10-30-1975

Italian Women and Girls: Interview with Teresa Sciarro by Carmela Santoro

Teresa Sciarro

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Recommended Citation
NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: Teresa Sciano
INTERVIEWER:
DATE OF INTERVIEW: November 30, 1976

SUBJECTS COVERED

Life in Italy, family

Education

Arrival impressions of U.S.

Schooling in America, daily life

Recreation

Loneliness here
Teresa Sciano
Brigham Middle School
November 30, 1976

Q: When did you come here?

Q: How old were you then?
A: Ten.

Q: Do you remember the town?

Q: What kind of factories?
A: I don't know.

Q: What did your father, mother do?
A: My father went out to work, my mother stayed home on the farm. He went to Naples to work.

Q: What did your father do in Naples?
A: Metal worker.

Q: Do you know why your parents came?
A: My uncle said there were better jobs here. My father came first. Then my mother. Then I came over later.

Q: How many children are you?
A: 3. My parents came here first.

Q: You went to school in Italy?
A: Yes. Kindergarten through fifth grade. We studied everything. Everything I studied in 3rd and 4th grade there we're studying now.
Q: Was school harder there?
A: Yes, we had homework everyday.
        Then I went to another school where the teachers helped us with the homework.
Q: What did you do for fun?
A: We had no fun. Sometimes we played hide and seek.
        I went through fourth grade.
Q: Was anyone else from your father's family here?
A: Just my father's brother and wife?
Q: Are your grandparents still in Italy?
A: Yes.
Q: Does your mother and father have brothers and sisters there?
A: Yes.
Q: Did you fly here?
A: Yes, we landed in Boston.
        We took a bus to Providence. My father met us.
Q: Was there already a house?
A: Yes. In Providence.
Q: Do you remember your first impressions?
A: Everything was so different. I didn't know anyone.
        I thought the beach was near the house. I thought there was all fun stuff. The houses were of wood.
Q: Was the inside of the house very different?
A: Yes.
Q: Did you go to school right away?
A: I came in July. I started in fifth grade in September.
Q: How did you learn English?
A: At school, English friends, once I learned it school was easy.
Q: Are you a good student?
A: I guess so.
Q: How did the other students treat you?
A: Good. They helped me with my work. They helped me with names.
Q: What do you enjoy most about school?
A: Music.
Q: What do you like least?
A: I don't know.
Q: Do you have any plans for your future?
A: I want to be a hairdresser.
Q: What is your father doing in this country?
A: He works in jewelry. My mother is at home.
Q: Have you been back to Italy?
A: No.
Q: Would you rather go to school?
A: Yes.
Q: Are you planning to go to high school?
A: My father wants me to go to college too. I guess I do too.
Q: What does your father want you to do?
A: Get a good job.
Q: What do you do for fun?
A: I go home and do my homework and go to my cousins house with friends and play.
Q: Do you ever go to the movies?
A: No.
Q: Do you go to the Italian movies?
A: No.
Q: Do you go downtown at all?
A: Yes, sometimes with my mother and sometimes with my cousins.
Q: What do you think of the stores in Providence?
A: They are big and have everything.
Q: Do you belong to any clubs?
A: No.
Q: Do you see yourself as Italian or American?
A: I think I look Italian. I feel Italian.
Q: Do you want to become a citizen?
A: I guess so.
Q: Did you have an idea of what an American was before coming here?
A: I don't know.
Q: Do you know anything about what Italians have done for the world? Famous Italians?
A: Columbus. Da Vinci.
Q: Do you know how we got the name America?
A: Amerigo Vespucci.
Q: Are you happy here?
A: I guess. I miss all my friends. I miss the feasts and concerts. I just stay in the house, like a prison.
Q: Do you think it's because you don't have too many friends?
A: There aren't lots of friends to listen. My cousins work.
I don't do anything. I'm lonesome.
Q: Suppose you had to decide to come here, would you?
A: No. I feel left out.
When school closes I'm going home. I don't know if I will stay. My mother wants to go, my father wants to stay. She doesn't like it either.
Q: What is your mother unhappy about?
A: She is afraid of the house burning down. Too much traffic.
    She doesn't like the city.
Q: What do you like best about the U.S.?
A: Stores. Schools, because we do different things. Trips.
    To Boston. To the pilgrims boat. To the aquarium. Mystic.
Q: Is there anything you don't like here?
A: Colored people, They think they are the bosses. (Is this what
    she really said?)
    My younger sister is back with my grandmother. If she does
    well in school we may all go back.