

Venendo in Australia

When and where were you born?

Virginia was born in a small town named Onore in Italy on the 7th July 1934. Onore is located in the northern part of Italy near Bergamo.

Who was part of your family?

Virginia had 18 siblings and 3 sets of twins, lots of cousins and her parents. Virginia had a big family. Virginia was the third to last to be born and she was only one year of age when her eldest brother Bianco went to fight in the Second World War. Because of this Virginia never saw Bianco again because he was killed in the war. This was very sad for Virginia because when she was growing up her older siblings often spoke of Bianco. Virginia was very close to all her brothers, sisters and her parents.

What was your life like?

Virginia had lots of friends but unfortunately only saw them during schooling because of work. Virginia worked in the morning before school and at night after school from the age of 6 to 12. Her family owned a hotel and that is where she worked. At 13 years of age Virginia had to leave school to work full time in the hotel.

How old were you when you migrated?

Virginia was 21 years old when she migrated.

Why did you migrate?

Virginia said she migrated because she fell in love with a man named Giovanni Colotti who was also born and grown up in Onore. Their families knew each other well. Giovanni migrated to Australia 5 years before going back to Italy to marry Virginia. 6 months after their marriage Virginia migrated to Australia with her husband by ship, this took one month.

What memories do you have of your country?

Virginia said that she remembers great times in Italy growing up. Her best times were between the age of 18 and 21 because she told her father that she had spent enough time in the hotel working and that she wanted to take a few years off spending time with her brothers and sisters, friends and her mother. Virginia enjoyed these years very much.

Who did you leave behind?

Virginia left all her family, cousins and a few close friends.

I dedicate this project to my *Nonna* Virginia because if she hadn't migrated from Italy to Australia I wouldn't be here right now. I feel it was very brave and courageous of Virginia to migrate leaving all her family behind and not even knowing the English language when she came. I have learnt a lesson doing this interview with my *Nonna* that I should be greatfull of what Virginia did because I can't imagine what it would be like migrating and not knowing the language.

Interview by Virginia Carletti to Virginia Scandella Colotti, her grandmother