Three Generations of Italians: Interview with Anna Petteruti by Susan McGuire

Anna Petteruti

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COVER SHEET FOR INTERVIEWS

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE  Anna Petteruti
INTERVIEWER         Susan McGuire
DATE OF INTERVIEW    2/24/79

SUBJECTS COVERED

Life in Italy

Family in Italy

Reasons for leaving

Settlement in America

Family in America

Social issues
Oral History Interview

with

MRS. ANNA PETTERUTI

FEBRUARY 24, 1979

at her home

by Susan McGuire

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me what town you were born in?
INTERVIEWEE: I was born in a town near Naples.
INTERVIEWER: Did you grow up in this town?
INTERVIEWEE: Yes.
INTERVIEWER: What was this town like?
INTERVIEWEE: It's a small town, 3000 people.
INTERVIEWER: How was it like growing up there?
INTERVIEWEE: I like over there too. Nice and near the city anyway.
INTERVIEWER: How large was your family before you left Italy?
INTERVIEWEE: Ten children and my mother and father.
INTERVIEWER: How many brothers and sisters do you have?
INTERVIEWEE: Seven brothers and two sisters.
INTERVIEWER: Did you live close by relatives?
INTERVIEWEE: No, just my aunt that's all.
INTERVIEWER: What kind of work did your father do?
INTERVIEWEE: He was a carpenter.
INTERVIEWER: and your mother?
INTERVIEWEE: She didn't work, she had ten children. That's plenty of work.

INTERVIEWER: What was expected of you and your brothers and sisters?

INTERVIEWEE: Well I didn't finish school because I had to help the family. I was the first one, first girl. Just washing and ironing was enough. Everyone was in the same position.

INTERVIEWER: What is your religion?

INTERVIEWEE: Catholic.

INTERVIEWER: Did everyone in your family go regularly to church?

INTERVIEWEE: YES, YES.

INTERVIEWER: What are some of the customs you've acquired through your family in Italy?

INTERVIEWEE: Stay within the family.

INTERVIEWER: How old were you when you came to America?

INTERVIEWEE: 25

INTERVIEWER: Were you married or single?

INTERVIEWEE: Came as a bride.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you want to come to America?

INTERVIEWEE: Because I had met my husband.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you meet your husband?

INTERVIEWEE: In my town.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a reason why your husband wanted to come to America?

INTERVIEWEE: My husband was here for 24 years.
INTERVIEWER: What form of transportation did you use when you came here?
INTERVIEWEE: We came by boat.
INTERVIEWER: What sort of things did you bring with you?
INTERVIEWEE: A lot of clothes, that's all.
INTERVIEWER: When you arrived here, where did you settle?
INTERVIEWEE: Providence, R.I.
INTERVIEWER: Was there a reason why you specifically settled in Providence?
INTERVIEWEE: Because my husband's mother and father were here, the family. I had no family, I didn't have anyone here.
INTERVIEWER: Could you speak English when you came here?
INTERVIEWEE: No.
INTERVIEWER: How did you learn to speak it then?
INTERVIEWEE: I try to learn it myself. I went to school for eight weeks.
INTERVIEWER: Did you have any trouble settling here at first?
INTERVIEWEE: No, had no trouble.
INTERVIEWER: How many children do you have?
INTERVIEWEE: I have two living, and I lost three.
INTERVIEWER: What did your husband do for a living?
INTERVIEWEE: When he came over here he worked at the garage.
INTERVIEWER: Did you do any kind of work?
INTERVIEWEE: No, I didn't work. In the house yes.
INTERVIEWER: Did you want your children to have a good education?
INTERVIEWEE: Oh, yes.
INTERVIEWER: Why?
INTERVIEWEE: Because I love them, especially my first boy, he went to many colleges. The second couldn't go because his father was so sick. What can you do?
INTERVIEWER: Did you expect anything from your children?
INTERVIEWEE: No, just a visit, call me up once in a while.
INTERVIEWER: Did it bother you at all that your children were going to American schools, learning the American values and then having to come home to accept the Italian values?
INTERVIEWEE: No.
INTERVIEWER: Did you allow your children to date freely?
INTERVIEWEE: Oh yes, I'm old fashion.
INTERVIEWER: Was your marriage prearranged at all?
INTERVIEWEE: No.
INTERVIEWER: If you could do it over would you still come to America?
INTERVIEWEE: I don't know.
INTERVIEWER: Did you have any misgivings when you came over?
INTERVIEWEE: No, I loved my husband.
INTERVIEWER: Do you consider yourself an American or an Italian?
INTERVIEWEE: Now it's more over here than over in the other country.
INTERVIEWER: So you consider yourself an American then?
INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I think so.