

[Page 74 - A Talk with Dominic Nardocchio](#)ISSUE : [Issue 53](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1990/1/1

from Czechoslovakia--a Bohemian. So I studied under him for about 5 years. And at the same time, I took up the shoe trade, too. I had a shoemaker right next to me. (On) Tupper Street--an Italian shoemaker there. And from there on I went to (him)--after school. But in Italy, when I was in Italy, were the village shoemakers, it was close to our house. And I used to go there, from when I was a child. And I used to see this fellow cut the uppers-- take the measurement of a foot, make a pattern on a piece of paper, and cut the uppers. And then sew them by hand. Well, he also (made shoes). Well, very few pair of shoes to make. But when he used to make, they were precision shoes. And he'd take maybe 2 weeks to make a pair of shoes, 3 weeks. Spare time. And I used to see this. And it kind of--you know, it kind of interested me. But when I came here, of c 2nd Floor of Quality Cameras Building, corner George & Dorchester Streets. PEOPLE YOU CAN TALK TO. Of course, this was different. All I saw this fellow do was put soles in and heels on shoes. Well, he was a shoe maker, too. And then, of course, as I grew up, I went with another fellow to work here. And he was making shoes. And that's how I started to make shoes. Now I have in the basement about 70 pair of wooden lasts. I made a lot of shoes in the '30s. A lot of people had deformed feet. Had something wrong: abnormal feet, deformed feet. So, I made a lot of shoes. And then I specialized in orthopedic work in--a lot of those people with flat feet, and toe-in--some deformities in the foot. So I started it by myself. And I can say that I helped a lot of people. In many cases I helped more people in their foot work than all the doctors in Cape Breton put together. If the truth was known. Of course, I didn't do it for money. Anybody that came to me and I saw that the shoe was worn in such a way, that I saw that the foot wasn't quite right. I questioned them, and if they wanted any help, I gave it to them. (And sometimes you wouldn't charge them?) No. I'd just charge regular. Normal fee, you know, just like a repair work. (You left school and you became a cobler.) Well, the only thing I could do, the only thing that I could see I could improve myself by doing that. Because I had no chance of going to university. Had I stayed in Italy, not come here--and kept on with the schools. I don't think I'd ever have been a shoemaker or even a musician. Because at that time I was inclined of being--I liked the army. My grandfather volunteered in the Garibaldi Red Shirts as a swordsman and fought with him to free Rome. Stayed with him until they ousted the Austrians out of northern Italy. He was decorated for valour on the battlefield. He was a big man--a 6-footer. He had a family of 13--9 sons. But my father was the only son that lived. And I had in my mind that when I'd become before 18, I'd have enough education to go to military college. And that was free. So I had that in mind (when my father sent for me). When I came here-, that's why I cried The HIGH WHEELER 295-3006 Cafe * Deli * Bakery %f/'g' ENJOY THE DECK IN THE HEART OF BADDECK! Your Sign of Quality DON'T ACCEPT LESS Let our experienced staff help you with all your printing needs SPECIALISTS IN PROCESS COLOR PRINTING 180 Townsend St.. Sydney Fax:(902)539-2040 564-8245 539-8666