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## A note about transcriptions:

Of the original 252 audio-recordings in this collection, 212 of these tapes were transcribed around the time of the original recordings (between 1966 and 1978). In 2012, Cabbage Tree Solutions was contracted to create transcriptions for the remaining tapes. Corrections to and clarifications for all transcriptions are welcome, especially for names and places. Please contact Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, for questions. [askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu](mailto:askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu)

Throughout the transcript, all references to *Castel' Morone* should be *Castel Morrone*. Thanks to Davide Bernardo and Mariano Villano, RcmLive (<http://www.radiorcmlive.it/>), for the corrections.

*Handwritten initials and date*

**Transcribed Interview**

**With**

**MRS. FANNY RICCHIUTI  
3 OVERLOOK DRIVE  
MARSHALTON HEIGHTS  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE**

**Interviewed By**

**Francis J. Fierro**

**November 20, 1968**

**Transcribed By**

**Carolyn F. Fierro**

**February, 1970**

All right, this is an interview with Mrs. Fanny Ricchiuti of Wilmington, Delaware. O. K., now we can start. Everything is going.

The first time?

O. K. now, where were you born?

In Italy.

What part of Italy?

Castel'Morone.

Castel'Morone, right? It's two words, right?

Yes.

Now where is Castel'Morone located?

In...is it in Naples?

It's near Naples. It's in the south of Italy.

Yes. Near Naples.

It's in the south of Italy not too far from Naples.

What year were you born?

1904.

1904? What did your father do in Italy?

Well, actually my father came to this country at the age of seventeen, right out of school. His father was a gardener, and he was here 'till he was twenty-two.

Uh huh.

Then he went back and married my mother and before I was born he came back here, which was less than a year, and he stayed here 'till I was born; and I was eleven months old when he sent for us. So then we were here 'till I was about five.

Now, when you say here, do you mean Wilmington?

The United States in Wilmington, Delaware, yea.

In Wilmington? Uh huh. Was there any particular reason why your father came to Wilmington and didn't go any place else?

He had a sister here?

This was what attracted him here?

Yea. Uh huh.

Was there anyone here in this country besides his sister before he came to the U. S.?

That I don't know. That I don't know.

Now your father went back to Italy when you were five years old.

When I was five he went back to visit his parents and took me and my sisters. Two sisters were born by that time. So then he left us there with his parents for I imagine about two years as far as I understand. I don't know, and he came back here and then he sent for us again.

Do you have any recollection at all of the times you spent in Italy?

Yes, some. I remember fruit trees. I remember the roads, and I remember grape vines, fig trees, all this kind of stuff. I remember the...my grandmother. I remember her very well, and I remember when we came back to this country, getting on the boat and getting off the boat. All these things sort of impressed me. I just remember them.

They were just like flashes that just stay with you.

Yes. Uh huh. They just stayed with me....

Uh huh.

and, well my father was already here. He had already come back here and when he met us in New York I was glad to see him and glad to come back. I know that much.

Now when your father did go over, did he go with just you and your sisters or did he go....

My father went over with the three of us, me and my two sisters.

Your mother stayed here?

No. My mother went along. They went to visit their parents. Yea, so as I say, we were only there about two years, but my father came back again. He couldn't stay there for some reason. He just couldn't stay there long enough, you know.

Like he left us there. He came back here. Then he sent for us again and....

Well what kind of work did your father do in the United States.?

He was working for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at that time.

Uh huh.

Exactly what he was doing, I don't know, but that's where he was working when we came then. Oh, I don't remember exactly when it was, but I know it wasn't too long, you know, after we had gone back to Italy. I know that.

What was it like when you were a little girl after you came back to the United States? Now first of all where did you live in Wilmington?

We lived on Seventh and Scott.

Seventh and Scott. So this was right in the middle of the Italian community?

Yes. Uh huh.

Right in little Italy. What was it like when you were a little girl here, say around 1910.

1910? 1910 we lived on Scott Street. Well, I thought it was grand. I went to school just....

Where did you go to school?

Number Eleven.

Now, this was the school that was located at Ninth and Scott?

Yes. Uh huh.

And today it's part of Padua Academy.

Yes.

It belongs to St. Anthony's church.

Yes.

What were the children like that went to this school? Were they mostly all Italian youngsters or....

No. No. There were all type children from different nationalities and there was mixed, you know, children.

Would you say the Italians were in a minority at that time?

No. I wouldn't say that.

In the majority?

Probably more than the other, but there was quite a bit of the others too.

O. K. How about the teachers? Were there any Italian teachers?

No. Uh huh.

How did the teachers treat the Italian youngsters?

Well, they treated us pretty well.

They treated you all right?

I know I was well liked.

Yea. Uh huh. This is good. I was just curious about this.

Yes.

Did you ever, as a child, run into any that you would remember. I'm certain that probably this sort of thing would never even impress you. As a child, did you ever experience any prejudice of any sort because you were an Italian?

Oh, no. Uh huh.

O. K. Now, there's one other thing I would like to ask you about life in those days. Now there are many things I would know about being from the Italian community myself and a lot of things that seem to you to be just commonplace because you lived through these things. Everybody you knew...

Uh huh.

went through the same thing....

Yea.

but what exactly did people do for entertainment in the Italian community at that time?

Families just got together. They got together and they would just entertain in their own home unless it was



a wedding or a christening. But otherwise, it was just getting in eachothers house and having together parties. That's all it was.

How about church? Now there was no Italian church.

No. Uh huh.

Where did the people go to church?

Well, the only place I ever went was St. Thomas's.

Uh huh. Now it's common knowledge, of course, that most Italians are Catholic.

Uh huh.

Now the ones that come from Italy, if they're not Catholic they're usually nothing.

Uh huh.

Now, how about the Italians that lived in Wilmington. Now in the community there was Italian church, and now I've been told by some people that they experienced prejudicial treatment in some of the churches in....I've had mentioned to me St. Thomas's, where they had a nine o'clock mass for Italians, and they couldn't go to any other mass. There was one priest there that during one period of time who would stand out in front of the church in front of the doors and if an Italian came to any mass but the nine, he would turn him away.

Well, I wouldn't know that Franny because I had my First Holy Communion there.

Uh huh.

Confirmation there, and I went to Sunday School there. Now I wouldn't experience anything like that, and I never heard my parents say anything about that.

Yes. Well, I heard the same thing happened at St. Peters Church on West Street.

It could be, but see I don't know that because I really don't even remember that, you know.

Well, these were in my talks with some of the people who experienced this.

Uh huh.

It was during a period of time when there was one particular individual who was either an assistant pastor or pastor of the church, who seemed to have a dislike for Italians, and he's the one who put more or less would insist on this sort of thing. But most people have said they experienced no untoward....

I think I know who you're hinting at now because I have heard that myself. He was a very strict priest. That he was, as far as I know, but I was always treated all right when I went because, as I say, I went there all the time.

Now, there not being an Italian parish, Italian church, people not having a church of their own, it's my understanding that a lot of people fell away from the church. Is that true?

At that time, yes.

They joined other churches? The Evangelist church, the Protestant church is one denomination of another.

Yes. That's true.

Now, what was the Italian like physically? When I say physically, I mean what were the streets like, the houses like. Were there houses? Where weren't there houses, say around 1910.

Well, as far as cleanliness in their home, there was you know, inside the house. But the streets, anything was out in the street, boxes or anything. I can remember that because my mother use to sweep them up in a pile, you know, in front of our house and clean it up, but inside I think majority had a clean home.

Yes. Now really this is what I meant to ask, but what I was wondering about the community itself. How far were there houses? To what point?

Oh together.

In otherwords, what streets were filled with houses.

What streets didn't exist and also were the streets paved in 1910 or were they dirt streets?

Gee, I don't know. I don't remember that. I really don't. I don't remember if they were paved or what. I know lots of them were just pebbles. I think like pebbles out on the streets and brick pavements. I remember that much.

The brick pavements. I remember those myself.

Yea. But as far as the streets I believe there was a lot of pebbles like rough streets.

Wh huh

Trolley tracks galore. That I know.

Where were there trolley tracks? Where did they run?

Oh, they run from Rising Sun...

Well on what streets? Now, for example I know there was a track on Seventh Street.

Seventh, Sixth.

Sixth?

Eighth.

Eighth?

Eighth. Oh, Union.

On Union Street?

Wh huh.

Street I suppose. ... So that these are the tracks you'd say....and du Pont

Yea, du Pont.

that were in the Italian community.

Uh huh.

Now, what we know as little Italy today probably stretches traditionally from fourth....

Uh huh.

Street to around Eleventh....

Eleventh, yea.

and then from du Pont Street to Union ....

Uh huh.

right?

Now were they about the bounds in 1910 also for little Italy or would you say it was smaller?

It was smaller.

It was smaller?

Yea, I think they all stayed from about Lincoln Street to about du Pont.

Uh huh.

And say from about Eighth to about Fifth.

Eighth to Fifth?

Uh huh.

O. K. So, but really it hasn't grown much although people have moved all around the area now.

Yea. Uh huh.

Now, how many years old were you when you started school here in the U. S.?

Well, I must have been seven.

You must have been seven because you came back to this country.

Yea, we came back here after a couple years or so.

How old were you again when you came back here to the U. S. from Italy?

About seven.

You were about seven when you came back.

Oh, yea.

Now you couldn't speak any English then, could you?

Oh, yes I could. A little. See, my father, he spoke English and Italian because he came here seventeen, and he had, you know, studied the language...

Yes.

and then I was a little girl here remember for about five years so I could.

Oh, in otherwords....

A matter of fact, I was speaking both.

Oh, during the two years in Italy then you didn't forget the English?

Oh, no because my father used to write me and write both ways. He tried to keep it up and as far as that goes I went to school in Italy....

Uh huh.

and picked up a little Italian....

Yea.

and when I came here I got along fine. It was amazing. My father said it was amazing but, you know.

Yes. O. K. now how many years did you go to school in....

Went to school the whole time we were there.

In Italy? The whole time you were there?

Yea. The whole two years, uh huh.

And how about in the United States. How many years did you go to school?

Oh, 'till I was about fourteen and one-half.

How would you compare....now you had the experience of both. How would you compare the Italian school to the American school?

Well, I don't remember too much about it. It was a man teacher. That I know.

In Italy?

In Italy. It was a man teacher, and I think they're

a little more advanced there. I think they....I don't know how to explain it, but they teach you further in each class.

In otherwords you think they expect more out of their pupils there than here.

They expect more. Yea. Uh huh. I don't know how to explain it. And I think when you're finished high school there it's almost like Junior College.

Yes. That's true.

See, that's what I'm trying to get at.

Yea.

Because I remember. I was only a little tiny thing, and I remember I wrote a letter to my father and you know you don't do that today.

No, not that young. No, heavens no. O. K. after having come back to the U. S. your father was still working for the railroad, right?

No. He was working for John Bancroft as a foreman...

Uh huh.

and he worked there 'till he went for du Pont's and he for P. S. du Pont's. Then I was a young girl about sixteen, but after he came back he was with John Bancroft for ten or twelve years.

Did you ever hear your father say he had experienced



any sort of discrimination because he was an Italian on any job he happened to be holding?

No. My father did pretty well. I don't know whether you have noticed or not Fran, but my father was made foreman in his day very young in Bancroft when he went there, and when he was on the B & O tracks, he was assistant foreman. I imagine if you ask your dad he'll tell you.

Oh, what would you say...were you aware of any of the political feelings in the Italian community during the time that you were growing up?

Well, the only thing I know about political, when my father was working on the roads for du Pont's. Naturally we all went out and, you know, worked for him politically. That was a political job he held.

Uh huh.

See, so we all went out and worked.

Political in what sense? You mean if the democrats were in he had the job. If the republicans were in he didn't have the job.

That's right. That's right.

Well, what sort of work did he do when you say you went out and worked for him?

Construction foreman.

No. I mean you say you went out and worked for him.

Yes. Well, you see when he worked for Frank Sparks, he works for Lynch, and he worked for du Pont's. Each one they would, you know, give him a job. Well, he worked for the three of them but mostly for P. S. du Pont.

Yes.

Well naturally they were all republicans.

They were all republicans?

Sure.

The republicans ran everything.

They ran everything.

And so your father was a republican.

So naturally we all had to go out and plug for them, you know.

In otherwords get out the vote when it came time for election.

Well, we'd go out and get people to vote. Just ask them to come out and vote, you know. We didn't give 'em a ballot or anything like that. We just asked them to come out and vote.

Yes. Uh huh. O. K., now who were the representatives? I don't know whether you remember this or not. It's really digging back. Who were the representatives from the Italian

community? Were they Italians or were they other people?

Oh, gosh. Let me see. I should remember something about that. I don't. I really couldn't say because I'd be making a mistake.

Yes. O. K. I was just curious about this. Now, in so far as working is concerned, did the girls ever go out and work too or did they stay at home or what did they do when they finished with school?

Went out to work.

What sort of jobs did they usually get?

Well, I have a sister that she worked as bookkeeping.

Uh huh.

And myself made cigars. I was a cigar maker. So was my other sister and then my brother. One of them was a foreman for Pusey and Jones and my other brother, well he was in the service most of the time, and when he came back he went to work for Atlantic aviation.

Uh huh.

And my brother is....when he came back he selling cars.

Now, in so far as working in the cigar factory, now this was in Wilmington, right?

Oh, yes.

Now they don't have any more of these factories in  
Wilmington.

No.

What was it like? Was the work all right?

Oh, yes. Very nice. Uh huh. Made very good  
money.

How was it...price work or was it by the hour?

Yes. It was so many cigars. You get so much.

Uh huh.

By the hundred.

And it wasn't hard? I guess once you get the knack  
of it.

Once you got the knack of it, you made cigars.

Where was this cigar factory located?

Second and, and Second and Madison and Ninth and  
Walnut. I worked mostly Ninth and Walnut.

What was the neighborhood like in those days?

Not good.

It wasn't?

No, not good. It was down, you know.

Yea. About what year was that?

It was 19....it was from 1918 to about 1924 that I  
worked there.

Uh huh, and even in those days the neighborhood wasn't  
the best in the world.

It was down.

Tell me something now. When World War I started...

Uh huh.

a lot of the boys, a lot of the young men who had come from Italy went back to Italy, didn't they?

Yes. I heard that. I don't know for sure.

You don't remember?

Oh, don't remember that definitely. I just, you know, heard about it.

Many of them were called by the Italian government to go back for the Army, you know. They were drafted from Italy. They were drafted to go on back you see to go on in the Army. You don't remember any of those boys? You just remember of it, right?

Yea.

How about when the U. S. got into World War I? Do you remember anything about that?

A little. I remember a little about that. Some of the people that went that I knew and not too much about it.

Do you remember what the general feeling of the people was at the general outbreak of World War I? Do you remember hearing people talk about it or how they felt about

it, what they thought?

Well, they didn't like the idea of war.

Yes.

This I know. They didn't like idea of their, you know, boys going out to fight and the war part of it they didn't like.

What did the people say about Italy being in the war because Italy went into the war a couple years before we did, and I'm sure a lot of people had some sort of feeling about this, most of the people being from Italy.

Well....

Do you remember anything that....

No.

You just remember about the American part of it then?

Yea. I only remember the people just hated the war, you know.

Uh huh. Were there many boys who volunteered for the service? Do you remember or don't you remember?

Yes, there was. I remember they used to come out on the street and ask for volunteers.

Uh huh.

They came right out on Scott Street with a big band and trucks, you know, and asked for volunteers and a lot of them would just jump on the truck and join. I remember that.

This was what, for the Army or the Navy or...

Yes. Uh huh.

What was it like? A carnival atmosphere?

Yea. Yea.

Everybody was having a good time listening to the music...

That's it.

and joining up.

And joining up. Uh huh. Yea.

Do you remember whether or not there were many boys that were killed during World War I?

I don't remember how many, no.

But do you remember of there being any who were?

Yes. But I couldn't tell you who they were.

O. K., now during this period during World War I and right after World War I I think probably we experienced one of the biggest changes in the way of living in this country and also in income.

Uh huh.

Prior to World War I I guess most people had their toilet outside the house.

Uh huh.

Right? No electric lights in the house.

Uh huh. You're right.

And no central heating.

Uh huh.

Just the stove in the kitchen.

Uh huh.

Furniture, next to no furniture.

That's right.

But after World War I...

Uh huh.

wages went up. Of course this happened during the war. Wages went up. There were more things to be had.

Uh huh.

The country advanced in many ways. Do you remember this period?

I do. I think it was out when Roosevelt came in.

Well, this was before Roosevelt now. This is going back to about 1920.

Oh, yes. It was before.

And life just had a complete, there was just a complete change in life.....

Yes.

where people had the ability then.



That was about '24, wasn't it?

Well, the war ended in 1918.

About '24.

Yes.

Because that's the year I was married, and I remember how electricity and everything, you know, nice.

Everything was just...

In otherwords you had everything?

Everything.

How did it seem to you when you changed from having gas lights...

Oh, gosh. It was great.

to electric lights?

It was great. Everything was great.

It was just marvelous?

Yea.

And central heating...

Yea.

where you had the little stove in the kitchen. No heating in the bedroom where...

No. Just heat.

So you can remember the transition....

Oh, yes. I can. Uh huh.

and your feelings about.

Oh, yea. It was just great.

Just great. O. K. now, how about automobiles in those days? Did your father have a car?

My father didn't, but my husband did; and he had a car when I was going with him. They had a car in their family when he was very young.

Uh huh.

So that didn't impress me too much because, you know, he had a car, and I used to go out with him.

But an automobile was quite an impressive thing in those days.....

Quite a thing, yea.

because there were relatively few people who had one.

Yes. Yes. Well his father was one of the few. He did have an automobile as far back as I can remember.

Uh huh. Now going back or staying right there in that period of time, do you remember when Mussolini started to gain power in Italy?

Yes.

What did people say about him here in this country?

Well, they didn't have much use for him, did they?

In this country?

I don't know.

Well, it seems that, you know a lot of the Italians here thought he was about the greatest thing going. I understand that...

because they were all getting an education, but they had a lot of things, you know, against him too. I don't know. I don't remember too much about it Franny, but I do remember that I used to hear people say he did a lot of good things; but there was a lot of things they didn't like about him.

This was back in that period of time also?

Well, back in the time...it wasn't before, not long before...he was...was he killed?

He was killed during World War II, of course. The Italian partisans caught him and killed him, but during his rise to power, of course, a lot of people thought he was good because he did do a lot of good things.

Yes.

He built roads.

Uh huh.

I guess the thing that most people like to say about

him was that he made the trains run on time, (laughter) and he did drain the swamps in Rome;

Uh huh.

and he did....he did instigate a lot...

I didn't follow too much.

a lot of land reforms.

Uh huh.

You remember....well, I don't know if you remember or not, in Italy prior to this man a sharecropper, an Italian sharecropper would get next to nothing from the land that he farmed. He might get maybe a third or no more than fifty per cent ever of what he farmed. The man that owned the land took the rest and some of these people at Easter time had to give a lamb to the owner of the property, a lamb, the Easter lamb and at Christmas time he had to give them a turkey. He had to give them so many eggs a year.

Oh, heavens.

And, of course, these people never could afford to eat an egg themselves.

Oh.

They never could afford to eat lamb themselves. They never could afford to eat turkey themselves, but yet they had

to see to it that the owner of the land of the property got this. Mussolini put a stop to that sort of thing.

Oh, I didn't know that.

You see, he did do some good things.

Yes, he did.

He did his bad bit too....

Uh huh.

but he did a lot of good things. A lot of people, even today, feel that he was a great man, really even today.

Yea. Uh huh.

Now certainly we seem to have a feeling toward anybody who's a dictator here that seems to exceed all reason at times.

Yea. Yea.

This is so. So you don't remember too much about..

No, I really don't.

In Wilmington I know that there was an organization known as the Facist League of North America. Did you ever hear of that organization.

No.

I mean some people belonged to it, and they supported Mussolini. They never did anything.

No, I don't.

It's simply a matter of their supporting the man, and they belonged to it. O. K. now, in the late twenties we had the depression.

Yes.

Now what do you remember about the depression?

I remember plenty about it.(laughter)

Could you tell me something about it...What it was like?

Well, you just couldn't get work, and if you didn't have good credit from before you...you were stuck; and you had to let do what you had, and it was a struggle. It was very hard.

Uh huh. Well, how about prices? What happened to them during the depression? Did they come down from what they were before the depression set in? Were prices lower during the depression than they were before the depression?

Well, all I remember is no matter how low they were you couldn't buy anything.

Yea. Well, you just didn't have the money to buy.

Uh huh.

But I don't remember exactly if they were lower or higher. I do remember that you just couldn't buy, and you

probably woudn't pay that much attention to it when you couldn't buy.

Yea. Well, that's it. If you didn't have the money in the first place, it wouldn't make much difference whether it was high or not.

Yea. That's right.

When did you see yourself...when did you see the U. S. coming out of this depression?

Well, I think when Roosevelt got in.

Uh huh.

Uh huh.

Can you think of anything specific.

Well, he gave everybody certain days to work and help in every way, and I think it was all the good that he did that brought everything on top.

Uh huh.

Uh huh.

Now we really came out of the depression when World War II started...

Yes.

in '41. Now during World War i, the U. S. and Italy were on the same side....

Uh huh.

but during World War II they were on different sides.

Uh huh.

How did most of the Italian people react to this? How did they feel?

They were upset. Some people that I knew, that I know that still had families there were upset, very upset.

Really?

I had a friend that her brother was killed by the American soldiers. She lived here, and, you know, she felt very bad about that. She said our boys killed her brother, but yet, I mean, you know that couldn't be helped.

That couldn't be helped naturally when there's a war.

Yea. Uh huh.

Now, what changes occurred during and after World War II in so far as the Italian's standard of living in this area was concerned? Would you say they progressed even more?

I think they progressed in every way. There's big changes. They stood a chance with anything.

I'm going to go back a few years again and ask you what you thought of Father Tucker?

Oh, I thought he was wonderful.



What sort of an impact would you say he had on the Italian community in Wilmington?

Well, he had an impact that they believed in him. They trusted him. No matter what he had told them to do, they did it.

Now what exactly did he do?

Well, he gave them a church, which they never had.

Uh huh.

And he gave them confidence that they had something here...

Uh huh.

and I think he just did everything. He was the greatest. He gave them their religion. He gave them everything.

Now, remember we were talking a little while ago about a lot of people had left the church.

Yes.

A lot of people had left the church...

Uh huh.

when there was no Italian parish. Would you say most of the...

They all went back.

They all came back?

They all came back to Father Tucker...

Uh huh.

and worked very hard. I know a few myself. uh huh.

O. K., you would probably say that he had a bigger impact on the Italian community than any other single factor.

That's right. Uh huh.

What...how was he regarded by many of the young men in the parish?

I don't know what you mean, Franny.

Well, a lot of times some of the boys would get themselves into scrapes with the police or one of...

Oh, well, yes they just looked at him that he could help them and go to him.

In other words if some of the boys for one reason or another were thrown into jail, why they didn't call their father. They called Father Tucker?

They called Father Tucker.(laughter)

They got ahold of Father Tucker...

Yea.

and he would take care of everything.

He meant everything to them.

Yes. He was quite...he is. I'm always talking of him in the past tense, and he's still alive.

He still is. He still is.

A magnificent person.

I saw him not too long ago.

Yea, I saw him about six months ago, I guess. He's, how old is he now. He's in his eighties.

Oh, late eighties. He did say, but I don't remember. He is up there.

Yea. He's a pretty old chap.

Yea.

Now he's living at Salesianum School now you know.

Is he living here?

At Salesianum.

Oh, is he?

O. K., now if you were to consider one thing as being the greatest change that you'd experienced in this country since you've come here, do you think you would be able to pick out one single thing that has meant the greatest change since your coming here?

You mean within the years?

Yes. Through the years since you first came to this country, all the years that you can remember being in this

country. What would you say was the biggest change if you could put your finger on one thing.

Well, the biggest change that I...is...speaking about something of now?

Well, for anytime up to the present. What would you say was the biggest change that had....well if you could pick out such a thing. For some people it's impossible to pick out one because there are so many things that happened and so many changes that occurred that to try to pick out one, the one most significant in your estimation is almost an impossibility at times.

I just can't think of what the biggest change would be. I just can't.

Would you say the biggest change would be in the amount of material things that are available to you right now... that are available to you right now that never were available to you before.

Oh, yes. Such as television and especially color television.

Right. Even if you didn't want to discuss even, say the electronic appliances, if you were just going to look at a house in general in furnishings in the house---- the furniture in the house, rugs on the floor, hard wood

floors, chandeliers.

Yea. Well, I wasn't thinking of that. I was trying to think of something else. That's why I thought.... oh, gosh, that's a big change.

You think that's a big change?

Oh, yes.

How about another big change now. What was the relationship between people when you were a girl growing up and in the last ten years, say?

Oh.

It changes when you say...

I think people are much closer.

People then were much closer than they are today?

I think so, yea.

Would you say people were kinder and more thoughtful of one another?

Well, I think they trusted each other more.

The people did trust each other?

Yea. I think so. I think that now they're more independent and distant, and they don't trust each other. That I do think.

You mean people are suspicious of everybody.

Yea, but then they trusted each other. Goodnight, they'd do anything for one another. They just trusted you. Uh huh.

When you were a girl, do you remember whether or not you used to have have to lock your doors at night?

No. Our doors were open all the time.

Everybody's doors were open?

Yea. Our doors were open all the time, night and day.

And nobody seemed....

Never thought a thing about it.

Would you do that today?

Are you kidding!(laughter)

You wouldn't do that?

Never. Uh uh.

Now certainly to say to you, "Have you ever regretted coming to the U. S." is really not much of a question. I could ask you since you came here at such a tender age that....

No. Uh uh. I'd never regret that. No, I think this is the best country, as far as I'm concerned Fran.

Have you ever wanted to go back to Italy?

No. Uh uh.

I'm gonna ask you another question here and this will be the last question I'll ask you. You know how you hear people talk about "the good ole days"?

Yea.

Have you ever wanted to return to...

No.(laughter)

I didn't get the question out of my mouth. No?

Uh uh.

Why not?

Oh I wished I was born today, not then. That's all. It was hard then. Why anything that I can see good those dyas was that people were closer, but outside of that...

Life was harder?

Life was harder.

Tell me how was it tougher? You know I talked mostly to the men..

Uh huh.

and I get the man's point of view about going out to work here, there and the other. How about the life of a woman in the early twentieth century in the Italian community in Wilmington? What was the life of a woman like?

Well, you didn't have any washing machines, and

if you did, it was the water power. You didn't have any sweepers. It was harder to keep a house clean there all way around, and if you worked out it was ten hours, nine and one-half, ten hours work.

If you worked somewhere...

Somewhere else?

For example, if you worked in a cigar factory making cigars,.....

You worked from seven to five-thirty so why should you want to go back to those days. No, I think today is best.

All right, now, life was much more different. You didn't have a washing machine...

No.

you didn't have a vacuum cleaner...

No.

all the other labor saving devices. You didn't have the kind of a stove....a cooking stove you have today. What kind of a cooking stove did you have?

A combination. It was coal...

Uh huh.

and gas.

Coal and gas?



Uh huh.

I remember seeing the old coal stoves that you just put coal in them and with the furnace on top, burners on the side.

Oh, that was when I was very young.

Uh huh.

But I got to be in my teens, we had a combination stove.

How did the combination stove work?

Well, one side was coal.

Yea.

You put your coal in and the other side you had your gas burners on the gas side.

Well on top of the coal side, could you cook on that too.

Sure. Uh huh.

So you used the whole thing, right?

Yea. It was quite a good sized stove.

I imagine it was. It had to be.

Yea. Uh huh.

Now, another thing that you didn't have in those days was heat in the house.

When I was a young child.

Right.

But then when I became about fourteen, we had hot-air heat.

They did come out with hot-air? How about this, the first hot-air heat....

Yea.

in so far as....you didn't have ducts running to every room.

No. It was a center.

There was one that sat in the center of the floor that was near the steps going upstairs, right?

Yea, in the hall.

It just blasted air out of a grating in the floor, right, and just shot it up as high as it could(laughter), but this itself was a tremendous advancement....

Yes. It was.

over what you had before which was no heat at all.

Yea. That's right.

Now, how about the lighting?

Well....

What kind of lighting do you first remember in houses?

Well, I remember oil lamps.

Oil lamps that you had to carry from one room to another.

That's right.

Then I remember the gas lights.

Uh huh.

Do you remember them putting the gas systems in the house?

No. I remember my father moving from Scott Street to Third and Lincoln...

Uh huh.

and that had the gas lights, and then he had it rewired to electricity when I was about sixteen.

Yea. Uh huh. And this, of course, was like magic. Wasn't it?

Oh, yea. A switch and you could turn a light on.

Yes. Uh huh.

This was another great advancement that you can remember?

Yea. Uh huh.

And of course there were no indoor toilets, were there?

Well, not on Scott Street...

Right.

but down Third and Lincoln there was.  
Tell me something. Now this is probably indelicate

but those toilets that they had outside, was there any way of flushing them or were they just the slit-trench type of thing?

No. You couldn't flush them.

You couldn't flush those outside toilets? They didn't have any plumbing then?

No, not out there, not outside.

Uh huh.

They had plumbing inside, but it was just a kitchen sink, you know, something like that.

O. K. Fanny, well this is about all I wanted to ask you now that I can think of. Is there anything else you have that you'd like to add to this?

I don't think so Fran.

Do you very often think back about those old days?

Oh, yes. I think back when I was a kid. Lots of things, yea.

Life was pretty tough?

Oh, yes. When I think back, you know I wonder.

O. K. I think that's about.....