

4-22-1976

# From Immigrant to Ethnic: Interview with Vincent Lentini by Joseph Conforti

Vincent Lentini

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.ric.edu/immigrant>



Part of the [Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Lentini, Vincent, "From Immigrant to Ethnic: Interview with Vincent Lentini by Joseph Conforti" (1976). *From Immigrant to Ethnic*. 1. <https://digitalcommons.ric.edu/immigrant/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project at Digital Commons @ RIC. It has been accepted for inclusion in From Immigrant to Ethnic by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ RIC. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@ric.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@ric.edu).

Rhode Island College  
ETHNIC STUDIES PROJECT

Oral History Interview # 1

with

Vincent Lentini

April 22, 1976

By Joseph Conforti

Tape 1 Side 1

- 3 Discussion of Italy under Mussolini.
- 16 Dignity of Italians was high.
- 19 Had school on Africa Street in Providence where he was a teacher. About 350 children attended.
- 33 Life in hometown; was patriotic sentiment there.
- 41 Visited Italy in 1971. Found things different. He didn't like it as much as when he lived there.
- 47 Wasn't a bad life under Fascist regime.
- 53 No crime in his neighborhood. Police didn't abuse their power. People respected on another.
- 69 Father was tax assessor for government; mother didn't work. He considered himself middle class.
- 97 Frequent travel because of father's position. Born in east of Italy. Account of relatives.
- 129 Came to New Jersey because his sister was there. Left Naples in December 1922. Came on advice of university colleague.
- 158 Came as second class passenger. Was happy in Italy but came to U.S. to better himself.
- 214 He finds a lot of discrimination here, even now. Feels Americans don't recognize the contributions of Italians who came here. He's always ready to defend his Italian heritage and promote his culture--pride in being Italian.

Vincent Lentini

- 365 In Europe people feel U.S. is refuge.
- 402 Found it difficult to leave Italy. Stayed here one year then went back to Italy. Unable to get job there, so return to U.S.
- 474 When he came, he brought books, \$40. and three suits.
- 506 Life of peasants near Naples.
- 565 Description of immigrants leaving port of Naples.
- 625 Some men got jobs through agencies when they arrived here. Agencies took part of salary for services and so men had very little left to live on.
- 660 Difficulties of travel to Italian port; his crossing.

Tape 1 Side 2

- 14 As soon as he landed, he saw U.S. was better--could see abundance, opportunities.
- 33 America is free, respect for person. Opportunity is here. People can work and save and better themselves whereas in Italy the same amount of effort doesn't necessarily make your condition better.
- 44 Documents he brought--passport, military papers. Needed to be in good health, no criminal record.
- 65 Got job through acquaintance. Worked in Hospital Trust building for 53 years--barber shop. association with professional men.
- 134 Feels still is much discrimination against Italians.
- 187 Had aunt who lived on Spruce Street on Federal Hill. Many bankers and doctors in that area. When he came, area was all Italian. He remembers feasts but he feels it's more important to remember the history and culture of Italy than to celebrate the religious feasts.
- 240 Italians came on their own, not sent out of their homeland. They should be proud of their heritage and of their reasons for coming: to make an honest living.
- 260 Enjoyed living on Federal Hill because they were his own kind of people, he knew their traditions, they respected him.
- 279 U.S. gave him opportunity to educate his children, to improve his life. U.S. is the hope for everyone in the world.

Vincent Lentini

- 323 His life on Federal Hill. Then he moved to Hudson Street in an Irish area but had no trouble.
- 457 Belongs to group of Italian war veterans.
- 470 Feels Federal Hill is still a safe neighborhood.
- 506 Belongs to Sons of Italy. Involved in radio program they present. Makes Italian heritage known. Speaks of famous Italians.