10-24-1975

Italian Women and Girls: Interview with Maria DeGregorio by Carmela Santoro

Maria DeGregorio

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### Cover Sheet for Interviews

**Name of Interviewee**: Maria DiGregorio  
**Interviewer**:  
**Date of Interview**: October 24, 1975  

**Subjects Covered**

- Life in Italy, family  
- Comparison of lifestyles in U.S. and Italy  
- Impressions of America  
- Education  
- Recreation  
- Likes and dislikes about U.S.
Q: Tell us about your town and how long you’ve been here?
A: I was nine when I came here, 12 now. I’ve been here 3 years. The town was small, farmlike. It had a big clock. I liked it very much. We had schools but no hospitals. There were three stores. My mother owned a grocery store.

Q: What did your father do?
A: He was a carpenter.

Q: What was the town?
A: Ponte Greco.

Q: How big a town was this?
A: 1,000 people. The houses were together.

Q: Were many of you related?
A: Yes, like a giant family.

Q: What did the people do?
A: There were farmers, people who worked out of town. My mother took care of the store and my father had a shop.

Q: How many children are you?
A: Three. I’m the oldest.

Q: Tell me about school there.
A: I went to third grade. We didn't have all the books like we have here. We only had one book. It wasn’t Catholic but we learned religion. I liked it.

Q: What did you do for fun?
A: I played with my friends. We were like brothers and sisters. We had a lot of fun and got into a lot of trouble.

Q: Did you have any movies?
A: We had a TV. at home.

From 6 to 11. None in the morning. No commercials like here. When it was a feast we had a big movie in the town.

Q: What do you find as a difference in lifestyles?
A: The schools are different. Over here I watch TV. a lot.

I'm new in the neighborhood.

Q: Do you know why your parents came here?
A: Because my father's parents were here. Over there we didn't make enough money. My parents wanted a better life.

Q: Did you fly?
A: Into Boston, my uncle met us.

Q: Were you excited?
A: Yes. I expected big things.

Q: Did you go to Providence right away?
A: Yes.

Q: What did you think?
A: The houses were different. The houses are different here.

Separate. Big porches and balconies in Italy.

Q: How did you learn English?
A: I went into third grade with my cousin.

Q: Did the children treat you differently?
A: Some of the kids make fun at me.

Q: Did that bother you a lot?
A: I wanted to go back and my mother did too but my cousins said it would be okay.
Q: How come you went to Catholic school?
A: Because my mother wanted me to and my cousins were here.

Q: Do you find any big differences in schools?
A: The homework is the same. The bathrooms are different. They have mirrors. The school was on one floor.

Q: Was a house found for you when you came?
A: Yes. We bought a house now.

Q: Where do you live now?
A: On Russo Street.

Q: What does your father do here?
A: He's a carpenter.

Q: What does your mother do?
A: She works in a yarn mill.

Q: Do you think your parents are happy working here?
A: Yes.

Q: Do you have any ideas about your own education?
A: I'd like to be a teacher or secretary.

Q: Have you thought about where you're going?
A: To Classical.

Q: What's the attraction at Classical?
A: My cousin's say it is very nice.

Q: Do your parents encourage you to go to school?
A: They value a good education.

Q: Do you think most parents want their children to go to school or work?
A: Most want them to go to school.

Q: Do you do much reading?
A: Not that much.
Q: Do you go to movies?
A: Yes, to the Italian movies.
    With my family.
Q: Do you remember the big feasts in Italy?
A: Yes, not the same here. We had an orchestra who played.
    We brought the statue down from the Church.
    There are two churches.
Q: Did you want to leave?
A: At first I was excited, then missed my friends.
Q: Have you been back?
A: No, but we are going back this summer, the whole family.
Q: Are you planning to do some sightseeing in Italy?
A: Yes, and see my town.
Q: Did you have a car in Italy?
A: Yes, not many did.
Q: At home do you speak Italian?
A: Yes, because my parents don't know English well.
Q: Do you speak dialect?
A: Yes.
Q: Are you planning to study Italian here?
A: When I get into the eighth grade.
Q: What do you like best about the U.S.?
A: Pools, color T.V., cars that are big, different high schools.
Q: Is there anything you're disappointed in?
A: The people aren't as nice. I miss my town. I miss all the things I had there.
Q: Do you see yourself as Italian?
A: Italian.
Q: Do you think your parents will become citizens?
A: Yes. They plan to stay.
Q: Do you?
A: I think I'll be a citizen but still be Italian.
Q: What does it mean to be an Italian?
A: I love my country very much.
Q: What is an American?
A: An American has more opportunities, better jobs, better schools.
Q: You find the people not as friendly?
A: They're friendly, but I'm just not used to them like I was there.
Q: If you had the decision to come here would you?
A: I think I would.