



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Joe Mangialardo

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TAPE 1/SIDE 1

ROSENFELD: ... at his famous delicatessen on Pennsylvania Avenue SE. We are sitting in the back room of the deli, so there may be some sounds of work going on. Mr. Mangialardo would you please tell me when you were born?

MANGIALARDO: I was born August 3, 1935 in Washington, DC at the old Providence Hospital.

ROSENFELD: Were your parents living on the Hill?

MANGIALARDO: Yes

ROSENFELD: When you said the Old Providence Hospital, you mean the one that is now Providence Park? [Second and D Streets SE]

MANGIALARDO: Right

ROSENFELD: Where did your family live in relationship to the hospital?

MANGIALARDO: 128 D Street SE

ROSENFELD: So it was practically across the street?

MANGIALARDO: Right

ROSENFELD: What brought your parents here, what were they doing here?

MANGIALARDO: They came from Europe, Sicily, I guess to find a better job, a better place to live. My father came over first, then he sent back for my mother and they got married and they raised a family.

ROSENFELD: Do you know what year they came to the States?

MANGIALARDO: I think it was 1917.

ROSENFELD: So almost 20 years before you were born? Did you have a large family? Were you the oldest, youngest?

MANGIALARDO: No there was three kids, two boys and a girl. The girl was the oldest and the two boys were next.

ROSENFELD: Where were you in that constellation?

MANGIALARDO: Second.

ROSENFELD: You were the oldest boy?

MANGIALARDO: Yes

ROSENFELD: What were your parents doing at the time you were born?

MANGIALARDO: He was a huckster; he sold fruits and vegetables on the street.

ROSENFELD: Why do you say huckster?

MANGIALARDO: That's what they called them.

ROSENFELD: Where did they get the fruits and vegetables?

MANGIALARDO: They would buy them at the Southwest Market or the Florida Avenue Market.

ROSENFELD: And then go door to door?

MANGIALARDO: He had two routes. Monday, Wednesday and Friday he would go to certain houses. And Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday he'd go to the other people. He had regular customers he went to every other day. And they bought all the fruits and vegetables and eggs from him.

ROSENFELD: Was your mother involved in this business?

MANGIALARDO: No, she was a house mom until we bought the store in 1953.

ROSENFELD: This store that we are sitting in?

MANGIALARDO: Right, well one block up the street. Then after five years we moved here. This August it will be fifty years that we have been in business.

ROSENFELD: Including the first place?

MANGIALARDO: Right. Five years there and forty-five years here.

ROSENFELD: So when did your father start the store, in '53?

MANGIALARDO: 1953

ROSENFELD: So you were about...

MANGIALARDO: I'll tell you it was like about 17 years old.

ROSENFELD: Where did you go to school on Capitol Hill?

MANGIALARDO: At that time [when he was 17] I was going to Bell Vocational.

ROSENFELD: Where did you go to elementary school?

MANGIALARDO: I went to St. Peter's for one year, then I went to St. Francis for 5 years, then I went to Benning School in Benning.

ROSENFELD: On Benning Road?

MANGIALARDO: Right. At that time we lived at the 3900 Block of East Capitol Street.

ROSENFELD: That pretty far out.

MANGIALARDO: It's just past Minnesota Avenue [SE] by about 2 blocks. At that time it was the suburbs.

ROSENFELD: Was there an Italian community in this area? Is that why your parents gravitated here?

MANGIALARDO: No. They had a Little Italy years ago down like First or Second Street, NW, but that's before I was born. He first went to Pennsylvania and then he came here. I don't know why he came here.

ROSENFELD: When you were growing up, part of the time on D Street, the rest of the time on East Capitol...

MANGIALARDO: Most of the time on East Capitol.

ROSENFELD: Was that an apartment...single family home?

MANGIALARDO: No. Both of them were houses. One was a row house and one was a semi-detached house.

ROSENFELD: That was on East Capitol?

MANGIALARDO: Right

ROSENFELD: Who were your neighbors?

MANGIALARDO: I really don't remember.

ROSENFELD: Were they people who worked in the Navy Yard, or do you have any sense of...

MANGIALARDO: No. When we lived on D Street I remember there was a barber as a neighbor. When we moved to East Capitol, it's funny; we had a barber on one side. The other people would move quite often, but I really didn't pay attention to where they worked at that age.

ROSENFELD: How do you remember your childhood? What was the pattern of your days? Did you walk to school?

MANGIALARDO: Partially we walked, and then we caught the bus...three-cent tickets we had to ride the bus. It was mainly just like any other kid. Then when I got older...I quit school young.

ROSENFELD: Why did you do that?

MANGIALARDO: Because I didn't have no education and my parents didn't, couldn't, speak English and all. My mother only learned English once we got the store. Once we bought the store she started coming down and helping. I started off I was going to be a construction worker. I worked at plumbing and then I thought I'd rather work at the store. When I got drafted in the Army and I came back I never went back to plumbing. I used to work plumbing eight hours a day and then the store was open from eight to eight at night. So then on Saturday and Sunday I would work at the store because the store was open like sixty hours, no it was more than that, more like eighty hours a week.

ROSENFELD: What did you sell in the store?

MANGIALARDO: Originally we just sold Italian groceries. People came from Maryland, Montgomery County and PG [Prince George's] County. Our two busiest days were Saturday and Sunday. Sunday was the busiest.

ROSENFELD: Why did people come from Maryland?

MANGIALARDO: Because in the old days you couldn't find this food in any other store. We sold everything that came from Italy. All different kind of cheeses ... we had maybe 25, 30 different kinds of cheeses. We had like 30 or 40 different kinds of macaroni. We used to get 50 cases a week of macaroni. Even though this place was small. We sold all kinds of dried beans, dried fish that they made in Europe. The Swedes and Italians ate the bakalao. Not the baklava, that's the Greek pastry. We made homemade sausage for 48 years. Our sausage went to Europe and everything. We had a customer who lived in Frankfurt, Germany. Every time somebody would go from here to the State Department there he would have a her bring sausage. My father's sausage went to Ireland and just went everywhere.

ROSENFELD: Who made the sausage?

MANGIALARDO: My father did for years and years. He died about 20 some years ago. I made it for about 20 years. But then it got where people eat this mass-produced stuff.

ROSENFELD: What's the secret of the sausage?

MANGIALARDO: What we used was real meat. We didn't even know what fillers were back then. We made it every day. We used no chemicals. It would last like 3 or 4 days because it was fresh meat. Today it's probably a week or two before it gets to a store where they are selling it.

ROSENFELD: So you found that people just stopped buying it?

MANGIALARDO: As time went on there were several reasons. One reason was that people wouldn't come back to Washington. Right now I live like six miles and 2/10ths from my house to here. It's in Maryland. Fifteen years ago the people who lived around me never came to Washington unless they worked here. They wouldn't come here because there were too many problems. As the older people died the newer people, the younger generation, didn't really care. Now they're going back where they want to taste natural stuff. There is a big difference. Today all the beef's full of chemicals. I was at a party three months ago, a birthday party for a child, and I was talking to an old guy. He was saying the beef doesn't taste the same and all. He didn't know if it was him or the beef. It's the beef. We buy brownies, commercial brownies, because you can't make them any better. But you're not going to find them in the average store, because we don't make that much money off of them. You have to pay more money for the stuff. Our sausage was just superior to what you buy today. In fact, we always had sausage subs. Three years ago when I quit making the sausage I bought from one company. When I would cook it on the grill—and when it got done you had to really scrape your arms off to get this stuff off the grill. I said, "What's the heck in there?" So I asked one wholesaler, and they didn't know. I telling another wholesaler and he said, "That's the sugar they put in there to preserve it." You know how sugar when it gets burned on the grill—so we just quit making sausage subs.

ROSENFELD: What about one of your boys, think ...

MANGIALARDO: You can't sell enough of it. When I was making sausage for the last ten years I used to tell people, "When I make sausage, I make \$2.50 an hour". You couldn't make enough, you can't sell enough... If you want to sell enough quantity you have to go to the means they use today with chemicals and all that. It just isn't worth making. I've had people say, "If you make it at home will you make me some?" Do you know how much trouble it is? You have to buy hog casings and you have to buy the meat wholesale. I don't even make it for myself because it's too much trouble. Maybe at Christmas I might. I bought a Kitchenaid mixer just for the grinder. I have big commercial one, but its not worth hooking up. For me to make five pounds of sausage at home probably takes me a couple of hours with that little

grinder and all. It's just not feasible today. That's why everybody sells junk! There are places that sell good things but most places—like we sell—100 percent of our business is submarines. People will come back and say, "Even the lettuce is fresh." It's because we do everything every morning. We get here like 5:30 or a quarter to six every morning. Two or three hours that we work then—it would take five hours while this store is open. People don't realize the work before and then afterwards.

ROSENFELD: I was in here one day and noticed there were a lot of cops. Is there a large clientele of cops?

MANGIALARDO: Our biggest is the DC government. The Federal Government and DC. The police I'd say are next. That's why we were getting to the point where it doesn't pay for ? to open on Sunday because all the customers are gone. They are in the suburbs. That's why we quit Saturday and quit Sunday about 30 years ago. Saturday we quit maybe 20 years ago. It just isn't worth opening. Now it might be because on the Hill they're starting to come back a little bit.

ROSENFELD: So the pattern of your business has kind of followed the demographics, the population changes in this city as a whole as people moved to the suburbs?

MANGIALARDO: Right. Even back in the old days a lot of our customers came for Maryland and Virginia.

ROSENFELD: But they were coming for the Italian connection?

MANGIALARDO: See, sandwiches we've only been making maybe forty years. Originally it was nothing but groceries.

ROSENFELD: When did you cut back on the groceries?

MANGIALARDO: We didn't cut back, it slowed down. I would say twenty-five years ago. Even people today—like a guy came in last week and said, "Did you quit making sausage?" I said, "Yes, three years ago." That's why we don't make it because people come in when they really want something good they'll take the time and come and get it. Then the other times they'll just go to what's local around them. People don't travel for groceries like they would in the old days because it doesn't mean that much to them.

ROSENFELD: Was coming here for the old customer some kind of an event?

MANGIALARDO: It was really, because we knew everybody and we spoke Italian. I didn't speak a lot, but I knew enough to talk to give them the prices and minor stuff. They knew the cheeses were always fresh. Fresh makes a big difference. Like, you can buy grated cheeses today, already grated. They don't

taste like what we grated. I try to buy a quarter of a wheel. A wheel is like 35 pounds. What am I going to do with 35 pounds of grated cheese for myself? This is 100% Italian grated cheese. I buy it ...

ROSENFELD: Where do you get it?

MANGIALARDO: From wholesalers. It doesn't taste anything like we grate. I'm going to try to get a quarter of a wheel and try to sell some to somebody. Now I don't eat like I used to eat. When I was little I was skin and bones. My first draft card I weighed 138 pounds. When my father bought the store, six months later I weighed 210 pounds. And I was 210 pounds almost my whole life.

ROSENFELD: How tall are you?

MANGIALARDO: I'm about 5-8 and a half. What was really funny is that I was always heavy my whole life and it never slowed me down in the bay [the sandwich making area]. Nine years ago I quit smoking and I went up to 270 pounds. I really didn't realize it. One day I went to Sears and I bought three pair of pants. When I got home they stopped here (pointing to waist). I couldn't even button them. Well, I said, "I'm not going to take them back" because these were 44s. Next is 54. I took me about a year and I got down to 240.

ROSENFELD: Eating less?

MANGIALARDO: Eating less. And then a year ago I really got tired of being fat. Believe it or not, I work hard every day. Everybody thinks I don't do nothing. But you can't bend over and all that. So I cut back. I cut out all soft drinks unless there's a place where you have to buy a soft drink. I drink iced tea. I quit sweets to a certain degree. I still have a few, but not as much, and I lost another 60 or 70 pounds. I'm about 180 or 190 now. That's why I don't eat as much spaghetti. I don't want to go back to buying bulk and eating. When you buy big, you buy and eat big. I like to tell my wife, "Don't buy those sweets." She'll see a cake and it's great. She eats one little sliver. I'm not going to throw the cake away. So I eat the whole thing. So I said, "Don't do that." If you cut back like that you can keep your weight down.

ROSENFELD: When did you move to Maryland?

MANGIALARDO: I'd say about 43 years ago, 44. I've been in the same house 39 years.

ROSENFELD: Why did you decide to stay there instead of staying in the city?

MANGIALARDO: Believe it or not it's because of parking and stuff. I always liked the country. I'd go to the country a lot, like up in the mountains and all that. When we moved out—I only live like 6 2/10ths miles from here but I live on a half acre. When I go home my driveway's there. If I want to go to the store

I come back and there's still parking. To live in the city is the best thing you can do, but for me it's a pain in the butt. I like my little half-acre lot.

ROSENFELD: So you raised you kids out there?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. Both of them—one of them lives on seven acres now. He has five kids. You never want to meet any nicer kids in your life. They are home schooled. People say they are backwards when they are home schooled. These kids are not backward. If they go somewhere they make friends just like that. They're very social. My oldest grandson is 15, so now he started to go to Grace Brethren. But they are all polite they don't cuss. It makes a difference.

ROSENFELD: Sounds like you are proud of them.

MANGIALARDO: Oh yes. You should see—the littlest one hasn't started walking yet. The personality that kid has. He hasn't been over to our house but twice, because we always go over to their house because it's easier for two people to travel than seven. He comes in, he's just as friendly smiling and all that. You have to meet him to appreciate him.

My other son has three girls and they're all friendly. I think they're as smart as a whip.

ROSENFELD: You have eight grandchildren?

MANGIALARDO: Right, and only two kids {laugh}.

ROSENFELD: Keep up the population!

MANGIALARDO: The middle girl that the youngest son has—I went over there and she's like two years old, maybe three at the most. I pulled up and she runs around the vehicle to hide from me. So I come around this way and she runs out the other way. My wife was up on the porch and she says, "That little kid looked down to see where your feet were!" I thought that was very smart for a young kid.

ROSENFELD: Let's go back a little bit to when you're growing up. Were you aware as a child that you living in the Nation's capitol at all?

MANGIALARDO: I knew I was, but it didn't mean that much to me. When I was like five years old I used to help my parents on the huckster truck. I actually worked my whole life. My whole life was working like 80 hours a week. Until about 20 years ago we quit Saturdays. I actually felt guilty for about a year.

ROSENFELD: So you think the fact that you were working so hard was the dominant thing and you weren't too aware of feelings?

MANGIALARDO: Now the kids don't do anything. I'm 67 years old. I cut a half-acre of grass. I've got a lot I'm going to move to eventually—seven acres I cut three or four times. I change the oil in all my cars. I wash my cars every week. These kids, they don't have time to anything.

ROSENFELD: You must have some breaks during your childhood. Where did you go for vacations?

MANGIALARDO: Up to about ten years ago, I bet you I didn't have three vacations in my whole life.

ROSENFELD: You're kidding?

MANGIALARDO: No. We would go for a weekend to Atlantic City. I've had more in the last few years.

ROSENFELD: Did any other people from your parents' families join them here? Did you have any kind of extended family?

MANGIALARDO: No. Just one uncle and he passed away about five years ago. We had—almost all of our relations were in Sicily.

ROSENFELD: Did you ever go to Sicily?

MANGIALARDO: No. I've been to Italy, because I was in the military in Europe in late '50s and early '60s. It was just two years that I was over there.

ROSENFELD: You were two years in the Army?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. I was stationed in Germany, but I went to I think 8 different countries in Europe while I was over there.

ROSENFELD: And that was in the late '50s?

MANGIALARDO: I was drafted in '58 and I got out in almost '61 I think it was.

ROSENFELD: And you came home. Were you married at that time?

MANGIALARDO: No, I got married after I got home.

ROSENFELD: Where did you meet your wife?

MANGIALARDO: I met her from a guy—I was working at plumbing—a guy came to work there. I went over to his house one time. His wife was my wife's sister, that's how I met her. She actually was born at—she lived at 14th Street SE. When I met her she lived right on the other side of old Providence Hospital at Second Street. The building was still there, but it wasn't a hospital anymore.

ROSENFELD: They were starting to take it down? How did you feel when the hospital was taken down?

MANGIALARDO: You know, I didn't know it until one day I went down there. When I was born at 128 D Street [SE] and I used to walk up to the Library of Congress, with my mother of course. You know the fountain in front of the Library of Congress with the men on horses and all? Every time I see that it reminds me of when I was a kid I had a string with a safety pin on it. I was trying to catch the goldfish in there.

ROSENFELD: Did you ever get one?

MANGIALARDO: No. I never put any bait on.

ROSENFELD: You remember that with your mother?

MANGIALARDO: Right. When they built the new annex on the other side [the James Madison Building]. That was that big building there. That was a street that had something like twenty-one restaurants on it. It was in the newspaper back in the '50s that that street had all these restaurants. They had one building there with like 15, 18 feet wide and the glass came across the front like this and then went in like 6 feet, and then the store was there to go into the store. And it had toys on both sides. I thought that was the most toys in the world. Because when we grew up like we just would get one toy.

ROSENFELD: For Christmas? So that was a big deal? Do you remember any of those particular toys?

MANGIALARDO: I remember one time there was a scooter and one time like a wagon. That's about it. Mostly what you got was underwear and socks.

ROSENFELD: Do you remember—did you ever go sledding on the Capitol grounds or anything like that?

MANGIALARDO: No. I was like six years old when I left, so I lived on East Capitol then. I would go sleigh riding there. We got more snow back then in the '50s.

ROSENFELD: More snow than this winter?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. I remember the Anacostia River here would freeze solid. Foggy Bottom—I'm not sure if that's the Potomac River or Anacostia.

ROSENFELD: Have to be Potomac.

MANGIALARDO: I was working down in Foggy Bottom doing plumbing and stuff like that. The river would have big chunks of ice like this {gestures} floating down. It would just freeze over solid.

ROSENFELD: Did you skate on it?

MANGIALARDO: No. We never had skates.

ROSENFELD: What sort of sports did you do?

MANGIALARDO: I used to play football.

ROSENFELD: In high school?

MANGIALARDO: No, in the street.

ROSENFELD: Street football? A favorite old game ...

MANGIALARDO: Right. I didn't care for baseball as much because I wasn't good at it.

ROSENFELD: Did you ever go see the Senators?

MANGIALARDO: No I never did. When they were up on Georgia, is that Georgia Avenue or Seventh. What was the stadium, Griffith's Stadium?

ROSENFELD: Yes.

MANGIALARDO: I never went there. I only went to this stadium [RFK] once or twice because the packing company had a big thing there where you would take your kids for the Redskins football players. It wasn't baseball it was football. I always worked on a Sunday up to the last 25 years. I never got interested in sports. I used to hunt.

ROSENFELD: In Maryland?

MANGIALARDO: Mostly in Maryland. I played football, like I said. Mostly just working in those days.

ROSENFELD: Do you remember any particular regular customers that you had?

MANGIALARDO: Yes, I don't think I could remember the names. Like Sam the barber, he used to have the barbershop on the street across from Library of Congress where that big building is [Madison Building]. He had one there. Second Street [Third and Pennsylvania] where that coffee shop is in that little building?

ROSENFELD: Starbucks?

MANGIALARDO: Starbucks, that little skinny building. That's where I got my first haircut. When my uncle was in the military, of course WWII, he used to cut my hair. That was the first time I went to a barber shop.

ROSENFELD: There was another barbershop on Stanton Park. I think they were mostly Irish barbers. That's where my son got his first haircut.

MANGIALARDO: There were a lot of Italian barbers on the Hill. That was an Italian guy there. Sam—Junta was his last name. He's probably been dead 50, 25 years.

ROSENFELD: Where do you get your haircut now?

MANGIALARDO: Most of the times in Ocean City. {laugh} For years I'd cut my own hair. I would trim my hair myself. Then my wife started going to a woman and she would cut my hair. She moved and is now in Calvert County. I still take my wife there. If I need a haircut—I might go to Ocean City like 8 or 10 times a year.

ROSENFELD: Just for fun?

MANGIALARDO: Right—just because my wife likes going. I could care less about the beach. I used to do a lot of fishing. That's what I used to do a lot. I had two different boats. I used to fish a lot.

ROSENFELD: Where did you fish?

MANGIALARDO: The Chesapeake Bay out of Deale, Maryland. I would go up and down the Bay.

ROSENFELD: What kind of boats?

MANGIALARDO: I had a 22-foot and I had a 26-foot. They were little cabin cruisers. I didn't like open boats. I don't like the sun beating on me that long. We go out there and fish sometimes for seven hours.

ROSENFELD: Why did you and your father keep the business on Capitol Hill? Why did you stay?

MANGIALARDO: We thought about once leaving but basically I really like the city. Even though I like living where I live, I like a lot of crowds. If I go up in the country—if I spend a day up there, I say, "What the heck do you do all day up there?" If I didn't have nothing specifically to do.

ROSENFELD: What was the toughest time to be here?

MANGIALARDO: In this business, it really changes a lot. People don't understand in this business you have to be on your toes all the time or you lose your business. It disappears. Through the years, like when we first started, we were strictly a grocery store is really what it was. It wasn't even a deli. It was a grocery store that was tiny. Then we got to a point where we started selling bulk stuff cheap. Like you could come in and buy a case of spaghetti for just pennies over what we paid for a case of tomatoes and all. When we sold a lot of bulk stuff it still was a grocery store. It was dying down and so we started

selling sandwiches. We really started selling sandwiches because of the riots. The crime was so bad in the city that we would make sandwiches for the police department to keep the cars in the neighborhood.

ROSENFELD: I was going to ask about you that; the effect the riots had.

MANGIALARDO: As time went on, we were selling sandwiches to the police department for like three years and people would say, “Well why don’t you sell them to us?” We would say because we don’t have a license. You had to have a deli license to sell sandwiches. So after three years selling to the police we would only sell maybe 10 or 15 sandwiches a day. We changed it to a delicatessen license. And that’s how we started in the sandwich business. The sandwich business went up and the grocery business went down. We did both for maybe ten years. It was at the point where people wouldn’t come back to Washington on account of crime and all.

ROSENFELD: When did that start, that crime problem?

MANGIALARDO: I think after the riots.

ROSENFELD: In ’68? At the time of the riots were you affected at all? Did you ...

MANGIALARDO: Yes. They busted the front door out and grabbed—I don’t know what. The police came by and saw it was busted out and they threw a tear gas bomb in here to keep them out. That was during the day of the riots. That night we came down with shotguns and stood next door in the basement apartment. The next day we boarded up the whole front. And we sold the produce, I mean the groceries to the people—we had the front boarded up for like a month because you couldn’t get the windows put in because they were so busy putting windows in. We built it back up. That’s when we started making sandwiches. What keeps a lot of people out of the city too is people bumming off of them. Customers...

ROSENFELD: Panhandlers?

MANGIALARDO: Yeah, they would stop and the customers would say, “They’re trying to get money from me.” People would be frightened when a tall person, big heavy person comes up to them and says. “Do you have any money?” Some of them would get to point where they would demand the money.

ROSENFELD: How has this immediate neighborhood around you changed?

MANGIALARDO: In the last five years it’s changed a lot. Five years ago right up at 13th and Pennsylvania Avenue [SE] there would be 15 to 20 drug dealers standing there selling drugs all day long. Nobody would do nothing about it. I would say a lot more but I might get in trouble. [laugh] It was terrible. And this is only about 5 or 6 years ago.

ROSENFELD: Was that the worst it had been?

MANGIALARDO: That's the worst in the history of the store. In the old days crime—like across the street there's a building there that's bricked up and there's a lot next to it. That was a Little Dutch Tavern from the '20s or '30s. I'd get off from work and I'd go over there and have a beer or something and leave my car with the windows rolled down. I'd come out in 2 o'clock in the morning and get in the car and drive home. I didn't have to worry about anybody hitting you in the head. You didn't have to worry about if your car was there. You wouldn't even lock it. Back there they had the hard top convertible. We'd leave the windows down. I had a '56 Ford like that. I never worried about it being stolen.

ROSENFELD: This was in the '60s?

MANGIALARDO: That would be in the '50s. All those taverns like McGuire's where La Lomita Restaurant is now. And that was where all the Irish construction workers used to go. That was there for years. Originally over here [gesturing] was a big cattle farm. That was before my time. Old people would tell me. The guy across the street lived in a house; this was back in the '50s. He had a little house in Little Washington, Virginia. That was their summer home so they could get away from the heat, as there was no air-conditioning. I still will go there once in a while. Little Washington. I love Virginia. You go up in the mountains and all. I wouldn't want to live there. The traffic over there is ridiculous. Maryland is almost as bad now.

ROSENFELD: Did you have air-conditioning when you were growing up?

MANGIALARDO: No. When I got out of the Army; so like '62 or '63. We got two little, like 5,000 BTUs and put them in the side windows here. They would just barely make it a little cooler here. When we first started up at the other store there was no air-conditioning. In '53 was the first car I bought. Air-conditioning wasn't even an option except in a few cars.

ROSENFELD: When did you change this place around? You own this building, right? Tell me what's in the building.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

MANGIALARDO: Yes. When my mother and father bought the building—I have a brother—we worked in the store but we never got paid. Because that's the way it was done in Europe. Even when I bought my first house I didn't even get a salary. That was in '63. They give you enough to pay for the building. My mother accumulated like 5 or 6 pieces of property.

[Mangialardo discussed business problems, noting that the business had difficulties but that his "... sons built it back up into a decent business."]

ROSENFELD: That's been in the last ten years?

MANGIALARDO: No. Just in the last 5-6 years. Every time we get on our feet like Christmas time is rough because people take off all the time, and there are customers that don't come here because they don't live here. This year we were doing great, and then Christmas came—and usually it takes a month after Christmas—well then the stupid snow kills you. People don't understand. My wife would tell the guy, "If we don't work, we don't get paid." They look at you like you're nuts. Who do you think is paying us?

ROSENFELD: You have this building and it has storage?

MANGIALARDO: No it doesn't have a basement because when you walk in the door you're walking in half basement and half upstairs. This was remodeled back in the—probably the late '40s or early '50s it was a T.V. shop. They remodeled it.

ROSENFELD: When they were just beginning to have TV's?

MANGIALARDO: Probably that's right. Because we didn't have one when we were a kid. We were one block up the street. What happened there was we had a nice business but we were renting the building. And the guy wanted to buy the business that owned the building and we wouldn't sell. He wanted to buy the business. He didn't own the building but he bought the building from the woman that owned it. And he said, "But what are you going to do?" He wanted to buy the business. You know, you never made money. Everybody thinks you're rich. I have a good life now that I have a decent life and all. But you know these government workers that do nothing make more than I do. And they get free hospitalization they get free retirement. I don't get any of that.

ROSENFELD: What do you do about health insurance?

MANGIALARDO: My health insurance—I wrote the checks last night—now I'm 67, so I'm with Medicare, so that costs me \$139 a month for Kaiser. My wife is 62, but she's not on Medicare. Hers is \$350 something. And Social Security takes 50 some dollars, so I'm paying like \$500 a month for health care. And people think you have it made. And that's one reason why we never had vacations. {laugh} Because if we didn't work; you can't bring a person in here for a couple of days or a week. It's not a babysitting job or running a register. You have to know what you're doing. People don't understand like when I'm slicing something—they see me sitting down a lot because I grab the phone and all, because I do the bulk of the work before we open. When the girls—the ladies, I call them girls—I run and get the

stuff for them and all. Not that they ask me to or anything, but the quicker they make it the quicker go out there. If you don't get them out you don't make any money. When you slice stuff—we come in here and we slice way over 100 pounds of meat.

ROSENFELD: Every day?

MANGIALARDO: Yes, and when you put that meat—we had one semi-automatic—the automatic one isn't worth fooling with, it's sitting out in the garage, because it weighs 500 pounds, you can't get rid of it. To slice this stuff—I put it in, mine's semi-automatic—if it's put in there just right it might slice right, but if you don't then I have to correct it or do it by hand. So half the stuff is two sliced or I cut it by hand.

ROSENFELD: So all of these fine points are things ...

MANGIALARDO: You see people don't understand if that meat is cut too thin the people will complain that there's no meat in the sandwich. If it's too thick you're losing money, because you're not making any money. We buy a lot of stuff for a little store. But when we buy stuff—one company has to know like a week in advance—most of them are three to five days in advance. The more advance—the longer it takes you to get it is the cheaper price. Because if you're dealing with a local person he's got to buy it from the people you're buying from. That's another thing people don't understand. I figured this stuff out. If I buy too much lunchmeat so it will go bad before I sell it. If I don't buy enough I lose the business. Everything is figured. The bread is figured.

ROSENFELD: You learned that all from experience. Is there anything particularly about being located here that it's more or less difficult?

MANGIALARDO: It's good here because we have a big building now. [further discussion on the cost of buying the entire building]

ROSENFELD: So you went into the hole for that?

MANGIALARDO: We ended up spending about like \$20,000 on the stores. That is nothing for three years, really. It's unreal what they charge. But there's really a lot more to this business than you think. People don't understand the buying of it, the running of it. These ladies we have now; these ladies are hard working people.

ROSENFELD: Do they come in; they don't live around here?

MANGIALARDO: No. They travel from—I think one lives in Montgomery County or they travel from—what's that place on 14th Street where the Spanish people live?

ROSENFELD: Adams Morgan?

MANGIALARDO: Adams Morgan. They come by bus; all the smell and that. The only day that we close is only because they can't show up. Before, when we went through all these years we had hired help. We couldn't grow because you couldn't get good help. You can't pay people \$50,000 a year. Everyone wants a big gravy job. So for years you couldn't get any decent help. One day we stumbled into one and ended up with four now. If things pick back up again we'll probably need another one. They work hard. We pay, we start like about \$7.50 an hour. And we give them raises.

ROSENFELD: Did you expect your sons to go into the business?

MANGIALARDO: No. Their kids are not going into the business because it's not worth it today. You can get a job—I mean—it's unreal. If you go to certain places you can be a trash man and make as much as you do in here.

ROSENFELD: But that's not indoor work.

MANGIALARDO: No. But then if you worked in the government you make \$150,000; \$100,000 with no problem. You have no responsibility really.

ROSENFELD: On the other hand you feel your sons have brought the business back.

MANGIALARDO: They'll stay in I'm pretty sure. My older son ...

ROSENFELD: But you all get along working together?

MANGIALARDO: Oh yeah. I own the biggest majority of the business but it doesn't mean a thing to me, because as far as I'm concerned it's their business. I don't argue with them. When I was younger—you can take more baloney when you're younger. When you're older and a person is delivering lies in your face you get fed up. When you deal with the public they really suck. They're all trying to rip you off; not all of them, I take that back, but there's a certain percent—and you don't run out of them, there's always a new one coming in trying to rip you off.

ROSENFELD: So you're a little burned out with that ...

MANGIALARDO: This August I'll be here 50 years. See they can handle it better, so I don't argue. A guy who came in today, he was checking the grill to see where you had the fire extinguisher stuff. He wanted to sell us a new system, so he comes in—well we didn't know he wanted to measure up there. So he jumps his feet on the shelf part. That burns me up. I kick people—if it weren't for my kids I'd have kick him out. One time they came in—every six months they have to do the bottle—the guy was

climbing. I said, "Don't climb on my damn table, you bring a ladder in here. This is for food." People today are unreal. They have no common sense whatsoever.

ROSENFELD: Getting back to the issue of crime, which seems to have affected you directly or indirectly. Have you ever been robbed here?

MANGIALARDO: Twice. It's probably about 25 years ago.

ROSENFELD: Were you here by yourself?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. It happened in like a split second. The first time I walked out from here—I don't think we made sandwiches then—we might have—I went through the little walkway where the ladies were working. And the guy said, "Give me your wallet." I said, "No, I'm not giving you my wallet." There was like three of them in here with guns. One of them pushed my mother and grabbed the money out of the register. It was like seconds and they were gone. Then a few months later it happened, but I was in the back room. When they said, "Holdup" I grabbed my gun and I chased them down the street, but I didn't shoot. So far we've never had any more problems. We have people steal. It's unreal. As little as that store is, you can have 15 people in there and people will stick stuff in their pocket. Unreal, even law people.

ROSENFELD: Really. Do you stop them?

MANGIALARDO: If we see it we do.

ROSENFELD: What do you say?

MANGIALARDO: Ever incident is different. I'll give you one example. This was maybe, I'd say six, seven years ago, and we still had quite a few groceries in here. Where the counter where you go up to get the sandwiches we had shelves there. We had a special on sardines. This guy came in. I knew he was a thief because you could tell the way—in other words when you into a store to buy something, do you worry about who's looking at you? Or who's standing around?

ROSENFELD: I probably don't.

MANGIALARDO: No. When a person's going to steal they're watching what everybody's doing. So this guy's is watching everything. If you look at him, they're watching you. Nine times out of ten that's a good sign somebody's going to steal something. So this guy would come in every time we were busy. And it happened like four or five times, and then one day I caught him. Now listen to this. I see him—he had this coat here and the pocket here and I saw the can of sardines in there. So I watched him, because you know I wanted to make sure when he went up to the register and when he paid his stuff, I was

standing behind him. I said, “Sir you forgot to pay for those sardines.” He reaches into his back pocket and pulls a can of sardines out. He had two. I didn’t see that one because it was shut. And then another time my son was at the register and there was nobody in the store but one customer, and he rang the customer up. I’m not going to tell you who he was. In uniform. So when my son took his money and said, “Thank you,” he ran in the back to do something. I just happened to come around the corner and I saw him reach up and grab a brownie and put it in the bag. So I asked my son, “Did he buy a brownie?” He said, “No.” He still comes in here and buys. This happened about ten years ago. But we’re watching. But even in the old days a woman would come here—she was an old Italian lady—and every time she would come in she would steal a can of paste. So my mother would just put it on her bill.

ROSENFELD: Has it affected your attitude about the city and the business?

MANGIALARDO: No. I really love this business. I personally would not live in the city because of different reasons. When I was young, like even my parents always had animals, like chickens or stuff like that. And that’s the reason why I wouldn’t want to ...

ROSENFELD: You had chickens on East Capitol Street?

MANGIALARDO: No this was in the suburbs. You still couldn’t have them. I had goats or ducks. I had a flock of chickens one time. All the neighbors used to love it because they would get eggs from them because they were running around.

ROSENFELD: You didn’t have that when you were growing up in the city?

MANGIALARDO: No. I was too little then.

ROSENFELD: But you liked being able to do that in the suburbs?

MANGIALARDO: Yeah. My oldest grandson just turned 15 so about 12, 13 years ago I raised quail. When he was like 2 years old he’d go to the quail cage but they’d freeze. They would let me go there because they knew me. I just turned them loose and I got chickens for them.

ROSENFELD: Have you had any famous customers, like Senators?

MANGIALARDO: Oh yeah, in the old days a lot of them came in. In fact—I wouldn’t know their names—we got a lot of senators on the Hill that would buy food. [Silvio] Conti was one of them I think years ago. I’m just ashamed but I wouldn’t remember names. My mother knew everybody’s name. One of the Kennedy daughters—Robert Kennedy, his sister—one of them came in the store one day with two bodyguards. She had the two bodyguards—they were big guys—and her. She asked to borrow the phone—and she called and talked to somebody downtown and she said, “Well I’ll bring lunch. She got an

eighth of a pound of salami. A big lunch {laughter}! There was some Senator, Batesta [?], or one of those names. I get them mixed up. He would throw a lot of parties. The catering company, the caterer would have to buy our sausage. They used to buy our sausage until we quit making it. I wouldn't know the names, but we had a lot of Congress people come in back in the old days.

ROSENFELD: Have you ever joined any of the business associations around?

MANGIALARDO: No.

ROSENFELD: Or have there been any kind of neighborhood watch things that you participated in?

MANGIALARDO: No. Our neighbors around here really did more damage to us. They couldn't spend what the damage they did to the building. They're always trying to break in and stuff like that. Six months ago they broke into the garage. I quit putting doors up years ago because why bother? The police would come out here and say, "Well you got to put a heavier door on." For what, you're not going to do anything about it. They're going to break it down. They had all the stuff up on the top and they were trying to break into the top. I shouldn't say this part, because it doesn't make people look good in the city. Over the years—the last couple years they didn't dare because they're all moving out to PG [Prince Georges] County. See, I live in PG County. That's going to be the next {unintelligible}.

ROSENFELD: Did you realize you have a Maryland accent?

MANGIALARDO: No. When I was young I had southern accent. Everyone thought I was from the South, because everybody who came to Washington were Southerners. Everybody thought I was from Alabama or something like {unintelligible}. {laughter}

ROSENFELD: When you went into the Army did they think you were a Southerner?

MANGIALARDO: That I don't remember. I was with mostly Southerners, so they probably—I don't know. When I was at boot camp—the military back then was mostly Southern people, because I think it was a way to get away from home and they made good money and they had free food. It wasn't good money, but it was better than living on the farm.

ROSENFELD: At this point there is something that smells really terrific. What is that?

MANGIALARDO: When you're working here you don't smell it all the time. In the old days people would say, some people would say, "What stinks in here?" We had like 50 different cheeses.

ROSENFELD: It smells really good to me.

MANGIALARDO: Sometimes we pick it up. Right now {unintelligible} and my nose is a little stuffed. Most of the time you don't smell it as much as a customer would.

ROSENFELD: Did you ever—do you recall either as a child or as a businessman here—any particular holidays affecting you, like 4th of July?

MANGIALARDO: Christmas is big for Italians, and Easter.

ROSENFELD: What did you do when you were a kid on Christmas? Did you go to church?

MANGIALARDO: Oh yes, and we'd work {laugh}. That was our big time in the old days. In the old days business from August would gradually build up and in December, January...

ROSENFELD: Where there special things that you sold at Christmas?

MANGIALARDO: Oh yes. All these dried fish, bacalao fishes, {unintelligible}. And all the different cheeses and hams and broccoli; rabe was a green that is starting to be in the chain stores today. They didn't even know what it was back then. And fennel seed; they didn't know what it was back then. We used to sell crates and crates of fennel seed—these great big boxes with the tops. And some people eat the tops and some don't. But you could actually buy the fennel tops in cans in the old days. We just threw them away. Certain people ate them.

ROSENFELD: That was used as an ingredient in ...?

MANGIALARDO: I think it was used on spaghetti, sort of like a basil sauce or fennel sauce.

ROSENFELD: What church did you go to?

MANGIALARDO: St. Francis mostly. I did go to St. Peter's. And Lady Queen of Peace, that was down by East Capitol Street. Sausage was real big. My father would make sausage from—we were open than from eight in the morning to eight at night—he'd be making it all day long.

ROSENFELD: And sell it all?

MANGIALARDO: Right. The Christmas week we would have a line going out the door for hours for sliced lunch meat because everybody would buy the salami, the capocollo, the sopressata and all that stuff. Everybody wanted it cut thin. They all wanted it a day or two days before Christmas.

ROSENFELD: Say those names again.

MANGIALARDO: Salami, don't ask me to spell that stuff, capocollo, a ham that comes five different ways, but now you can't get it that way—prosciutto. Sausages were really big at the holidays.

ROSENFELD: People would actually be in a line?

MANGIALARDO: Oh yes, because they wouldn't buy it a week ahead of time. People eat stuff...

ROSENFELD: Fresh?

MANGIALARDO: Right. The most they would buy it was two days before the holiday. So the two days before the holiday we figured, my brother and I and my father would be slicing lunchmeats and all, my mother would be on the register, originally there was no outside help.

ROSENFELD: So you worked here ...

MANGIALARDO: Sometimes we wouldn't even have time to sweep the store. If there was little break—people would drop stuff on the floor and all that. The day of Christmas—the first four or five years it was—because we had to work to pay the bills. We worked half the day on the holidays. It wasn't like today. People didn't have money like ...

ROSENFELD: So you were actually open on Christmas Day?

MANGIALARDO: Oh yes, half a day, I'd say maybe the first five years. You would actually do a little business. Years ago we delivered on Sunday. The chain stores were closed on Sunday. Now the chain stores are open and we're closed. {laughter}

ROSENFELD: But you delivered?

MANGIALARDO: We delivered because people were fairly close. I even delivered down at Fort Washington. But then it got to a point where it wasn't worth it any more.

ROSENFELD: People would call up and order a list of things and you would take them to them?

MANGIALARDO: Right.

ROSENFELD: Did you enjoy doing that?

MANGIALARDO: I liked to do deliveries because it would get you out of the store. Back then it was a pleasure driving. When you went somewhere you could park. People say, "Why don't you deliver?" You go downtown, where are you going to park?

ROSENFELD: Did you go downtown much?

MANGIALARDO: When I was a little kid my parents always took us down to Hecht's and Kann's for Christmas. As I got older I don't go. A couple of years ago I went down. My wife said, "You never go

down to see the Christmas trees and all.” We always did our shopping on H Street [NE]. Can you imagine shopping on H Street NE now?

ROSENFELD: What did you buy there?

MANGIALARDO: You would buy the furniture you need and all that.

ROSENFELD: So that was a huge commercial...

MANGIALARDO: Oh, yes. My bedroom set that I have right now was bought at Fourth or Fifth and H Street NE. When my mother was a young girl and she came over and got married, they lived off of H Street somewhere before they bought the house on D Street. Two or three o'clock in the morning it was so hot in the city you couldn't sleep and there was no air conditioning. They would walk up and down H Street window-shopping looking at the stores. Can you imagine doing that today? My father sold fruits and vegetables on the street and he lived in a rooming house down there. He was on D Street and the house was being auctioned off. That's how he bought that house. That house was a three-story house. It's a brownstone. There's three of them there now.

ROSENFELD: Still there?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. It had a two-story garage. He bought that house for I think about \$2,300. The people that owned it were Italians. The old man would give the son the money to make the house payment, but he would go to the racetrack. Lost the house. We lived in there for, I don't know, X amount of years. I don't know because I was born there. She sold that house for \$12,000 and the people lost it. And she got it back. She sold the house three times for \$12,000. I bet you can't buy that house for \$1 million today. It's right around the corner from St. Peter's church. It was three stories. It had an apartment. I don't why the apartment was on the third floor. A little old Jewish woman let from my mother. The garage is a two-car garage with an upstairs. It's probably a house now. It's 128 D Street [SE]. One day, I was a little kid, water pipes were shaking in the house. I don't know why. I looked out the window and the guy is screaming, “St. Peter's is on fire!” That's when the church burned down. So it had to be—it was before I went to school—so I was born in '35, so it was probably in the late '30s. I remember standing out front—you know the three doors of St. Peter's and this one here {gesturing} has the statue of St. Peter—I was watching the crane put that in there. You know where the Penn Theatre street [650 Pennsylvania Ave. SE] used to be? Across the street was the Avenue Grand [645—649 Pennsylvania Ave. SE], now that's a mall. That's where I saw Pinocchio when I was young. That was a movie there.

ROSENFELD: Did you get to go to the movies too often?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. Back then we did because it would cost, like 12-15 cents. Of course that was a lot of money back then.

ROSENFELD: Did you mostly walk around the neighborhood?

MANGIALARDO: Right. We had a '37 Chevrolet. During the war for some reason he sold it and he had a truck. Then we had a '46 Buick. When I lived on East Capitol Street, that's when I was 10 and up, the average person on that block didn't even have a car, let alone two cars. The three or four people that had cars—we thought that they were rich.

ROSENFELD: You were saying earlier that you used to spend a lot of time here, even as a child. What did you do?

MANGIALARDO: I waited on customers. The cheeses, like provolone would come this big around and be 80 pounds, long. We would sometimes get them at 110 pounds. We'd cut the cheese. My mother ran the register. We actually did the rest. She had the register that you had to push the buttons down. This was her pushing finger {gestures}. It actually had a crook in it. It looked like it was broken. That's from pushing those—because those buttons you had to push hard.

ROSENFELD: Do you remember your first job? When you were five?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. No, I was five and a half—before I started school I would go to the market with my father on the holidays, Saturdays all summer when we were out of school, and we would buy produce and go on the roads and sell it. When I was about 15 years old, I got a job, my first job—outside of doing that and working for the neighbors. There were certain papers, at the Star [Washington Star] down at 12th and Pennsylvania Avenue. I used to insert papers there. Then sometimes I'd be working in the store and a soda truck guy asked for help and I'd go help them.

ROSENFELD: Did your father—when you were going to the market with your father—did he make a point of showing what a good vegetable was?

MANGIALARDO: No. I learned a lot of things, like when you pick up a lettuce and it's not hard you don't want it because it's empty inside and all that. It's light. I could tell fresh produce.

ROSENFELD: You just learned that from...?

MANGIALARDO: Right. Just like my kids learn. I didn't actually sit down and explain. My father made sausage all those years—I learned just by watching. I worked at plumbing like two years. Then I was drafted in the Army. When I came back I just stayed in the store. That's about the only jobs I had was plumbing and working at the Star.

ROSENFELD: Well, you've just listed four other jobs {laugh}.

MANGIALARDO: Yeah, I would do neighbors—there was one neighbor down the street, the husband and wife worked, which was rare back then. She had a lot of flowers and I always did her flowers. She said her kids would pull the flowers up instead of weeds. I had one neighbor, she was a Jewish woman, her husband had a franchise, I think it was Arnold Bread. This was back, it had to be in the '40s. They moved away and then we moved away. She wanted bookshelves or something made—not that I was a carpenter—she would tell me what she wanted and I would make it.

ROSENFELD: Could it have been Ottenberg's Bread, because they had a bread factory.

MANGIALARDO: I don't think it was. We buy Ottenberg's Bread. This was Arnold Bread. They made little bread that was real expensive but it was good. I don't know if they're still in business. [Arnold Bread is available in the local Safeway and other grocery stores] They were probably bought by a bigger company. I don't think it would have been Ottenberg. Because Ottenberg's two sons run it now. They're like in their forties or something. They're attorneys.

ROSENFELD: Did your family have a favorite restaurant?

MANGIALARDO: We didn't eat out much. I think I went to the movies once with my father. When we were married I took my mother out to a restaurant before we got married. I don't think my mother ever ate in a restaurant. She wouldn't have spent the money for it. Just like when people buy flowers and stuff like that at the nursery and all. Shoot, you think they'd buy a flower? They'd take a clipping or make their own flower. They'd trade with a neighbor. They made their own rose bushes. They didn't have money to do that. A dog got sick. You took care of it. You didn't pay your own vets. They didn't have the money. My mother and father weren't that poor, but they were very frugal, they were very conservative. My mother—if she had something—she had bedspreads and all—she had a little place down at the beach—she made curtains, because they were worn out. They didn't throw nothing away in the old days. Today if you buy a radio it would cost you more to fix it than if you'd buy another one. Cars are almost that way.

ROSENFELD: Do you remember, were there any other businesses on this street?

MANGIALARDO: You know what it was; right on the corner was Maryland Market [1301 Pennsylvania Avenue SE]. It was a supermarket like in the '50s and a liquor store. They sold produce. They had two delivery trucks and they sold all the produce up to the Hill. We were up the next block—you go one block up and there was a building there with like two doors and only one floor—we started there. Next to that was a restaurant. Next to the restaurant was a Safeway. Then they tore the

Safeway down and made an Exxon station now. Across the street where the Sunoco Station is, that faced 13th Street; there was a tavern there, a restaurant and tavern. Across the street where there is a vacant lot, that was a tavern. The restaurant was Italian. Where the chicken place is at 15th Street that was a tavern. There was a tavern, I can't think of the name of it, at 14th Street. There were beer joints everywhere here.

ROSENFELD: What kind of a crowd did they draw?

MANGIALARDO: Most of them were like regular people. If you went to this one, I think it was Maguire's [now La Lomita], they were all construction workers. The Little Dutch [Tavern, 1304 Pennsylvania Avenue SE]—the guy that opened up the Little Dutch in the '30s or '40s he opened it up and he put pizza in there, but he called it tomato pie. It went out of business. He couldn't sell it anybody any pizza. He ended going up to Georgetown—it must have been on the '40s or '50s—he opened up the Silver Dollar. It's still up there?

ROSENFELD: I don't think so.

MANGIALARDO: That was a beer joint. What he would do was {back door bell rings} ... It must be his wife]

ROSENFELD: We were talking about the other taverns, and all the taverns that were in the neighborhood at the time.

MANGIALARDO: He opened up the Silver Dollar. That was supposed to be a big—I don't know because I didn't drink when I was young. I don't drink now. I drank in the middle {laughter}.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

MANGIALARDO: ...Italians for years and they sold it maybe 15, 20 years to a French woman. She runs it now.

ROSENFELD: You were telling me the Catania Bakery [was on North Capitol Street just above Rhode Island Avenue]. Did they deliver, or did you go up there?

MANGIALARDO: Oh, they delivered. They still deliver. We still sell Italian bread. We also use Italian rolls. But hard rolls not as many people can eat, because they are not used to the hard crust. Even though we have a cooked {unintelligible word}.

ROSENFELD: Is that because your clientele is aging?

MANGIALARDO: No, because the old Italians it's unreal what they would do. They'd come in here when I was a teenager, and they'd be 50 and 60 years old. We had dried beans. They would take a dry bean and bite it in half with their teeth. Smoked Lucky Strikes and Camels; their teeth were all yellow. Their teeth didn't rot. I could never do what they could do.

ROSENFELD: Of course in those days you could smoke in a...

MANGIALARDO: Yeah. I quit smoking nine or ten years ago. I started at 24 years old. If I weren't in the military I probably would never have smoked. I never drank. In my house my father drank wine, drank whiskey, drank beer, but not all at once. He drank wine at dinner. In the winter he might have a shot of whiskey in his coffee. He might have a beer in the summer. When he'd cut the grass he'd have a beer. I never seen the man drunk in his life. I never drank, even though that stuff was all in the house. He made wine. He had gallons of it, he had barrels in the basement. When I worked at plumbing I started drinkin', because everybody there drank. I went in the military and I drank a little bit less. When I got out, maybe a year or two—one day I said, "This is ridiculous." I went out one night and got so drunk that I was sick. The next morning I got up. At the meat counter someone would say, "A half pound of salami." Instead of bending over, I'd go down like this {demonstrates} because I felt that if I bend over I'd throw up. So, I quit.

ROSENFELD: Was that one of those bars around here that you had that overindulgence?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. I don't know that particular one, but I would go over there because I knew everybody.

ROSENFELD: It was a nice sort of neighborhood pub.

MANGIALARDO: That was the Little Dutch Tavern, but then eventually it turned into L. Brookman's. He was a DC prizefighter. He had L. Brookman's on the other side of the bridge, just before you get to Minnesota Avenue on the left hand side. I think it was an appliance store for about a year or two. It closed. That was a restaurant. He opened this restaurant. There was a restaurant on 14th Street. They used to buy their salami for the kitchen here. A customer—Potomac Gardens wasn't there—that was all houses [then]. He lived in one of those houses. He would go and play the piano in that Little Tavern. He was like in his 40s and I was like 20 years old. He'd go here and play the piano for free. The whole top of the piano would be nothing but beer. Everybody would buy him a the draft. I helped him drink it. Eighth Street was all kinds of taverns. We called them beer joints. There were two, the Roundup and Guy's [Guy's Place, 529 Eighth Street SE]. Guy was an Italian. He had a bar. These bars were rough because they had the Navy Yard and the Marine Barracks. Like 2 o'clock in the morning—was like say 1:30 the MPs, the Shore Patrols, would all be out there, because everybody is coming out of these beer joints.

Eighth Street must have had 10 or 15 beer joints going from Pennsylvania Avenue to the Navy Yard. Fights would break out everywhere. It was rough. Like I said, a half hour before closing all the military police were there. The last guy that I knew that ran those two beer joints was Italian. He bought his groceries here. I'd go down sometimes and sit at the bar and have a beer and talk to him. His father-in-law was on the other side. He was a little Italian guy. His name was Tony. A fight would break out, he grabs a bat and hits you up the side of your head.

ROSENFELD: Whoever was fighting?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. These fights were rough. I hung around in the beer joints for maybe 10 or 15 years, but I never got in a fight.

ROSENFELD: Good for you!

This was like '55 or '56. A guy came into the store one day and said, "Do you know these people?" I said, "No." He said, "They're Syrians, and he said you look just like one of them." They had a beer joint where Florida Avenue and North Capitol Street meet. You go up a block or two and there wa a black nightclub. And these Syrians ran it. This was in the early '50s. I said," Let's go up there and see if they look like me. His name was Hank, but I didn't think he looked like me. I took you [his wife] up there once. She was scared to death. The whole place was black. And this was in the 50's. It isn't today. I used to wear short sleeves. "They were really nice, they were glad that we came in." [wife] I'll go in there and have a beer or two and nobody—and I would sit and talk to guy at the bar. Then you know what happened? They had the bar and they opened up a place on Marlboro Pike, it was called—what was it called, the High Boy? That was the name of the beer joint. Where they sold the strawberry shortcake; the carryout—they opened up a big carryout restaurant; a drive up restaurant. They were known for their strawberry shortcake. These were Syrians; I think they were. Then they opened up a place on Branch Avenue, just as you go into Maryland. It was the High Boy doughnut shop. Now it's a hamburger joint. They sold all kinds of doughnuts there for years and they would deliver in town and they'd come by the store and we'd buy a dozen if they had them left over. My favorite was the French doughnut. It was real light. They're out of business there too. These people are all dead today. These people were old. I was a young kid. The guy from the doughnut shop; he was in his 50's. I was only 20. That's another reason why the customers are gone. Eighth Street was a rough place. At Eighth and I [Street] they had Johnnies on one side. Johnnies, that was all homosexuals. The other side was all the females. What are they called? [Johnnies was at 500 Eight Street SE]

ROSENFELD: Transvestites or lesbians?

MANGIALARDO: Lesbian. And those two beer joints—he used to come in with the chief of police every Friday night. He’s an Italian gangster.

ROSENFELD: Johnny was the Italian gangster?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. Don’t say his name because he’s got relations here. He’s been dead a long time.

ROSENFELD: What was his last name?

MANGIALARDO: I don’t want to say. They would come in every Friday night and buy groceries; Saturday night. Johnny would buy the groceries; the policeman would buy the groceries and Johnny would pay for the groceries. They were real good friends. They were both named Johnny. He would drive in the scout car sometimes with him. So he was a volunteer sergeant, Johnny was. They come in the store and he says, “You know, I want to become a lieutenant. Italians look good in a white shirt.” He didn’t want the blue shirt. The lieutenants had white shirts back then. I think they just changed that. {sound of machines} I said, “Yes, you ought to make him a lieutenant.” He was also a head of the motor police. This Johnny—not the guy who had the beer joint—the inspector. When I was young. I wasn’t young; I was like 30 some years old. I would go downtown. I loved drag racing. I would drag.

ROSENFELD: Downtown?

MANGIALARDO: Right. It was stupid. I lived in the suburbs then. I would drive up to Georgetown and go way up Wisconsin Avenue. You ride the bike.

ROSENFELD: Are you talking about a motorcycle?

MANGIALARDO: Yes, a motorcycle. You have to go to the bathroom, so where are you going to stop? So you stop at a beer joint and go to the bathroom and have a beer. Then you start driving again and you have to go again! One night I come home—I was sort of like a hotrod; in fact I’m almost a hotrod today—this is like 1:30 in the morning on Pennsylvania Avenue. This was in the ‘60s. Each red light I would do up to 50 miles an hour. That’s how fast this bike was. I would stop for each light. I get to like the third light and I’m stopping and I hear all this squealing. The policeman slides like this. He almost wrecked. He says, “Where the hell are you goin’?” I said, “Home.” He said, “You ain’t never go’in to make it!” He didn’t think I was going to stop at the light. I’d race but I wasn’t a lawbreaker. He gave me a ticket. Next weekend the other inspector came in and I said, “You know one of your guys gave me a ticket.” He said, “Really?” He didn’t do anything about it. That’s one thing that reminds me of something...

ROSENFELD: It sounds like such a lively neighborhood.

MANGIALARDO: I used to love it, even in the car. In 1953 the family bought a Ford. It was 1700 bucks. That was a little 6-cylinder. I just started driving. I guess if I were in the right family I'd be a car racer. I would drag anybody. This thing was a little 6-cylinder and I'd beat almost any V-8 around. That started it all. A few weeks ago I was thinking about that. For some reason I always ended up with cars with big motors. One time I bought a '72 Ford. It was Italians at Sheehy Ford. They would come down and buy sandwiches. The holidays at the beginning of the summer, Memorial Day, right? We was open half a day and they come down and got sandwiches, getting ready to go to the beach. He come down and he had a full size 2-door Crown Victoria Ford, or whatever they were called back then—LTD Ford. It was a beautiful car. It was a big sedan, 2-door. I said, "Boy that's a nice car." He said, "You want to buy it?" I said, "Well." It was a demo because it was one of the manager's. I go out and buy the car. I had it for about 4-5 years. I knew the thing was fast and all that. So one day a guy was working on it because something was wrong with it. He said, "I want to show you something." My house is right at the Beltway. So we go out and get on the Beltway. As we hit the ramp he punches it and before you get on the Beltway this thing is going 85 miles per hour. It had a 429 police interceptor motor in it. I didn't know it at the time, but when I'd buy parts, I'd have to say that. If I didn't say "police interceptor" the parts didn't work.

ROSENFELD: What does that mean?

MANGIALARDO: It was made for the police department. And this manager had it put in his car. I would go to Culpepper a lot. I'd go to Culpepper and I'd wear cowboy hats back then. And I go down and everybody would pull over. And I come down in this big green sedan. They thought I was a State trooper I think. This is thinkin' back. Then one time I bought a station wagon. That's a 455—Pontiac. That thing would blow half of the cars off the... Then one time I bought a Mercury station wagon one time. It was a 460. I really didn't buy them for the engines. I'm thinking back what at they were.

ROSENFELD: What do you own now?

MANGIALARDO: Werll, you know, I drove a minivan for 12 years. The thing happens to be fast. I drove this thing like a maniac. I bought a car two years ago. I bought a Mustang. I always liked fast cars. Like that minivan, there ain't too many people that can take me off the line. But I sort of slowed down the last two years, because the car is 12 years old. When it was 10 years old I said, "This car isn't going to last if I keep this up." {laughter}

ROSENFELD: So now you drive your Mustang.

MANGIALARDO: I bought it two years ago.

ROSENFELD: That's for special occasions?

MANGIALARDO: I'm going to quit that because it's just going to sit there and rot. I'm going to start driving it.

ROSENFELD: Do you park out in back?

MANGIALARDO: Yes. The Mountaineer. I just got that about three months ago, but that's really my wife's car. I think what I'm going to do is sell her other car and she can drive this. I'm driving this—and start using the Mustang—because I'm getting tired of paying these insurances. They're not cheap today. You know my minivan; it's got 137,000 miles. A couple months ago I said I'm just going to put liability to cover the other person. It's almost \$400—the liability. It's ridiculous! This is five-something every six months. So that's why I'm going to get rid of them. I'm going to keep this and the Mustang and get rid of the other two.

ROSENFELD: Well, I think I better end the interview

END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 1

END OF INTERVIEW