**Paul**: This Paul Seacrest for the National Park Service today is Wednesday may 31st 1995. I am at the Ellis Island recording studio, with Remo Spinola and Remo is spelled R-E-M-O Spinola S-P-I-N-O-L-A.

Mr. Spinola came from Italy in 1913. He was 12 years old at that time and was detained at Ellis isalnd for 40days. Mr. Spinola, can we begin by you giving me your birth date please?

**Spinola**: September 13th 1900.

**Paul**: September 13th 1900.

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: And where in Italy were you born?

**Spinola**: North of Italy.

**Paul**: What was the name of the town?

**Spinola**: Casale Monferrato

**Paul**: Can you spell that?

**Spinola**: C-A- no wait, because I lived there but when I was born I was small town. This is a city. Q-U-A-R-T-I PONTURA

**Paul**: That was the city or the town?

**Spinola**: That was the town.

**Paul**: That was the town. Where in the North of Italy is that?

**Spinola**: It’s close to- well, I will give you the big city to Reno-

**Paul**: Oh so in Turin. Tell me a little bit-

**Spinola**: Alexandria.

**Paul**: Did your mother ever tell you any stories about your birth?

**Spinola**: No I don’t think so. I don’t remember anything because it was a long time [Laughter].

**Paul**: It was a long time. What do you remember about the town you used to live in as a child? What sticks out in your mind?

**Spinola**: Well, I went to school over there. I graduated the last year of school before you go to college.

**Paul**: Do you remember what the school building looked like?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah. The [unclear 00:02:27] sat there and everything.

**Paul**: Can you describe that for me?

**Spinola**: Well there were dancers and I was always at the last I don’t know why, the last chair. They thought I was watching the other kids because I was a little bigger, for my age I was a little bigger.

**Paul**: I there a teacher that sticks out in your mind from Italy?

**Spinola**: Yeah, I think there was a teacher. He was a principal at the town and at the same time he was teaching school.

**Paul**: What time of subjects did they teach you in school?

**Spinola**: Well, everything, they liked have what do you call figuring, reading. There was a lot of stuff like that.

**Paul**: Could your parents read and write?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: They had had an education themselves?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: How were you taught at home if you were taught at home?

**Spinola**: Well, they wanted me to try to be good and respect the people. They were very respectable people my parents.

**Paul**: Is there one job or activity that you remember being taught to you by one of your parents?

**Spinola**: Well we used to go- we had a vineyard, you know whatever this grapes and stuff like that and we used to go there and work. They didn’t know I know other job I don’t think.

**Paul**: Can you describe for me the type of the kinds of jobs that you had to do at the vineyard?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah, we had some kind of water that was spraying on early in the season and just keep watching it. And this was around September, the 13th or 14th. Sometime depends few days more or less. That was ripe enough to make wine.

**Paul**: Right around your birthday?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Was there a specific kind of grape that you grew in the vineyard?

**Spinola**: We used to grow black grapes and white grapes.

**Paul**: Black grapes?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: And white grapes?

**Spinola**: And white grapes.

**Paul**: Can you describe for me the process of making wine?

**Spinola**: Well, in Italy most of the places they make wine.

**Paul**: How do they make the wine?

**Spinola**: Well, you try and pick up the grapes when it’s nice and ripe and then you have a grindery your grind it all up. Some I have to tell you they do it on the feet [Laughter] with the jumping.

And then later ferment, then you keep tasting it, whenever you get the right taste you [unclear 00:05:59] that’s it. You stop from the tasting.

**Paul**: Did you sell the wine that you made?

**Spinola**: Well, see that time there no much. My people didn’t have real big vineyard. They had just enough for themselves.

**Paul**: Can you describe the house that you lived in when you were growing up?

**Spinola**: Yeah, there was about five rooms and the kitchen, that was pretty nice little place.

**Paul**: And what did they build houses out of in Italy?

**Spinola**: Brick, all of the house or most of the house had brick.

**Paul**: What kind of a roof did the house have?

**Spinola**: Well I think it’s about like this-

**Paul**: Yes, curved, you’re making a curved shape with you hand.

**Spinola**: And there about that high and you put on a roof with that.

**Paul**: This is like a tile roof that you are describing?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: What about the floor inside the house?

**Spinola**: Well the floor, mostly they made of cement.

**Paul**: How many rooms did the house have?

**Spinola**: About five.

**Paul**: Five and how was food prepared?

**Spinola**: Well they had a kitchen.

**Paul**: There was a kitchen in the house.

**Spinola**: In the house.

**Paul**: What kind of a stove did it have?

**Spinola**: Well, to tell you the truth I didn’t even know exactly but I think it was just wood and stuff like that you know we didn’t have the facilities they have now.

**Paul**: What kind of furniture did you have in your house?

**Spinola**: Well, pretty fair furniture.

**Paul**: Is there a piece of furniture that you remember very well from your childhood?

**Spinola**: No, to me they looked all the same [Laughter].

**Paul**: Did your family raise livestock?

**Spinola**: No.

**Paul**: No, you didn’t have any animals?

**Spinola**: No, maybe chickens. I don’t know.

**Paul**: What was your father's name?

**Spinola**: It’s Edward.

**Paul**: Edward and what did your father do for a living?

**Spinola**: Well he was working on a coal mine. Not coal mine, cement. Where they make cement. The cement they grind it then they cement. That was what it was in a mine like that. Rocks. They picked this that was good enough to make cement.

**Paul**: And that industry was right in this town?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: What was your father's personality like?

**Spinola**: Oh real good and I have to tell you this he was a great clarinet player.

**Paul**: Clarinet player?

**Spinola**: Yeah, and he was real good but you know and he used to play by ear did not much music but he was real good in fact through to couple of few times he play in the theater.

**Paul**: Do you remember any of the songs that he played on his clarinet?

**Spinola**: Well, I don’t know this stuff. I don’t think so.

**Paul**: You are saying clarinet like a trumpet?

**Spinola**: Yeah trumpet, trumpet.

**Paul**: What did your father look like? Can you describe him in words?

**Spinola**: He was nice clean man everything.

**Paul**: Is there a story about your father from your childhood that you'd like to tell?

**Spinola**: No, I don’t have. No story.

**Paul**: Don’t have a story about your dad. What was your mother's name?

**Spinola**: Pauline.

**Paul**: Pauline and what was her maiden name?

**Spinola**: Lupairia

**Paul**: And can you spell that please?

**Spinola**: L-U-P-A-I-R-I-A

**Paul**: And what do you know about your mother's family background?

**Spinola**: Well, I thought they were beautiful people.

**Paul**: What was some of the things that your mother had to do around the house in Italy?

**Spinola**: Well, to prepare food and she was like making dresses so. She didn’t have a complete place but she used to do that inside so.

**Paul**: Did she have a sewing machine?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: She did. Did she make the clothes for the family?

**Spinola**: Yeah. She even does-some they pay there.

**Paul**: So some people would hire her to make clothing for them? Huh?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: What did your mother look like?

**Spinola**: She was nice looking.

**Paul**: What color of hair did she have?

**Spinola**: Black.

**Paul**: Were there any other family member who lived in the house with you?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah we had- let’s see-at the end there was three brothers and myself that’s four brother and two sister.

**Paul**: Can you name everyone for me?

**Spinola**: Yes, the boys there was Remo-

**Paul**: That’s you?

**Spinola**: Me, and then the second one was Pete and then the other Robert and the last one I just talked to him the other day, Henry.

**Paul**: And then how many girls?

**Spinola**: Two, Pauline and Rose.

**Paul**: So Pauline was named after your mother?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: You’re the oldest?

**Spinola**: The oldest uhuh.

**Paul**: Who’s the youngest?

**Spinola**: Pauline. Oh do you mean the family?

**Paul**: Well, who is the youngest of the brothers and sisters?

**Spinola**: Well, the Pauline.

**Paul**: Did your parents once they came to America have any more children?

**Spinola**: No.

**Paul**: No.

**Spinola**: Yeah, they had Pauline.

**Paul**: She was born here Pauline?

**Spinola**: Yeah. She was born in Pennsylvania.

**Paul**: I see. What kinds of activities did you enjoy doing with your brothers and sisters when you were growing up?

**Spinola**: Oh play cards mostly. But I’m good card player.

**Paul**: Who taught you how to play cards?

**Spinola**: Don’t even know [Laughter].

**Paul**: What card games did you enjoy as children?

**Spinola**: We used to play 31, stuff like that you know something really easy.

**Paul**: Uhuh. What religion were you in Italy?

**Spinola**: Catholic.

**Paul**: Catholic. And was there a church near by your home?

**Spinola**: Yap.

**Paul**: And what do you remember about going to church?

**Spinola**: Well, I remember because for a while I even you know go in with the priest and help them out.

**Paul**: You mean did you have to serve on the Alter?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Do you remember what you had to wear when you did that?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah we had the regular jacketed to put on. Regular uniform.

**Paul**: Were there nuns or monks in this town?

**Spinola**: No.

**Paul**: No.

**Spinola**: No, because it was a very small town.

**Paul**: So the school, was not run by the church then?

**Spinola**: No.

**Paul**: I see. What kinds of foods did you eat when you were a kid growing up?

**Spinola**: Oh we used to eat a lot of bread.

**Paul**: Who made the bread?

**Spinola**: We used to buy it.

**Paul**: Used to buy it? So there was a bakery in this town?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah.

**Paul**: So your mother didn’t make the bread then?

**Spinola**: No.

**Paul**: What other kinds of foods?

**Spinola**: Oh, some raise pigs you know they kill it, make sausages, salami, and stuff like that.

**Paul**: Were there special foods for holidays that you remember?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah, there was one all day we would have-chicken or chicken rooster-

**Paul**: Do you remember which holiday that was?

**Spinola**: It was in the spring I think or I don’t remember right now the day it was.

**Paul**: When you were a child in Italy what did you know about America?

**Spinola**: Not much of anything. In fact my dad never mentioned about coming to America but 1912, one day he came from work. It was 12 O’clock. And my mother was worried said “What’s the matter you not feeling good?” because he used to work till four or five o’clock every day.

Hesaid, “No,” he said, “I think I am going to go get the passports to go to America.” Just like that, I remember that because I heard it. And my mother seemed disappointed, says, “You never said nothing and now you want to leave.” He said “Well if I leave, in one year either I am back here or you will also be in America,” and then in one year, less than one year about 10months, we were here.

**Paul**: Where did he go when he left your town I Italy, where did he go to in America?

**Spinola**: He came to Detroit but them the job in Detroit at that time they weren’t paying too much, so he left there he came to Pennsylvania, worked in the coal mine.

**Paul**: Where in Pennsylvania?

**Spinola**: Salina.

**Paul**: Salina Pennsylvania, did he have any family in America?

**Spinola**: No, we the only family.

**Paul**: Why do you think your father wanted to go to America?

**Spinola**: Well, he wanted to improve his-you know the things he was doing.

**Paul**: What job did he get when he came to America?

**Spinola**: Well, he was working in Detroit Box card you know where the box come in clean them and stuff like that? And they weren’t paying very much so he give up and he had some friend of his that were in Pennsylvania working the coal mine and they got in touch and told him to come down here I will help you get a job.

**Paul**: Did your father ever tell you later any stories about his experiences working in the coal mine?

**Spinola**: I work with him.

**Paul**: Once you got over here?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: We will talk about that when we get you over to America. Tell me a little bit about what life was like without your father when he was in America. How was life different in any way when he was gone?

**Spinola**: With was trying to, I was already 12, 11/12, something like that. And I used to go work in the garden help my mother to raise us little food or something like.

**Paul**: Do you remember what kinds of vegetables that you were growing?

**Spinola**: Oh we were growing tomatoes, peppers beans, and then we have salads to make salads stuff like that.

**Paul**: How did your mother support the family during the time your father was away?

**Spinola**: Well, there was a little bit-my dad once in a while he sent little money home because he knew that we need it.

**Paul**: Do you remember how he sent the money? How did the money arrive?

**Spinola**: By, he sent like a check and it was in an envelope. It was just like now.

**Paul**: And then what would your mother do when she got that in the mail?

**Spinola**: Well she would take it in the bank and cash the check.

**Paul**: I see. Did you get a job even though you were so young that paid money while your father was in America?

**Spinola**: No.

**Paul**: Because you are the oldest of the children?

**Spinola**: Yeah but I was only 12. Well there is that one summer that I went to walk with the brick layer. Carrying bricks and stuff like that. Towards the last couple of months that I was there,

**Paul**: Do you remember the point when your mother said, “Well we are ready to go to America.” Do you remember that happening?

**Spinola**: oh yeah. Absolutely. My dad wrote that we could go to America and he asked us if we would like to go. Sure we all would like to go.

**Paul**: Did he stay in America or did he come back to Italy to get you?

**Spinola**: No he stayed in America-

**Paul**: He stayed? So he was going to meet you when you came?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: What did your family pack to take with you to America?

**Spinola**: Oh I don’t know. That is pretty hard, most of the clothes we had. But food we didn’t take because they were serving food in the boat.

**Paul**: So you knew you didn’t have to bring any food?

**Spinola:** No, no.

**Paul**: Do you remember was there some kind of a sendoff dinner in town or some kind of celebration?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah, my aunts and my uncles. We had a dinner all together. And I was there three four times in Europe myself.

**Paul**: Later on?

**Spinola**: Yeah. One time I spent five and a half months.

**Paul**: How did you feel as a 12 years old about leaving Italy and going to America?

**Spinola**: Well at first I thought you know don’t know nobody there. Here I used to play with other boys. That was different story but once we got here we got used.

**Paul**: Do you remember if while your father was in America if he was writing letters telling you about America?

**Spinola**: Well, like when he first was there in Detroit, the job wasn’t paying very good he was kind of disappointed but after was go in the coal mine, he was working hard and then later on he even put a story, and a storey. In mining town he saw a movie house. He would see a movie two three time a week.

**Paul**: Where did you and your mother and your brothers and sisters get the ship? Where did you get on the ship?

**Spinola**: We got on the ship in France. I forgot the name of that port-

**Paul**: How did you get from your town in northern Italy to France?

**Spinola**: We went by train.

**Paul**: Does anything stick out in your mind about that train ride to France?

**Spinola**: Not right now. We were kind of happy that we were going. Then we were kind of disappointed to because one of my brother had measles but someway or another my mother kept that kid in her arm or something didn’t realize he was sick. Till we got to America. Then we got to America we got caught.

**Paul**: So he had the measles even when you were in Italy? I mean when you were getting ready to go on the ship?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Oh so he had them for a long time.

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: You are not sure where in France you were? Where the ship left from?

**Spinola**: I don’t know that. I can’t remember the name.

**Paul**: And what was the name of the ship?

**Spinola**: Chicago.

**Paul**: The Chicago. Do your remember what your impressions were when you looked at that ship for the first time?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah. It was excited all excited.

**Paul**: Where did you sleep on the ship?

**Spinola**: We had like classes. I was sleeping with the men already because I was like a size 13 almost and the other one they were small they were sleeping with my mother.

**Paul**: So the ship divided the men from the women?

**Spinola**: Yeah

**Paul**: What kind of a room were you sleeping in?

**Spinola**: Oh I don’t know just ordinary room.

**Paul**: Were there other men in that room?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah.

**Paul**: How many?

**Spinola**: This depends because we didn’t have a bed. We have bunks. Three high and then we sleep there,

**Paul**: How did you feel initially about having to separate from your family?

**Spinola**: Not too bad, because during the day I see them all day see?

**Paul**: What did you do during the day on the ship?

**Spinola**: Not much of anything. I was 13 years old what did you think to do?

**Paul**: What time of the year is this? What month?

**Spinola**: It was-when we left Italy it was in February but we then got to our destination until March.

**Paul**: Oh. So took a long time?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: What else do you remember about being on the ship? For instance do you remember where you were feed on the ship?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah. They had a kitchen and a dining room and we got there and they give us some food.

**Paul**: And do you remember what it was that they feed you? What kind of food?

**Spinola**: It was ordinary food. It was soup and sometime we get a piece of meat. It was pretty fair.

**Paul**: Did anyone in your family get sick?

**Spinola**: No, except my brother that had the measles. In New York, in Detroit I mean in New York we get caught.

**Paul**: How long were you actually on this ship? Do you think?

**Spinola:** 12 days.

**Paul**: 12 days you were on this ship. And tell me what happened when the ship came into New York? What happened? How did they discover the fact that your brother had the measles?

**Spinola**: Well you through, the doctors take care of you and they--

**Paul**: And where did that happen in New York? Where did you get looked at by the doctors?

**Spinola**: We stayed right there when we get off like this, like this place here.

**Paul**: Here? Ellis Island?

**Spinola**: Yeah. We get off here that’s it.

**Paul**: What kind of examinations did they give you?

**Spinola**: Well they examined pretty good.

**Paul**: Do you remember specifically what they were looking at?

**Spinola**: No they weren’t looking for one thing only. They were looking for everything. If you were sick, they wait to tell you either you go back or stay here till they approve, after 40days. I don’t think they keep you much longer than 40days.

**Paul**: And you were detained here for 40days because of your brother’s illness?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Were you still separated from your mother and the younger children?

**Spinola**: Yes, in the ship.

**Paul**: But I mean once you got here in Ellis Island were you separated still?

**Spinola**: Yeah, I was sleeping with the men.

**Paul**: And what did that look like where you were sleeping with the men?

**Spinola**: When I was sleeping there it was three high bunks-

**Paul**: Three high bunks.

**Spinola**: And I always try to pick up the top one.

**Paul**: Did you have a different bed every night?

**Spinola**: And different room every night too.

**Paul**: Why did they do that?

**Spinola**: I don’t know. When it was time to go to bed, we lined up. They give you a blanket and up you go. That’s the time there I don’t know now.

**Paul**: And what did you do during the day while you were detained?

**Spinola**: Well they used to ask me a lot of questions. They asked me if I went to school and being that there was pretty good reading and stuff like that, they just but a time they had a law, that if you come to these country you have to know how to read or write your own language.

So there are times the Italians fellas come in and they make me used to for me to ask if I could write or read but if they ask me in Italian but some of guy there they couldn’t even speak Italian. They speak just the language because every place they meet every country, they got little different language.

**Paul**: Different dialects?

**Spinola**: Dialect yeah.

**Paul**: From town to town. We are going to pause just for a moment and Kevin is going to flip the tapes over and then we will get you into America.

**Spinola**: Ok

**Paul**: We are now beginning side two, with Remo Spinola, who came from Italy in 1913, when he was 12. And you were in the middle of talking about the 40days that you spent here in Ellis Island. Your mother has small children with her?

**Spinola**: Yeah we-

**Paul**: What did she do during the day while she was held here all that time? Especially with the little ones?

**Spinola**: Not much of anything. Just stay there watch the kids because the food they would give it to you. You know, breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Paul**: Did you experience any food that you had never seen before while you were here?

**Spinola**: Well, I don’t know. Probably there was some but I don’t know.

**Paul**: Do any other people who were here in Ellis Island stick out in your mind. You talked about the other Italians trying to talk to each other.

**Spinola**: Well see, being that this law that-about reading and you know to school, you know something, that you went to school, you were educated-and I can’t anything. Forget what I was going to tell you.

**Paul**: You were talking about the law that they put into place that you had to prove that you could read in your own language, which you could do.

**Spinola:** The other guy that come and people had to go over there and then those fellows you know they came right, because they want to know something. Probably you had to write to the parents see what they come into this country you see.

Can read or write in their own language, so they ask me to write for them. I was only 13years old. I always wrote and some they give some very bad excuse, so I used to tell them I say, “No I don’t write that.” I said, “I don’t believe that they ask they don’t done this do that for you.”

**Paul**: You mentioned that you saw other Italian people here at Ellis Island, where there other kinds of people that you had never seen before that you saw for the first time?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah there was lots of country. We all slept together and all day long we are together.

**Paul**: Did you visit your brother while he was recuperating?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah.

**Paul**: Did you have to go to a different part of the island to do that?

**Spinola**: No, it was right there, but just on the side by themselves.

**Paul**: The first day that you landed, did your father come expecting to take you away?

**Spinola**: No he knew that we are coming. I don’t think he was thinking about coming to meet us because spending money you know. He finally came that way when we this come when we got to place in Pennsylvania, Baresville. It was something about 35 /40miles from Salina and he got on a train because they needed the train to go one place to the other one. We got on a train we celebrate [laughter].

**Paul**: Oh your mother must have been very happy to get out off of Ellis Island after all of that?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Do you remember how your mother's behavior was like when she was here? How did this experience affect her while she was detained here?

**Spinola**: That, really she didn’t get mad, a little disappointed but we didn’t have to-never talked much about it.

**Paul**: I see. So you took the train to got to Pennsylvania?

**Spinola**: Yes.

**Paul**: Tell me what it was like to see your father again for the first time in almost a year?

**Spinola**: It was real nice you know. He came with couple other people that I knew from Italy. They used to live there and they come together and there was little celebration, after that we have a cook out and oh, it was really a good one.

**Paul**: Can you describe where your father was living? What the apartment or house looked like that he was living in?

**Spinola**: Really nice. There wasn’t just to make out of woods but it would end up real nice.

**Paul**: Can you tell me how many rooms it had? Was it an apartment or a house?

**Spinola**: It was a house. See mostly the coal mine they build their own home then if you want to buy a home you would go out to buy it.

**Paul**: So this was company owned then?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: The company- oh I see. Do you remember the name of the company? The coal company

**Spinola**: No. I don’t think so.

**Paul**: How old were you before you started working in the mines?

**Spinola**: I started at 13 and a half years old.

**Paul**: Oh so you were only here few months then?

**Spinola**: Yeah, right away.

**Paul**: Tell me about what the experience was like for you working in the coal mines.

**Spinola**: Well, there wasn’t much experience. I was glad. At that time there, they weren’t too particular about [unclear 00:35:37] you know or how to but then you work with your dad that’s all. Make it look like you were same age.

**Paul**: Do you know how much you were paid when you first went to work?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah, they load the coal so much is 10.

**Paul**: And is that what you did first was to shovel coal?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Was it common for people of that age to work in the mine? Young men?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah, there was a lot of young kids.

**Paul**: Were there other nationalities other than Italians who were working in the mines?

**Spinola**: Yeah. Polish mostly.

**Paul**: What time in the morning would your day begin?

**Spinola**: We used to begin-well we had to get up at six o’clock. Then seven o’clock they have what they call a man trip they take you to place where you supposed the work.

**Paul**: What did they call it?

**Spinola**: A man trip.

**Paul**: A man trip?

**Spinola**: Yeah. You sit in this car and they take you there.

**Paul**: And you go underground?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: And do you have to wear special clothing?

**Spinola**: No.

**Paul**: What about a helmet or anything?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah we have helmet with the light on it.

**Paul**: And then you would work from seven o’clock until?

**Spinola**: About four.

**Paul**: And did you get a break for lunch?

**Spinola**: Well it’s up to you there because the company don’t care. You don’t produce you don’t work. You have to have [laughter].

**Paul**: I see

**Spinola**: You have to have-they pay you by the sun.

**Paul**: So it’s in your best interest to keep working during a break time?

**Spinola**: Yeah. I work in the coal mine about three years.

**Paul**: Is it hard work?

**Spinola**: Oh yes. It just depend on how you want to do it see, the more time you have to put out the more money you make.

**Paul**: Did any accidents occur while you worked in the mines?

**Spinola**: Oh yeah not to me, but oh yeah wait a minute I have one not-I broke my shoulder-

**Paul**: You are pointing at your left shoulder

**Spinola**: I used to [unclear 00:37:58] this.

**Paul**: How did that happen?

**Spinola**: Well there was a- they bring you a car I think we call a car but they little truck.

**Paul**: Little truck

**Spinola**: You put your coal in there. And this one here, the other brake broke, and my dad was working at the end and this car couldn’t stop. So I got on some way or another tried to stop it. Well it did stop but at the same time the roof got so low, it cut my head and down I went and I went down below I hurt my eye but lucky that my eyes there was losing

**Paul**: You are pointing to the mark on your eye. Your right eye. Is that the only time that you were hurt in the mine?

**Spinola**: Yeah that’s the only time.

**Paul**: Now did the company take care of taking you know the medical?

**Spinola**: Yeah they pay part of the rest. Because after there they came a long time before it was broken. I was there almost six months.

**Paul**: So it took almost six months for your left shoulder to heal?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Of course you can’t make money while you’re out? Did your mother get a job once you came to America?

**Spinola**: No, she didn’t get no job.

**Paul**: She just stayed, sit home with the kids?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Well she had a lot of house hold kids right? [Laughter]

**Spinola**: [laughter] yeah.

**Paul**: So you worked in the mine for three and a half years, then what happened? Why did you leaving working in the mines?

**Spinola**: Well my dad had a grocery store and he put on. So I went to be a butcher with him. I never killed animal but I start killing animal and everything.

**Paul**: Can you describe for me what it was like to learn how to slaughter an animal?

**Spinola**: Oh no. it was good. One thing I did have no problem. Well the thing I do I you know it was small animal, calf but there big cows stuff like that we didn’t buy. So you get a calf and we get a hand and you hit them over the head. Right away the life we cut them here. We were already tired his leg to a think then we pull them up.

**Paul**: How did you feel when you were just learning to do this? How did it make you feel to do that?

**Spinola**: Well, I didn’t feel like nothing important.

**Paul**: When did your farther get his grocery store? Like how long did he work in the mines before he opened the store?

**Spinola**: Well, I really don’t remember what month that he started working in the coal mine. That’s when he come from Michigan and then about three years after he had a store.

**Paul**: Well, how did your family’s life change when he bought the grocery store?

**Spinola**: Well, we liked it.

**Paul**: Who worked in the store with him other than yourself?

**Spinola**: My sister.

**Paul**: Which sister?

**Spinola**: Pauline.

**Paul**: Pauline who was born in Pennsylvania?

**Spinola**: No there was Rose.

**Paul**: Rose. She worked in the store. What kind of things did he sell in this store?

**Spinola**: Grocery.

**Paul**: All food?

**Spinola**: All food.

**Paul**: And who were his customers? Who-

**Spinola**: The coal miners. Mostly.

**Paul**: Was the store right in the town?

**Spinola**: That time there wasn’t much ice or freezing the area or stuff like that so I used to go out in the morning, take two orders and then I deliver about two o’clock so they could use meat that evening. So the meat don’t spoil.

**Paul**: How did you learn English?

**Spinola**: Well I went to school through a young girl that she was in school-you know I was working I couldn’t go to school. I was schooled, so in the evening I go there and she only had to. I had to pay a little bit but that’s what whatever I could learn.

**Paul**: Was it just you and this young lady or where there other immigrants learning how to speak English?

**Spinola**: It was just me and her.

**Paul**: Do you remember what your first English word was or you know the early-

**Spinola**: No I don’t remember.

**Paul**: Do you remember a story about trying to say something in English and having it come out incorrectly?

**Spinola**: That I don’t know if I ever did that. Maybe I did, I didn’t pay much attention.

**Paul**: Did your parents attempt to learn English?

**Spinola**: See they talk a little bit. They didn’t go to school they could learn very much.

**Paul**: Were most of your father's clients immigrants.

**Spinola**: Yeah. The majority in the mining town they were polish or Italian.

**Paul**: How did the two groups of people get along?

**Spinola**: Most of them get along pretty good.

**Paul**: Did they all go at the same church in town?

**Spinola**: Mostly because they were all catholic.

**Paul**: They were all catholic. But there wasn’t an Italian church and a polish church in this mining town.

**Spinola**: There wasn’t that big of a place we could keep with so they went all together.

**Paul**: Did your parents ever want to return to Italy?

**Spinola**: No they never mentioned it. In fact they never go. Like me I went four times.

**Paul**: How old were you the first time that you went?

**Spinola**: I was about - first time it was about 1929.

**Paul**: 1929. So you had been here, well a long time.

**Spinola**: Yeah well you know, I was small didn’t make much money. I couldn’t go.

**Paul**: Why did you go in 1929?

**Spinola**: I wanted to go see my parents-no my parents were in Detroit. I don’t know why but I just took a trip that’s all, me and wife.

**Paul**: So you were married by 1929?

**Spinola**: I marry in 1925.

**Paul**: 1925. What was your wife's name?

**Spinola**: Josephine

**Paul**: Josephine and do you know her maiden name?

**Spinola**: Josephine Tola.

**Paul**: Can you spell that?

**Spinola**: T-O-L-A.

**Paul**. T-O-L-A. Josephine Tola. And you married her in 1925. And was she born in America or born in Italy?

**Spinola**: Yeah she was Italian but she was born in America.

**Paul**: Where did you meet her?

**Spinola**: Well it’s a funny story. In 1925 I was working in Ohio, in Pennsylvania but you know I was near Pittsburgh not very far. And I got in a train. I was working the coal mine. It was Saturday morning and there was no work, I said, “I think I am going to take a trip to Pennsylvania to see my folks.” I told one guy. He said, “Okay, goo ahead.”

So I got in the train the when we came to Pennsylvania there was a place called Salina then we stopped. And I looked out and I saw the name of an orchestra that was my best friend and that he was playing there at that town that night. So I grabbed my suitcase then I went I checked my suitcase in the station I got off the train and I started walking.

I came to a place where they were selling ice-cream I go in there and get an ice-cream. Then I ask myself, what this dance on tonight? I used to like to dance. They told me. So I finally find it. I go along the walk off to see a [unclear 00:47:50] somebody yell, yaaay! Remo Remo. I say what the hell.

It was the leader of this orchestra. He said, “It’s me, where you gone" said that "I am looking for you' come here come here. So I went there, somebody that he knew was staying there, said I have to go get a room someplace for sleep for tonight. He said, “You don’t have to go and get a room, I got room with two beds in it.” Said I paid them already, “You can use one bed I use the other.”

That all I said, “Okay.” That night we meet a girl who came to the dance, start dancing begin to like her and I ask her “Do you have a boyfriend?" She said, “No,” said, “I would go out with some boy sometimes but I don’t have no steady one.” She said, “Why?” I said, “Nothing I just would like to know.”

So instead of going home that night I stayed there till Monday and I went there and got a job and I was living there. So next Saturday she asked me-she came to the dance again because they used to dance every Saturday night. And she says, “What you doing here?” I thought you was working higher? “I said yeah, but I like this place.” Said, “What do you mean you like this place?” I said, “Some girl that I like here.” Well, “Who is the girl?” I said, “You.” So I take her over the house to meet our people. Three months later we were married.

**Paul**: How many children did you have?

**Spinola**: We only had two that time, we couldn’t have too many [laughter].

**Paul**: [laughter] and what are your children’s names?

**Spinola**: Raymond-

**Paul**: He is the son with you today?

**Spinola**: Yeah. My son and daughter we call her Josephine.

**Paul**: Josephine. Like her mother?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Did you become a citizen?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: What was that experience like for you?

**Spinola**: Oh it was very good I liked it.

**Paul**: What year was it that you became a citizen?

**Spinola**: I became citizen oh, let’s see. It was young yet. It was before my marriage probably 1924 1925 that was the year 1925.

**Paul**: Did your parents become citizen?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Do you remember if that was difficult process for them?

**Spinola**: No, because they weren’t interested with nothing else just to be seated and to go very slow.

**Paul**: When you think about yourself and who you are, do you think of yourself as being a person from Italy or a person who is American.

**Spinola**: Oh right now I am person of here and this is where I make my meals.

**Paul**: Do you have any advice for people? You know you've lived. You’ll be 95 in September. Do you have advice about young people nowadays about hour they can live their lives successfully having gone through the experiences you have gone through?

**Spinola**: No I never think about other people to tell you the truth.

**Paul**: I see. Is anything else you would like to say before we end?

**Spinola**: That’s but. After that I marry my wife got her own job, thinks 29. She was working when the building [unclear: 00:52:28] went to hell. So they put a garage in it was worse, than you ever thought. Sell gasoline and fixing cars. One day the company that time there, they were lousy.

Sometime they were selling gas two cents cheaper than what we pay for. I quickly assessed the business, so we [unclear 00:52:56] together but after there we went to the company we told them, “Either we get grantee wages or we close every station.” They said, “We give you five cents a gallon I say okay [Laughter].”

**Paul**: Is that the business that you had during the depression? Doing this?

**Spinola**: Yeah that I started during the depression almost like said, the building trade went to hell.

**Paul**: Yeah you had to do something else.

**Spinola**: So I had to do something else to get a job.

**Paul**: When you went back initially for the first time in 1929 you said you went with your wife, how did it feel? Did you go back to the town where you are born?

**Spinola**: Yeah

**Paul**: How did that make you feel?

**Spinola**: Well I had known the people just as good as because I went to school to with them still I was 13 almost. So I liked it.

**Paul**: Did it feel-did you feel like you had come from that place or did it seem sort of distance to you?

**Spinola**: No, I know it. I come from there.

**Paul**: And you have gone back four times you said?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Well Mr. Spinola I want to thank you very much from taking some time off from your visit here at Ellis Island and when are you going to go back to Detroit sometime soon?

**Spinola**: Yeah but another week or two.

**Paul**: Going to another week here with your son?

**Spinola**: Yeah.

**Paul**: Well, this is Paul seacrest signing off with Remo Spinola on Wednesday may 31st 1995 at the Ellis Island recording studio. Thank you very much sir.

**Spinola**: Okay you are welcome.