10-24-1975

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

Sara DeGregorio

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NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Sarah DiGregorio

INTERVIEWER

DATE OF INTERVIEW: October 24, 1975

SUBJECTS COVERED

- Life in Italy, family
- Preference for living in Italy
- Impressions of America
- Education
- Recreation
Sara DeGregono
October 24, 1975
M. Bove School

Q: You were ten years old when you came. Where were you born?
A: I was born almost near Rome. It was just a little town, about 200 people. It was like a big family. We did everything together. It was Ponte Greco.

Q: What did the people do?
A: They worked in the fields. Some worked out of town. Other people worked in factories.

Q: What did your father do?
A: He had a bar and restaurant.

Q: Did your mother work?
A: Sometimes in the restaurant.

Q: What was it like?
A: It was very small and they only sell what the people in the town like. It isn't a bar for liquor.

Q: How many children are there in your family?
A: One. They only wanted one.

Q: Did you ever go into Rome?
A: My mother and I would go for a couple of days.

Q: Did you go to school there?
A: For four years.

Q: What was it like?
A: It only goes up to the fifth grade. There are little kids in all the grades. Everyone does everything together. We
I studied everything we study here, math, science, geography, spelling, social studies.

Q: Do you find the schools easier here?
A: The same. Maybe because I am in a Catholic school. In Italy there aren't public and Catholic schools. We had religion.

Q: What did you do for fun in Italy?
A: We usually worked during the week, help our parents. On Saturdays we went to school till twelve and never did too much. We made up our own games. We played together.

Q: On Sundays?
A: We go to Church, eat, go on a picnic. Play in the fields.

Q: Is your town on a hillside?
A: Sort of small. The Greeks named it. There is a fountain.

Q: What are the houses like?
A: The same except they were stone.

Q: Were they in rows?
A: Some were separate.

Q: Were the houses separate from the farms.
A: Yes. You couldn't have big animals in town.

We lived downtown and there weren't any animals around. They had chickens, cows, pigs.

Q: Were many of you related in town?
A: Yes.

Q: How did your family happen to come here?
A: It started about 14 or 15 years ago. My uncle was engaged to a girl and her parents came with her. Then more of the family was called over.
Q: Are any of your relatives still in Italy?
A: My mother's side is. Her parents, cousins.

They (my father's family) thought life would be better here.
He wanted to come and see his family. He hadn't seen them in 8 years. We were only going to stay for a few months.
He liked it here.

Q: Does your father still own his bar?
A: Yes, but it is rented.

Q: How do you feel about being here?
A: It's alright. I still like it better there. You have to stay in your house and yard here. There was more freedom there.
We knew everybody.

Q: What about comparing the schools?
A: No important differences. The schools may be a little harder here.

Q: Did you come by plane?
A: Yes, into Boston.

Q: Who met you?
A: My uncle and two cousins and grandparents.

Q: Did you come to Providence right away?
A: Yes. We saw a little of Boston.

Q: Do you remember your impression of the U.S.?
A: When I came out of the airport I was surprised because I didn't know English and felt stupid. Then I learned English.

Q: Did you start school right away?
A: Yes. All my cousins came here.

Q: Are you happy here?
A: Yes.
Q: What impressed you about Providence?
A: I saw so many people that I missed and some that had been
born here. We started seeing a lot of things. We went to
parks a lot. I never went to parks in Italy.
Q: What grade did you go into here?
A: Fifth.
My cousin helped me with my school work.
Q: Do you like school?
A: Yes.
Q: Do you know what you want to do when you grow up?
A: No.
Q: Do you think you will continue in school?
A: Yes, because my father wants me to get an education first and
then I can do what I want to do. Maybe college.
Q: What does your father do here?
A: He's a cook at Rocky Point. My father likes it there.
Q: Does your mother work?
A: In a jewelry shop. She didn't work in Italy.
She adjusted very well. She's not hard to please.
Q: Do you speak Italian at home?
A: Yes, my parents don't speak English.
We speak dialect.
Q: Are you studying Italian here?
A: Yes. My father doesn't want me to forget it.
Q: Do you consider yourself Italian?
A: Yes, because I was born there and have an Italian atmosphere.
Q: What does an American mean to you?
A: It makes me feel good to know that I have an American friend.
Q: Are your parent citizens?
A: No. We've only been here three years.
Q: Do you think you will become a citizen.
A: My father would like me to, but I think they may go back.
Q: Have you been back to Italy?
A: Yes, for a cousin's wedding. It had been two years.
Q: How did you feel?
A: Real good to see friends. They all made me feel like I hadn't been away.
Q: Do you think you will go back?
A: Maybe next summer for a visit. My father would like to go.
Q: Would you rather go to work or school?
A: School.
Q: What do you do for fun here?
A: On Sundays I go to my cousin's house and talk.
Q: Do you go to the movies?
A: To the Italian movies with my father. I would rather go to American movies. I go with my friends sometimes.
Q: Do you go to parties?
A: Yes.
Q: Sporting events?
A: Sometimes.
Q: Do you do anything in sports?
A: No. I'm gonna be a cheerleader for the basketball team.
Q: What's your favorite subject?
A: Language.
Q: Are you interested in politics?
A: No.

Q: Are you disappointed in anything here?
A: The crime.

Q: Suppose you had to make the decision to come here, would you?
A: Maybe not to stay, but to visit and see it for sure.