is the greatest in the world, but I'm a Canadian first" (Arthur Ninni). "I speak the language but the kids don't, I have no regrets, we are here now" (George Ninni). Other Ninnis have painful memories of their language and cultural differences. "In the war, we were all Canadians, people didn't want to

deal with fucking wops. I'm very proud to be an Italian, I love the music, theatre, food, but when do I become a Canadian? How do we maintain our language if we never use it" (ibid). Others are happy about their heritage but accept being Canadian. "I wouldn't want to be anything else. I cook Italian, I love pasta, I married a Canadian, the genes are diluted." (Frank Ninni)

One of the Ninnis believes that being Italian hindered his opportunities in life. Kenny Ninni believes that he lost his campaign for the mayoralship because he was Italian. "The city wasn't ready for an Italian mayor, and it won't be in my lifetime (Kenny Ninni). Kenny also believes that discrimination against Italians occurs today. "It's difficult for Italians to get managerial positions and even around here it's really bad" (ibid).

Family was a key theme in all of the Ninni discussions. "Without family you are nothing" (ibid). "Gui manga soli si fuca" (George Ninni). It translates into he who eats alone chokes. The family was always a very closely knit group. The Ninnis maintained this tightness through the weekly Sunday dinners at Edna Ninni's house. This ritual lasted for some 30 years. Every Sunday the family would go to church and after church meet at Edna's house and have a large dinner which lasted until 7-8:00 p.m. They'd discuss family events, politics and culture. This ritual strengthened family ties. These dinners continued until the death of Ted and Edna Ninni. Over time people raise their own families and they in turn have their own dinners. The family naturally drifts. The Ninnis also experienced a few major rifts between brothers. Also due to the size of the family, it is difficult to remain closely knit. Regardless of the drifting from the immediate family, the family does come together in times of need. On numerous occasions, the brothers experienced financial problems, bankruptcies, Barney's diseased mushrooms, Ken's mayoral race, but they all came together to help each

other. The family also came together at joyous occasions as well, Alfonso's election to the separate school board, Ken's election as Alderman, George induction to the Hall of Fame (Gallery of Distinction), family weddings, were all happy occasions. Regardless of all the competition between siblings, there is a strong support group that is established. When in the 1970's Kenny lost his election to be alderman, Alfonso was seen walking with his head down by his uncle Barney. This is what he said to Alfonso:

"Alfonso get in here (he was driving a cadillac). Are you walking with your head down? You fucking walk with your big fucking nose in the air, you are a Ninni. People voted your dad down as a candidate, not as a person, you are special" (Barney Ninni).

The family was always there when needed. "It was instilled within us that the family is a strong unit. Time passes, we are a strong family, we will always be around, our kids will never forget we were Ninnis" (Vita Ninni).

COMMENTARY AND CONCLUSION

The life histories as stories from the Ninnis tell us primarily what happened to them. It is also interesting to learn what did not happen and what is relatively unimportant to them. We note significant life-events, amongst which are those relating to economic problems such as bankruptcies and other business difficulties. But, by and large, the Ninnis tell us that they have been isolated from most economic changes that have affected the national and local economies. Their chosen route to economic well-being has largely been through education and professionalization and they have mainly gravitated to the more highly paid

professions - physician, lawyer, architect. Even in terms of owning their own businesses, the Ninnis have become, through luck or judgement, suppliers of the public sector (as well as large multinationals). Their chosen business is a basic one - food - which is itself somewhat isolated from economic changes. The changes in the local economy in particular -especially the move from a manufacturing to a more service-oriented employment structure -has had little impact. Indeed, most of the Ninnis were there before this wave of changes grew in intensity and power.

When family members have been affected by economic or other critical life-events, they have been assisted by family support. Familial bonds are the true cement of the Ninnis and an important dimension of both their economic and psychological well-being. In this regard, they are little different from any migrant family but the intensity and longevity of these bonds appears to be qualitatively different from many migrant situations. Family has helped the Ninnis adjust to and explore the Canadian way of life.

In fact, their relationship to and belief in their ethnicity is extremely complex. Some of the persuasive models of ethnic identity change (Greeley, 1971) suggest that migrants on the route to assimilation or cultural accommodation must pass through stages of self-hatred and doubt. The Ninnis have not. They have not been overly concerned with their Italianness in either to get it to work for them or as something which has to be overcome. They become rapidly economically assimilated and there followed, according to their own stories, behavioural and emotionally assimilated as well through going to war for Canada (against their 'homeland') and by marrying members of other migrant groups as well as Anglo-Canadians. Greeley suggests that the grandchildren's generation is curious about its heritage in the phase of 'emerging adjustment' but really has no

pride or shame about its ethnicity. But this generation of Ninnis is little different from its parents. There is a continuity in attitudes towards ethnicity and its heritage. The Ninnis confirm the point that the sense of history is celebrated in collective ritual. With the Ninnis this has become a ritualization and it occurs primarily within the family as the dinners and events at Barney's Quebec cottage attest. The Ninnis are of course important to the wider community of Italians in Hamilton and participate in its activities but for them ethnicity has ceased to be of major importance for coping and adjustment and for negotiating self and identity.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most interesting findings in this study occurred in the immigrants quality of life, employment history, in the use of a particular methodology, and about the ethnic literature. This final section will discuss some of these findings.

Of special interest is the feelings of **discontent** and **dissatisfaction** with the quality of life that these immigrants enjoyed. A key point to be made is that not all Italian-Canadians in Jamesville and Stoney Creek were unhappy with their lives. The use of qualitative methods and the limited size of my sample do not allow me to make such generalizations. What was evident in the people I spoke to, was that their lives appeared to themselves as being unsatisfactory. Yet one may argue that this was the case because many of the respondents were over the age of 65. Their age could have been an important factor in affecting their quality of life. It was also because of their ages that many of them were not involved in employment, hence the impacts of restructuring could not have been noted on these individuals. To actually answer the questions of employment change and restructuring would have required a different survey design in which a sufficient sample of Italian-Canadians could have been compared with the general population and employment structure of the city.

In the Jamesville area work and family were closely related. The main purpose of work was to support and advance the family. Family was central to the lives of all these individuals. The family gave financial and emotional support and provided employment opportunities. In all the accounts very little was mentioned of friends. People were satisfied with the neighbourhoods in which they lived. There was genuine caring and cohesiveness amongst residents of Jamesville. They said people that live in Stoney Creek are snobs, big shots, have a lot of money and big houses. But important to this area is that their traditional ways are disappearing and the residents of Jamesville feel threatened by this. And by feeling threatened their lives become less joyful and their quality of life diminishes. This may be due to their ages, declining activity and changes to society in general.

In the Stoney Creek area much is similar. The family is again extremely important in the function of day to day life. People were content with their living conditions. In many cases they built their own houses. They also appeared to be aware of an increase in social status. These people also saw a decline in traditional ways. They also saw a decline in an importance in religion, language and associated life. In general these people were discontent with their lives despite their successes.

In both study areas little variation is noted. A key theme that evolves is one of discontent. Over the last twenty years very little is written about the unhappy life of the immigrant. Many authors show only the positive examples of immigrants. The sense of helplessness and unhappiness truly emerged from this research. In general the people in both areas had many laments about life. This could be a pattern that is evident in all immigrants or in all populations.

Success brings security, but a host of other issues emerge as problems; the place for tradition, religion, quality of life, and so on.

The appreciation of particular theories helped to better understand how individuals gave meaning to their lives. Structuration provided us with the key link. Structuration helped us understand how individuals and their lives were formed and how they were constantly changing by larger more broader social contexts; namely work, family, and culture.

The use of the ethnicity literature proved to be useful in many ways. The concepts of boundary formation and social closure were particularly helpful showing how both the mainstream culture and immigrants try to stop or minimize interaction between both parties. The theories of assimilation by Yinger(1981) and Glaser (1958) point out interesting concepts. In Yinger's Model the older Italian-Canadians are still in the identifying stage and their children are in the integration stage. It is at this stage that the children realize that through interactions and with language (English), that their attachments to Canada are being reinforced. This in turn creates frustration for the parents, for their children are not Italian, and for the children, because their parents are 'old fashioned'.

According to Glaser's Model (1958) Italian immigrants are in the marginal stage. This stage shows that immigrants are uncertain, somewhat assimilated, and under some anxiety. Conversely with the case study of the Ninnis this was not the case. The Ninnis appear to be in the desegregating stage. In this stage the stigma of being an immigrant is lessened and the individual feels a part of the mainstream and wants to be accepted by it. The immigrant starts to think the 'Canadian Way'. In this example, key components are those of time and status. The Ninnis arrived in Canada about forty to fifty

years earlier than many of the immigrants interviewed. Further, they have engaged in intense professionalization, and the professions with their values, rules, codes, interests and developments are host-society-oriented.

Greeley's model (1971) of ethnicity change also reveals interesting findings. In this model it appears that the Italian immigrant is in the organization and self conscious stage. In this stage immigrants are moving from unskilled employment, to skilled employment and becoming involved in politics. They also appear to be still experiencing culture shock. The key in this stage is mere survival. They also have characteristics of those in the militancy stage. In this stage they may try to 'outdo' the mainstream culture. They have expensive weddings and funerals- conspicuous consumption is a demonstration of success. Their children fall into the self hate anti-militancy stage. The children feel embarrassed to speak the language and alienate themselves from their home culture. Conversely the Ninnis are experiencing the assimilation of the elite. They are moving into the middle class by shunning their ethnic background. The children of the Ninnis are in the emerging stage. There is little pride, or joy in being Italian. The children are part of the dominant culture. Therefore it may be concluded that it is only over time, and successive generations that ethnic identity changes.

The models devised by Yinger, Glaser and Greeley are all evolutionary models. These models place individuals in certain stages depending on the individuals behaviours and attitudes. As can be seen in these case studies not all individuals could be placed exactly into these stages. Caution must be used when dealing with these types of models. People can always be forced into a particular stages, and that may not enhance understanding.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The thesis described how people viewed their lives and events in them over time. Changes in people's behaviours, attitudes and perceptions did occur. In general people viewed their lives as struggles and full of pain through its entirety. For some the struggles are still evident, but raising a family, and becoming prosperous in a foreign country has given their life significant meaning and worth. Struggle is for security.

Of course, no research can answer all questions. And it also leads to others. To conclude:

1. It would be useful to begin a longitudinal study, both for areas and individual families.
2. Other life histories could be conducted with an average Italian family and note the similarity in themes to that of the Ninni's.
3. It is possible to select themes to investigate further ie. Quality of life. As the nature of Italian-Canadian life and the reasons for its shape require further elaboration.
4. It is also possible to conduct more ethnographic studies of different groups.
5. Comparisons between Italian-Canadians and other migrant groups may produce interesting findings on how migrants adapt and cope over time in a New World that is itself always changing.

APPENDIX A - NAMES OF PEOPLE - INFORMATION ON INFORMANTS.

JAMESVILLE

- J--1 Woman 80, lives alone, ill health. Cleaner and welfare in past.
- 2 Man 82, married. Retired construction worker.
- 3 Woman early 70's, divorced, ill health. Housewife all her life.
- 4 Man early 60's, 2 children at home, disabled. Worked at foundry.
- 5 Man 60, married, 4 children. Worked construction, now on compensation.
- 6 Woman 67, ill health, never married, lives with dad.
- 7 Woman 66, widow, lives with children. Housewife all her life.
- 8 Woman 60, married 3 children, store owner. Husband works at DOFASCO.
- 9 Man 40's, married lives with mom. On compensation.
- 10 Man 60's, 7 children. Worked in steel factory, now on compensation.
- 11 Woman 50's, married, lives with mother. Own business, now retired.
- 12 Man early 50's, 3 children. Works as labourer at STELATO STEEL.
- 13 Man early 50's, 2 children. He is a tailor; His wife is a seamstress.
- 14 Woman 70's, never married, lives with sister. Retired from STELCO.
- 15 Man 75, married, 3 children. Retired from rendering factory.
- 16 Woman early 60's, married, ill health. Had business, now retired.

STONEY CREEK

- S--1 Man early 30's, 2 children. Teacher, wife is a receptionist.
- 2 Man late 40's. Service station security guard.
- 3 Woman mid 60's, 3 children, widowed, remarried. Retired cashier.
- 4 Man early 50's, 2 children. Harvester, wife is cleaner at hospital.
- 5 Man mid 60's, 3 children, construction worker, retired.
- 6 Man 66, retired, worked at DOFASCO.
- 7 Man late 40's, 3 children. Breadman.
- 8 Man early 60's, lives with wife. Contractor.
- 9 Man early 50's, 2 children. Owns building supply store.
- 10 Man late 50's, worked in construction, now on compensation.
- 11 Man late 60's, retired from DOFASCO.
- 12 Man late 60's, 2 children. Worked with city.
- 13 Woman early 50's, 3 children. On family allowance.
- 14 Woman early 50's, divorced, 3 children. Husband on compensation.
- 15 Man early 40's, 2 children. Works at DOFASCO.
- 16 Man 40, 2 children. Contractor.

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