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Italian Women and Girls: Interview with Rita Langano by Carmela Santoro

Rita Langano

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NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Rita Longano

DATE OF INTERVIEW: October 17, 1975

SUBJECTS COVERED

Life in Italy, family

Impressions of America

School experiences

Comparison of lifestyles in U.S. and Italy

Impressions of America

Education

Recreation

Likes and dislikes about U.S.
Rita Längano  
October 17, 1975  
Arrive 1972

Q: Tell us a little about your life in Italy.  
A: I use to go to school every morning. 8-1:30. After school I did homework and housework.

Q: What did you do for fun?  
A: Play. There are more people outside in Italy. I like that.

Q: What town was that?  

Q: What did your father do?  
A: Builder, stone and cement.

Q: Did your mother work in Italy?  
A: No.

Q: How many children?  
A: 7, 2 married and 1 sister who has three more years of college in Italy in Naples.

Q: How long did you go to school there?  
A: 4½.

Q: When did you come here?  
A: May 1972.

Q: Did you study English in Italy?  
A: No.

We had uniforms there.

Q: Did you come with your family?  
A: My mother came here first with my two sisters and brothers. Then the other sister came. After me, my father and sister.
My mother got the card to come here. We had to wait for a card for us. She had relatives here.

Q: How old are you?
A: 14. I have another sister 11.
    The oldest is 27.
Q: Why did you come here?
A: My family.
Q: Your sister wanted to stay?
A: Yes, she didn't have much school left.
Q: Do you remember when you first arrived?
A: By plane in Boston.
Q: What impressed you?
A: 
Q: Did somebody meet you?
A: MY uncle.
Q: Your mother had a house for you?
A: Yes, but we live somewhere else now.
Q: What was different?
A: The houses are wood. The yards are big. The hospital was like in Italy.
Q: How long had it been since you'd seen your mother?
A: 1 year.
Q: When did you go to school?
A: I came in May. I went for only two weeks. I should be in the ninth grade but am in 7th.
Q: Did you go to summer school to learn English?
A: No.
I learned English from someone in Hopkins.

Q: How did the children treat you?
A: There are all sorts of people here, colored. I think it's better to be mixed.

Q: Do you feel uncomfortable because you are older than your classmates?
A: Yes, a lot.

Q: Do you have many friends?
A: Yes. I like to be with friends my age.

Q: Do you have any difficulty with subjects here?
A: No. Here is easier. Over here there isn't much homework. The hours are longer here, but less homework.

Q: What were your first impressions of the U.S.?
A: More cars than there. The city is bigger than where I lived. School is better here.

Q: Is there anything you don't like here?
A: I like the fun, feasts there better. Not enough things. I have more fun. But I like it better over there.

Q: Have you been back?
A: No, but when I go work I plan to go visit.

Q: Do you speak Italian at home?
A: A dialect. People think Italy is a lot worse than it is. They don't know what they are talking about.

Q: What are your plans?
A: I want to be a secretary. If I wouldn't be so old when I got out I think I would. I don't like being older than others.
Q: Would you go to a business college?
A: Yes.

Q: Do you find that since you've been here that the way you lived in Italy is very different than here?
A: There are a lot of poor people in Italy. The stores are bigger.

Q: Is family life very different?
A: Yes. There were more farmers.

Q: What do you do for fun?
A: School. I go to Italian movies every Sunday.

Q: Do you get Italian papers at home?
A: Sometimes.

Q: What else do you do for fun besides Rocky Point?
A: Carnivals, movies,

Q: Do you belong to any clubs?
A: No, I'm really restless and want to play baseball next year.

Q: You like sports?
A: Yes. I watch it a lot. I love baseball. I don't really like the Red Sox. I like the Yankees.

Q: Are you interested in politics?
A: No.

Q: What does it mean to you to be an Italian?
A: Being able to speak the language.

Q: Do you see yourself as an Italian?
A: I'm not a citizen. We haven't been here long enough.

Q: Do you want to become a citizen?
A: No. I see myself as Italian.
I have an accent.

Q: What does being an American mean to you?
A: Speak the language.

Q: Do you know what Italian have made outstanding contributions?
A: No.

Q: Suppose you had a chance to come to the U.S. again would you?
A: Yes. But I would still go back.

Q: Would you be happier with kids your own age?
A: I guess.