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MSS 179 Robert H. Richards, Jr., Delaware oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

## **Contact:**

Special Collections, University of Delaware Library  
181 South College Avenue  
Newark, DE 19717-5267  
302.831.2229 / 302.831.1046 (fax)  
<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec>  
[askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu](mailto:askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu)

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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)

## Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Marra

[00:00:00]

Interviewer: Where were you born?

Mr. Marra: In Italy.

Interviewer: In Italy? Where in Italy were you born?

Mr. Marra: Castel Morrone.

Interviewer: Where is Castel Morrone located?

Mr. Marra: That's near Caserta.

Interviewer: It's near Caserta which is a city near Naples, right?

Mr. Marra: Yeah near Naples.

Interviewer: What year were you born?

Mr. Marra: 1898.

Interviewer: 1898. Did you go to school in Italy?

Mr. Marra: Yes.

Interviewer: How old were you when you started school?

Mr. Marra: About seven years old.

Interviewer: About seven years old? And how many years did you go to school?

Mr. Marra: I went to school about four years.

Interviewer: About four years? Did you cover what, three grades or four grades?

Mr. Marra: Three.

Interviewer: Three grades? Is that all they had? Three grades?

Mr. Marra: No they have more but...

Interviewer: They had more, what have they got six grades?

Mr. Marra: Six grades yeah, the highest sixth grade.

Interviewer: The highest was sixth grade? If you were to compare the third grade in Italy that you went to with school here in the United States how would it compare?

Mr. Marra: Well it's about the same as second grade over here.

Interviewer: You're saying it would only be compared to about second grade?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: I see. Now what did you do while you were in Italy besides go to school?

Mr. Marra: I go to work.

Interviewer: What kind of work did you do?

Mr. Marra: I just helped my father, he was a worker and I helped my father.

Interviewer: What kind of work was that?

Mr. Marra: In the farm.

Interviewer: Was it working on a farm?

Mr. Marra: On a farm, yeah.

Interviewer: Was it your own farm?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: You worked somebody else's farm?

Mr. Marra: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Did they pay you for the work or was it a share cropping arrangement?

Mr. Marra: No there was arrangement, share farms.

Interviewer: In other words you and your father did the work?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: And instead of paying money to the man who owned the land you paid him a portion of whatever you grew?

Mr. Marra: No they pay us?

Interviewer: They paid you?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, they don't give you much but they paid.

Interviewer: In other words you didn't get any of the crops you just got paid for doing the work.

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: I see now did you work on this farm after school hours, at night?

Mr. Marra: After school hours, yes.

Interviewer: And during the summer you worked there all the time?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Did you ever learn any trade or anything?

Mr. Marra: No, no trade at all.

Interviewer: How old were you when you decided to come to the United States?

Mr. Marra: I was 17.

Interviewer: In other words from the time that you were 10 years old until you were 17 you worked with your father on the farm, right?

Mr. Marra: Yes that's right.

Interviewer: And then you decided to come do that in States?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Why did you decide to come to the United States?

Mr. Marra: Why because we weren't making enough in all I that try to get a little better.

Interviewer: You didn't see any prospects of bettering yourself?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: What made you decide that you wanted to come to United States?

Mr. Marra: When I got *[inaudible]* **[0:02:55]** so that's why I make better leave and...

Interviewer: But did you know anybody that was here already in the United States.

Mr. Marra: I had my brother and my sister here.

Interviewer: Your brother and your sister and they wrote back and told you that it was good here?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: And that's why you decided to come here?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, that's when my parents sent...

Interviewer: They sent you the money to come over and everything?

Mr. Marra: It was that time I only paid \$20 for the fare so.

Interviewer: \$20 that's all? That's pretty cheap.

Mr. Marra: That's all, yeah.

Interviewer: Now when you left Castel Morrone to come to the United States, how did you leave Castel Morrone? Did you leave there on a bus, did you ride a donkey, a horse?

Mr. Marra: No we had donkey at that time there wasn't no bus at all, a donkey.

Interviewer: On a donkey?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: And where did you go from Castel Morrone?

Mr. Marra: Castel Morrone I got the neighbor, go the boat that's all.

Interviewer: Now did you go to Caserta the first or did you go straight to Nepal?

Mr. Marra: No I don't have to go to Caserta, straight to Nepal.

Interviewer: On a donkey?

Mr. Marra: On a donkey yeah.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to go on a donkey from?

Mr. Marra: That take about seven hours.

Interviewer: About seven hours? And how many miles is that?

Mr. Marra: It's a little about 300 miles.

Interviewer: From Castle Morrone?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: 300 Miles?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, close to.

Interviewer: That far? I remember when I was there it doesn't even take a half hour from Caserta.

Mr. Marra: Yeah, on a train.

Interviewer: No from Caserta to Castel Morrone, in car it takes about a half hour.

Mr. Marra: A half hour yes.

Interviewer: And from Naples to Caserta it takes about a half hour by train.

Mr. Marra: By train, yeah.

Interviewer: That's an hour, also?

Mr. Marra: That's it, yeah.

Interviewer: And it took you about seven hours by donkey?

Mr. Marra: By donkey yes.

Interviewer: About 30 miles maybe.

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah because in mile that's longer you see.

Interviewer: Yeah it says probably about 30 miles.

Mr. Marra: About 30 miles, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay because there they go in kilometers instead of miles.

Mr. Marra: That's it, yeah.

**[00:05:00]**

Interviewer: Okay once you got to Naples you boarded the ship?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: How did you make arrangements to come to the United States in Italy?

Mr. Marra: You've got to go to the mayor first of all, yeah.

Interviewer: You had to go the mayor.

Mr. Marra: You had to go to the mayor they make all paper and they go the **[inaudible] [0:05:20]** stops.

Interviewer: So they had someone working there who just took care of making out the papers and making the arrangements.

Mr. Marra: Making out papers and everything **[inaudible] [0:05:30]** bring you on a boat and everything.

Interviewer: Oh really he brings you right to...?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, right to the boat **[inaudible] [0:05:38]** ride on the boat because he had about 20 or 30 at the time.

Interviewer: There are about 20 or 30 from Castel Morrone that went at the same time?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Now when you got aboard ship, do you remember what the name of the ship was?

Mr. Marra: Ankona.

Interviewer: Ankona?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Was that an Italian ship?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: An Italian ship.

Mr. Marra: Yeah I remember when it went back it got to sink but the water was ***[inaudible] [0:05:57]***

Interviewer: Oh it was sunk? On the return trip?

Mr. Marra: On the return trip, yeah.

Interviewer: What year was this then that you left Italy?

Mr. Marra: It was 1914.

Interviewer: 1914 and the ship was sunk by the German submarines on the way back?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, it went back it sunk.

Interviewer: Now what was it like aboard the ship?

Mr. Marra: Well I'll tell you that time was not so good.

Interviewer: Wasn't so good?

Mr. Marra: No.

Interviewer: How did they have you so far as your cabin, you were in a cabin? What did they have you in?

Mr. Marra: Yeah we had six all in the cab.



Interviewer: Six in the cabin?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: There were six of you in the cabin.

Mr. Marra: Six in the cabin and then you know we had to go and get our own food and everything nobody came.

Interviewer: You didn't go eat in the dining room?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: You just went with what a dish or a pan or something?

Mr. Marra: A dish and we were six were together.

Interviewer: So they'd just put the food for six of you in one pan, you bring it back to your cabin.

Mr. Marra: Bring it back, we eat. That's all.

Interviewer: And you eat? Now how long did the crossing take you?

Mr. Marra: Took about 14 days.

Interviewer: It took about 14. Did it stop anywhere or it just came straight?

Mr. Marra: Just come straight, yeah.

Interviewer: Where did it land in the United States?

Mr. Marra: Philadelphia.

Interviewer: In Philadelphia?

Mr. Marra: That's right, yeah.

Interviewer: You got off in Philadelphia?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now how were you met in Philadelphia?

Mr. Marra: My brother.

Interviewer: Your brother met you? So you did have someone to meet you there?

Mr. Marra: Yeah I had my brother meet me there.

Interviewer: When you went through customs did they hold you up very long?

Mr. Marra: Yeah they did.

Interviewer: How long?

Mr. Marra: In fact they wanted to send me back.

Interviewer: Why did they want to send you back?

Mr. Marra: Because there was no job here. I only was sent give me a job, yeah? See everybody had to work. So my brother said he had money in the bank. They called off the damn bank there wasn't no money there, and they wanted to send me back.

Interviewer: They wanted to send you back?

Mr. Marra: So I headed to the consulate over here and *[inaudible]* **[0:07:53]** school one year with the consulate *[inaudible]* **[0:08:00]** that's why they let me off.

Interviewer: In other words you got a hold of the Italian consulate and a friend here in Wilmington, Crisenzo Gregor?

Mr. Marra: Gregor.

Interviewer: Who promised that he would keep you in school for one year?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: And so they decided to let you stay?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Now how did you come to Wilmington from Philadelphia did you come by train?

Mr. Marra: By train, yeah.

Interviewer: Now once you got to Wilmington, where did you live?

Mr. Marra: I live on my sister.

Interviewer: You lived with your sister, your sister was married?

Mr. Marra: Married, yeah.

Interviewer: What was her name?

Mr. Marra: Josephina.

Interviewer: Josephine, what was her last name?

Mr. Marra: Foresi.

Interviewer: Foresi, she lived where?

Mr. Marra: She lived on *[inaudible]* **[0:08:38]** in Scott.

Interviewer: She lived on *[inaudible]* **[0:08:41]** Scott, in Wilmington?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Were you able to find any work?

Mr. Marra: The way after I was off for work for about five months.

Interviewer: You had to wait for five months?

Mr. Marra: Me and my brother, both.

Interviewer: Both of you, you never did go to school here then?

Mr. Marra: No, never did.

Interviewer: Did you ever go to any night school? Did they have any courses for immigrants?

Mr. Marra: No I went back when I got that citizen papers so.

Interviewer: You went just to get your citizenship paper and that was all?

Mr. Marra: That's all.

Interviewer: Now you say you were here five months before you found work? Did you look for work during those five months?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah, every morning.

Interviewer: Every morning you'd go out and look for work?

Mr. Marra: Yes.

Interviewer: When you finally did find work, where did you find work?

Mr. Marra: Bancroft.

Interviewer: At Bancroft? Bancroft Mills?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: How did you get the job there?

Mr. Marra: Well I just went down there looked for job then they finally gave me the job.

Interviewer: Did you speak English at that time?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: How could they understand you?

Mr. Marra: Well the guy who was there, he goes by the name Miller. He was French but he was speaking a little bit of Italian too.

Interviewer: There's a guy by the name of Miller, who was French but he also spoke Italian?

Mr. Marra: Yeah. And he's the one that gave me the job; there was a lot of people but they called me and gave me the job.

Interviewer: And he gave you the job?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

**[00:10:00]**

Interviewer: And how long did you work at Bancroft?

Mr. Marra: I worked about a year.

Interviewer: About a year? What sort of work did you do?

Mr. Marra: I worked on a brick house and *[inaudible]* **[0:10:11]**

Interviewer: You were processing coffee?

Mr. Marra: Processing, yea that's all, coffee.

Interviewer: Now you worked there for about a year, what were the working conditions like? For example what time did you get to work and when did you finish work for the day and how many days a week did you work?

Mr. Marra: Well we work 12 hours a day, six till six.

Interviewer: 12hours a day?

Mr. Marra: And we work overtime, well we'd never get done at six, we get done at 9 o'clock.

Interviewer: At night?

Mr. Marra: At night.

Interviewer: And what time did you start?

Mr. Marra: 6 o'clock.

Interviewer: From six in the morning until nine at night.

Mr. Marra: At nine at night.

Interviewer: And you worked six days a week?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, Six days a week.

Interviewer: And this was in 1915?

Mr. Marra: 1914.

Interviewer: 1914.

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now what did you do when you weren't working for example what did you do for recreation?

Mr. Marra: At that time there wasn't nothing *[inaudible]* *[0:11:01]* just to work and that's all either sleep or work and sleep.

Interviewer: Work and sleep that was it?

Mr. Marra: That's all.

Interviewer: How about on Sundays when you had a day off did you go to church or?

Mr. Marra: Yeah I go to church that's all I must to do.

Interviewer: Where did you go to church?

Mr. Marra: St. Anthony. At that time it was St. Thomas.

Interviewer: Did you go to St. Thomas?

Mr. Marra: Yes.

Interviewer: How did they treat you at St Thomas?

Mr. Marra: Alright.

Interviewer: They treated you alright?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Did you have to go to any particular mass there?

Mr. Marra: No, you don't have to.

Interviewer: You can go to anyone you want?

Mr. Marra: Anyone you want to, yeah.

Interviewer: Did they have a mass there for the Italian people?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: They had one mass every Sunday for the Italian people?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: And was that the one you usually went to?

Mr. Marra: Yeah

Interviewer: Alright, now after you worked at Bancroft for one year, six days a week. You say you had no recreational activities at all?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: Didn't you ever get together with your friends to play cards or play bochi or.

Mr. Marra: That time there was no money at all for friend.

Interviewer: Nothing at all?

Mr. Marra: Nothing at all, there was no money at all.

Interviewer: But what did you do when you weren't working? For example on Sunday after you went to church then what did you do?

Mr. Marra: Well I just talked to friends.

Interviewer: Just talked?

Mr. Marra: Just talked but played cards *[inaudible] [0:12:16]* no money at all.

Interviewer: Okay, I see. Now after you worked at Bancroft for one year, what did you do? Did you quit or were you laid off?

Mr. Marra: No I quit because I had a better job and I grew more money that's where I went down for the Morocco shop.

Interviewer: You went down to the Morocco shop? What was that? Leather tanning?

Mr. Marra: Leather factory.

Interviewer: A leather factory? Now you say you made more money there?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did they pay you piece work or by the hour?

Mr. Marra: Piece work.

Interviewer: Piece work? And Bancroft was by the hour?

Mr. Marra: By the hour, yeah.

Interviewer: Now what sort of work did you do at the Morocco shop?

Mr. Marra: In Morocco shop we *[inaudible]* [0:12:52] put the strings on the table and put a nail over it and run.

Interviewer: Stretch the skin is what you did?

Mr. Marra: Stretch, yeah. That's it.

Interviewer: And the more skins you could stretch the more money you make.

Mr. Marra: The more money you make.

Interviewer: Now what were your hours like there?

Mr. Marra: Oh the hour to work about 17, 18 hours a day.

Interviewer: 17, 18 hours a day?

Mr. Marra: We went in at 4 o'clock in the morning, left about 6:00, 7 o'clock in the afternoon.

Interviewer: From 4 o'clock in the morning to 7:00 in the afternoon?

Mr. Marra: Yeah we make better money but I worked.

Interviewer: They worked. Now how many days a week did you work there?

Mr. Marra: Six days a week.

Interviewer: Six days a week there too?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.



Interviewer: Now when you started making more money then could you participate in more recreational activities?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, well if you made \$5 a pack you can go out and play cards or things like that.

Interviewer: Where did you go play cards or get a drink, things like that?

Mr. Marra: At that time with friends we go *[inaudible]* **[0:13:45]** beer by the pitcher.

Interviewer: By the pitcher?

Mr. Marra: And *[inaudible]* **[0:13:51]** play cards and we'd drink a beer.

Interviewer: And how much did you pay for a pitch of beer in that sense?

Mr. Marra: 10 cents.

Interviewer: 10 cents for a pitch of beer?

Mr. Marra: 10 cents you'd get about 13, 14 glasses of beer.

Interviewer: 13, 14 glasses of beer?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Quite a difference between then and now.

Mr. Marra: It's alright I made 10 cents an hour when I was working down in Bancroft.

Interviewer: 10 cents an hour Bancroft?

Mr. Marra: That's all. I'll never forget I worked all the time, six to nine every night I worked on a Saturday all day long, I still don't make \$10, I tried to make \$10 I couldn't. I made \$9.95, never forgot.

Interviewer: And that's how much you made for working 12 hours a day, six days a week? 9.95?

Mr. Marra: 9.95.

Interviewer: That wasn't too much money was it?

Mr. Marra: Stuff was cheap *[inaudible]* **[0:14:38]**.

Interviewer: 3000 yeah.

Mr. Marra: Stuff was cheap.

Interviewer: Things were a lot cheaper

Mr. Marra: Yes.

Interviewer: But still that wasn't too much money?

Mr. Marra: No, *[inaudible]* **[0:14:46]** so.

Interviewer: You made enough to live?

Mr. Marra: Just enough to live, that's about all.

Interviewer: So that wasn't too much.

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now how long did you work at the leather factory?

Mr. Marra: I've been to work almost all of my life there.

**[00:15:02]**

Interviewer: Did you stayed there pretty regularly?

Mr. Marra: Yeah. I quit Bancroft I went to the leather factory I worked till 1946.

Interviewer: From 1915 to 1946 you were at the leather factory.

Mr. Marra: The leather factory, yes. And then I got that place then and...

Interviewer: Yes now when the First World War started how were you affected here?

Mr. Marra: Well the job *[inaudible]* **[0:15:31]** money.

Interviewer: There was a lot of work with...

Mr. Marra: A lot of work but still *[inaudible]* **[0:15:37]** there was a ration. Then a lot of things was a ration too.

Interviewer: That was during the First World War?

Mr. Marra: First World War.

Interviewer: Gas was rationed and everything else?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now when the United States entered the First World War, you were draft age?

Mr. Marra: I was under age then.

Interviewer: You were under age then? How old were you?

Mr. Marra: I was 19.

Interviewer: You were 19?

Mr. Marra: 19, they were drafting 21 I think, I forget. 21.

Interviewer: In other words draft age starts at 21?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Were you able to go voluntarily if you wanted to go at age 19?

Mr. Marra: No, I was try to go but my brother stopped me because my brother too was war.

Interviewer: Your brother was in the service so he kept you out?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, say he kept my mother and father with them **[inaudible] [0:16:31]** and send some of the money there.

Interviewer: Yes. So you had to work here to send money to Italy?

Mr. Marra: What's right.

Interviewer: And therefore you didn't go into the military. During the course of the war you never were drafted then?

Mr. Marra: Never.

Interviewer: Never, you stayed here and you never went in the service at all.

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: After the war ended what changes took place in the Italian community in Wilmington?

Mr. Marra: I'd say not *[inaudible] [0:17:01]*

Interviewer: You don't think there were very many changes?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: It was pretty much the same as it was before that?

Mr. Marra: As before, it's all the same.

Interviewer: It's just the same routine, go to work and opening up?

Mr. Marra: Same routine. We go to work, yeah. Same.

Interviewer: How about your recreational activities did they change then?

Mr. Marra: But that changed of course people were making more money through the war they'd gotten you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Alright now when people started to make more money and they maybe had more free time then?

Mr. Marra: Sure.

Interviewer: What did you do with your free time?

Mr. Marra: *[inaudible] [0:17:33]* on Sunday and *[inaudible] [0:17:40]*

Interviewer: And that was it, you'd go maybe on picnics, did you ever go on picnics? You go to River view Beach park, Shell Park, you go to the movies perhaps?

Mr. Marra: The movies, yes.

Interviewer: Were there any Italian movies, did they ever have anything?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: No?

Mr. Marra: One thing where I only here when I came to see here *[inaudible]*  
*[0:18:05]*

Interviewer: They had what? Stage plays?

Mr. Marra: Stage, yes. They didn't last so long it was done a couple of years and then.

Interviewer: And then it stopped?

Mr. Marra: It stopped, yeah.

Interviewer: Now you said there wasn't really too much in the way of recreational activities then it was just a normal day to day life?

Mr. Marra: No, that's right.

Interviewer: Where you went to work, you came home. Maybe on the weekend you go to a movie or something like that. But that was the extent of your recreational activities?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: When did you get married?

Mr. Marra: It was 1918.

Interviewer: In 1918? Now did your family in Italy ever decide to come to the United States?

Mr. Marra: Yes, 1921 that's when they come over here.

Interviewer: In 1921 they decided to come over. Did you help them to come over here?

Mr. Marra: Well me, my brother and my sister were here so.

Interviewer: You, your brother and your sister were already here?

Mr. Marra: That's right, yes.

Interviewer: So you sent for your family, you sent the money and they all came over.

Mr. Marra: They had to come over here.

Interviewer: Did you meet your family when they got here? Where did they land, in New York?

Mr. Marra: They landed on Boston.

Interviewer: They landed in Boston?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you meet them there?

Mr. Marra: Yeah my brother went there, I didn't go my brother went there.

Interviewer: Did he meet them though?

Mr. Marra: He did meet them in Boston, yeah.

Interviewer: He did meet them in Boston?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: And they came to Wilmington together?

Mr. Marra: They came to Wilmington together.

Interviewer: I see, now once they came here what did you do? Did you help them establish themselves and the house and everything?

Mr. Marra: Sure. We had a house already picked when they come over here.

Interviewer: So everything was ready for them, right?

Mr. Marra: Everything was ready yeah.

Interviewer: When they got here?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay now with the end of the First World War in 1921 your parents came here, in 1921 seems to be the year around which Mussolini came to power in Italy?

**[00:20:02]**

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Now, how did that affect you? What did you think of this and what did you think of this man? And what did the other Italians that you knew think of this man?

Mr. Marra: Well I tell you we were here, we don't even know the man. We don't know what goes on out there.

Interviewer: You didn't know too much about what was going on there?

Mr. Marra: Don't know so much about what goes on out there.

Interviewer: But you heard about him here?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, yeah we hear about it yeah.

Interviewer: And from the things you heard what did you think of him?

Mr. Marra: Well he was alright, the way I hear.

Interviewer: From what you heard he seemed to be doing alright?

Mr. Marra: He seemed to be doing alright but I don't know I was here, that's what I hear I don't know.

Interviewer: In other words you could only go by what you heard? And from what you heard he seemed alright?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: How did the people that were here seem to accept him, did the people accept him as being a good man?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: What sort of organizations or groups supported him in this country?

Mr. Marra: Fascist.

Interviewer: The Fascist organization? In other words.

Mr. Marra: I don't know if you ever see that picture.

Interviewer: So the fascist organization supported Mussolini over here. Did the fascist organizations over here ever have any rallies or parades or anything?

Mr. Marra: We had parades *[inaudible]* **[0:21:17]**

Interviewer: Where were the parades in Little Italy?

Mr. Marra: No that's not over here I remember one time *[inaudible]* **[0:21:23]** Jersey.

Interviewer: No what I mean is did they have parades of bands and everything they go to the streets?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: They never did that?

Mr. Marra: No.

Interviewer: They used to have rallies at Sons of Columbus Hall, right?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: What did they have there? Who spoke and what did they do at these rallies?

Mr. Marra: Well I tell you *[inaudible]* **[0:21:41]** I don't know what they say, I don't know.

Interviewer: You never went to any of those meetings?

Mr. Marra: I never went to any of those meetings.

Interviewer: I understand they had meetings there where Mussolini, well he wasn't there personally but to get the gold and precious stones he would ask people to give them wedding rings.



Mr. Marra: Yeah, I hear about that, yeah. A lot of people gave him wedding rings, the wife wedding rings and everything they can. Yeah.

Interviewer: And they would get back a steel band in return?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: So this happened there?

Mr. Marra: 1922, '23.

Interviewer: No later than that, they probably had them even later than that didn't they?

Mr. Marra: Yeah *[inaudible]* **[0:22:19]** late but I remember like it was yesterday people would go round their wedding rings and this and that and...

Interviewer: They'd collect these things and they'd send them to Italy?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now when World War II started, but prior to World War II of course we had a big depression here.

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: How did that affect a lot of the people in this country? How did that affect people in this country?

Mr. Marra: Well **[0:22:48]** *[inaudible]*

Interviewer: Yeah. Well how about in Little Italy, in the Italian community were there a lot of people out of work?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah, a lot of people out of work.

Interviewer: And things were pretty difficult. How did they live when they weren't working? How could they live? How could they eat?

Mr. Marra: *[inaudible]* **[0:23:14]** beans and Dandelion and so.

Interviewer: Beans and Dandelion that's all you could have picked, the Dandelions in the fields? Yeah?

Mr. Marra: In the fields.

Interviewer: And this is what they ate? Dandelion and beans?

Mr. Marra: That's all, either that or nothing.

Interviewer: Either that or nothing?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: And that was until they started to come out with welfare?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Before the welfare started with Roosevelt, there was nothing.

Mr. Marra: No, nothing at all and that's why there was relief in order.

Interviewer: Then they started relief and people started getting a little more to eat and they could eat a little better and clothes **[inaudible] [0:23:48]**?

Mr. Marra: **[inaudible] [0:23:49]** relief you can't buy at the time anything like that **[inaudible] [0:23:53]**.

Interviewer: So people just existed off what they could pick up in the fields?

Mr. Marra: That's all, yeah then better relief came.

Interviewer: Now when you first came to the United States was prohibition in effect?

Mr. Marra: No.

Interviewer: When you first came it was not in effect?

Mr. Marra: There was no prohibition then.

Interviewer: Now after Prohibition started, how did that affect a lot of people?

Mr. Marra: That left a lot of people out of work.

Interviewer: Prohibition put a lot of people out of work?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: How do you mean it put them out of work?

Mr. Marra: **[inaudible] [0:24:31]** can't make no beer and things like that.

Interviewer: And the people were put out of work, people who worked in breweries and beer gardens and things like that?

Mr. Marra: Sure, sure.

Interviewer: What happened to the beer garden and the breweries? They all closed?

Mr. Marra: No they were not all closed **[inaudible] [0:24:45]** somehow they closed all **[inaudible] [0:24:56]** they put like a store, candy store and you know.

**[00:25:01]**

Interviewer: Candy store, ice cream store that sort of thing?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now in Little Italy, there are a lot of people who were bootleggers.

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now what were these places where they sold bootleg beer and whiskey and wine, what were these places like, were they regular houses?

Mr. Marra: They ain't no regular house, sometimes they **[inaudible] [0:25:22]** a lot of people had died from that bootlegged whiskey. They used to use those **[inaudible] [0:25:31]**

Interviewer: A lot of people you said died?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, I remember that time I used to work at Broomtoes.

Interviewer: Where did you work?

Mr. Marra: Broomies, the Morocco shop.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mr. Marra: Every morning two people miss no work, they died **[inaudible] [0:25:47]** a lot of people died so.

Interviewer: Did you say a lot of Polish died from drinking that alcohol?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Were there many Italians who died?

Mr. Marra: Not so many Italians.

Interviewer: Why.

Mr. Marra: Because Italians made their own.

Interviewer: The Italians made their own?

Mr. Marra: They make their own.

Interviewer: In other words they didn't like sell it but they didn't buy it?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Were there a lot of people who were not Italians that used to come to Little Italy to drink?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Now you said they had these speekies these hidden like in cellars and stuff, what were they like if they had them in a cellar, just a bare cellar?

Mr. Marra: Just a bare cellar so.

Interviewer: With what? Chairs and?

Mr. Marra: No a lot of people don't have no chairs either.

Interviewer: No chair, no table?

Mr. Marra: No chair.

Interviewer: What did you do? Sit on the floor?

Mr. Marra: Sit on the floor and drink that's all.

Interviewer: You would just sit there and drink?

Mr. Marra: That's all.

Interviewer: Would they eat anything or just drink?

Mr. Marra: Well maybe tequila sandwich because you drink tequila sandwich or something like that.

Interviewer: Did this go on every day?

Mr. Marra: Not every day well most weekend, Saturday and Sunday, Friday nights.

Interviewer: Were there very many people who sold the alcoholic beverages up in Little Italy?

Mr. Marra: Quite a few.

Interviewer: Quite a few. Did they sell it to anybody that came and asked for it or just the people they knew?

Mr. Marra: No they had to know the people because they *[inaudible]* **[0:27:07]**

Interviewer: And they wouldn't sell it to him?

Mr. Marra: No no, that's right.

Interviewer: Were there also a lot of people who just made wine for themselves?

Mr. Marra: That's right, yeah.

Interviewer: And they would never sell it?

Mr. Marra: No they never sold it.

Interviewer: How do most of the Italian people feel about this looked at the people who sold?

Mr. Marra: The Italian people didn't like that.

Interviewer: They didn't like it?

Mr. Marra: The polish people that drink them up.

Interviewer: The Polish used to come up there to drink? And the Italians didn't like that?

Mr. Marra: No they don't like the Italians used to make our own stuff.

Interviewer: Most of them did?

Mr. Marra: No, they don't sell.

Interviewer: How did the people who didn't sell bootlegged wine and whiskey and beer.

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: How did they feel about the ones who did?

Mr. Marra: Well they don't care, because their own and they don't care.

Interviewer: Did they object to seeing all these other people from all parts of town coming up here just to get drunk?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, they did care. Yeah.

Interviewer: They didn't like that at all?

Mr. Marra: They don't like that.

Interviewer: But did they ever report any of these people who sold.

Mr. Marra: No.

Interviewer: They never did anything like that?

Mr. Marra: No.

Interviewer: Were there very many drunks on the streets during Prohibition?

Mr. Marra: No, not so any.

Interviewer: You didn't see so many?

Mr. Marra: Not so, many I think the drunks had gone long ago so they were not so many.

Interviewer: Now were there any clubs in Little Italy that there were speekie? I mean clubs I don't mean private houses.

Mr. Marra: Yes, clubs.

Interviewer: Could you name some of the clubs that existed? Do you remember any of them?

Mr. Marra: No I don't.

Interviewer: Do you remember a place on 6th Street called the Republican Club?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Was that a speekie thing?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, it was speekie. It got locked up a couple of times. But I never go in places like that I don't know for sure.

Interviewer: Did a private individual run the Republican Club and sell the booze or was it a group of people?

Mr. Marra: There was a group of people.

Interviewer: So it was the Republican Club in other words?

Mr. Marra: Republican Club, yeah. There was a group of people that belonged in there. A lot of them they didn't belong they just go in and have drinks.

Interviewer: I see, they just go in there to drink?

Mr. Marra: They just go in there to drink.

Interviewer: Where did the Republican Club get it's booze, if we can call it booze, that's what everybody called it then right?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Where did they get it did they make it or buy it?

Mr. Marra: No they buying it mostly come from Chester.

Interviewer: It used to come from Chester

Mr. Marra: **[inaudible] [0:29:38]** half a booze, half a water.

Interviewer: And that was it?

Mr. Marra: That's all, yeah.

Interviewer: Now when did these places finally close up? When Prohibition ended?

Mr. Marra: Yeah. I think. I don't remember for sure but I think it was 1924 or 25, something like that.

**[00:30:08]**

Interviewer: Now were there ever any gangsters involved in business around here?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you see them around a lot?

Mr. Marra: Not over here but I was staying in **[inaudible] [0:30:19]**

Interviewer: Well I know what I mean is did they ever become involved in anything down here?

Mr. Marra: No, not over here.

Interviewer: They never had any of that over here?

Mr. Marra: No, not that sort of thing.

Interviewer: None of that sort of trouble? Now when Prohibition ended, I suppose a lot of the bars opened up again, is that it?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, there was a lot of work **[inaudible] [0:30:40]**

Interviewer: They had it picked out?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now when you were working at Bancroft and at the Moroccan shop how were you treated as an Italian did they treat you the same?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah, they treat me the same.



Interviewer: Did you ever notice any prejudice against you because you were an Italian?

Mr. Marra: No, none of that.

Interviewer: I mean besides work, did you notice it anywhere else?

Mr. Marra: Well sometimes they call you guinea or a thing like that but.

Interviewer: Other than that you didn't.

Mr. Marra: That stopped and...

Interviewer: You didn't notice anything?

Mr. Marra: No, no I didn't notice anything.

Interviewer: When World War II started, when the United States became involved with Italy In World War II did you notice any change in attitude towards you since you came from Italy

Mr. Marra: No, I don't.

Interviewer: It was still the same as it always was?

Mr. Marra: Still the same, yes. I never noticed any change at all.

Interviewer: You didn't notice any change at all? And people didn't call you an alien or anything like that?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: What happened in Little Italy when World War II started? When the United States got into World War II? What happened in Little Italy? Were any people who were not citizens or anything?

Mr. Marra: No they got quite a few who weren't citizens, they got them.

Interviewer: They got a few who weren't citizens, the government picked them up?

Mr. Marra: Oh yeah. After the war they gave *[inaudible]* **[0:32:07]**

Interviewer: But what did the government do with them when they picked them up?

Mr. Marra: Well they take them *[inaudible]* **[0:32:14]** whatever they need and then all that so.

Interviewer: No I don't think that you understood it too well, there were a lot of people that came from Italy right in this country.

Mr. Marra: yes.

Interviewer: And when the war started they still had not taken up American citizenship.

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now the government arrested these people. Didn't the government come out and arrest all the Italians? I remember a few that the government picked up, do you remember the ones I'm talking about?

Mr. Marra: Yeah I know what you are talking about.

Interviewer: What did it do with these people? Where did they send them? Were they arrested and put them in jail when the concentration came?

Mr. Marra: No there was *[inaudible]* **[0:32:54]** about four or five of them.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mr. Marra: And that they come over New Jersey.

Interviewer: To New Jersey?

Mr. Marra: New Jersey, they stayed there about two three days and they come back here so.

Interviewer: Do you know what they did with them during those two, three days?

Mr. Marra: No, I don't know, I *[inaudible]* **[0:33:10]**

Interviewer: They just picked them up and then they let them go?

Mr. Marra: Picked them up and let them go so the people over there *[inaudible]* **[0:33:16]**

Interviewer: I see. Now how were you affected by the Second World War?

Mr. Marra: Well it wasn't too bad.

Interviewer: With you your job went on the same as always?

Mr. Marra: Same as always.

Interviewer: It's just that you had the rationing and things of that nature that **[inaudible] [0:33:36]** but you were making better money then and everything else?

Mr. Marra: Yes.

Interviewer: If you were to compare the United States now with what it was like when you first came here, what comparisons would you make?

Mr. Marra: That's a 100% now better.

Interviewer: It's a 100% better?

Mr. Marra: Sure, yeah.

Interviewer: How would you say it's a 100% better for example in the housing itself what was the house like first and what is it like now?

Mr. Marra: When I come first it was no type of house **[inaudible] [0:34:04]** in fact we don't have a lot of that.

Interviewer: No electric lighting?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: How about central heating?

Mr. Marra: No we had gas stove.

Interviewer: You had a gas stove and maybe a coal stove in the kitchen?

Mr. Marra: A coal stove that's all.

Interviewer: That's all, no central heating just in the kitchen that's the only place?

Mr. Marra: Just in the kitchen.

Interviewer: No anything in the bedroom or the other places, nothing?

Mr. Marra: No, no place.

Interviewer: So now you've got heating and everything else so this is one of the big differences?

Mr. Marra: Better now, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you have anything you'd like to add about your life here in the United State on some of your experiences before we close this?

Mr. Marra: No, I got nothing to add.

Interviewer: Your life was just a normal life.

Mr. Marra: Yeah, I guess so.

Interviewer: Nothing extra ordinary you don't see anything extra ordinary happened to you?

Mr. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: And you have enjoyed yourself in this country over the years you say our prosperities are better off here then they were in Italy had you stayed there?

**[00:35:03]**

Mr. Marra: That's right, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay fine. In 1914 you said life was very difficult here?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: How?

Mr. Marra: How we could *[inaudible]* **[0:35:11]** gas lamp.

Interviewer: Little gas lamp?

Mr. Marra: No gas lamp, sometimes you run out of gas you have to put the *[inaudible]* **[0:35:21]** meter.

Interviewer: What you had a meter in the house?

Mr. Marra: A meter in the house, you've got to put a quarter in the meter *[inaudible]* **[0:35:25]**.

Interviewer: You had to put a quarter in the meter? When you put a quarter in the meter how long did the gas last?

Mr. Marra: Well it'd last about a couple of days.

Interviewer: A couple of days?

Mr. Marra: Couple of days, in a couple of days you've got to put another quarter *[inaudible]* **[0:35:41]**.

Interviewer: Now this gas that came in for a quarter you used it to cook?

Mr. Marra: To cook, yeah.

Interviewer: What did you have? one gas lamp in each room?

Mr. Marra: In each room? Just in the kitchen, that's all.

Interviewer: That's all?

Mr. Marra: And you had to have coal *[inaudible]* **[0:35:54]**

Interviewer: Coal lamps?

Mr. Marra: Yeah if you want t go around. It was rough.

Interviewer: You didn't have any bathrooms in the house either?

Mr. Marra: No, I go outside.

Interviewer: You go outside?

Mr. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now did you have a lavatory in the house? You know where you wash in the bathroom, where you take a bath?

Mr. Marra: Yeah we got a little sink that's all.

Interviewer: Just a little sink, not even a bath tub?

Mr. Marra: No.

Interviewer: Just the sink, did you have the little sink in a room by itself where you got washed or?

Mr. Marra: No in the kitchen.

Interviewer: In the kitchen?

Mr. Marra: In the kitchen you got *[inaudible]* **[0:36:21]** that's all.

Interviewer: And you didn't have a separate bathroom in the house?

Mr. Marra: No, no.

Interviewer: So you had to wash in the kitchen?

Mr. Marra: Wash in the kitchen and clean your hands in the kitchen you've got to do everything in the kitchen. That's the only thing we had in the kitchen.

Interviewer: I see, did you have anything else anywhere else?

Mr. Marra: No.

Interviewer: The only running water you had then was in the kitchen?

Mr. Marra: In the kitchen.

Interviewer: That's *[inaudible]* **[0:36:46]** okay fine, anything else now?

Mr. Marra: *[inaudible]* **[0:36:52]**

Interviewer: Three bedrooms then the rest or just three rooms in the house?

Mr. Marra: No three *[inaudible]* **[0:37:07]** over that.

Interviewer: You were all over the house?

Mr. Marra: Sure, when one room *[inaudible]* **[0:37:12]** sleep in one room, two three and one bath.

Interviewer: And this is how you had to live?

Mr. Marra: That's it.

Interviewer: There just wasn't anything else for you?

Mr. Marra: No there wasn't anything else.

Interviewer: Now for an Italian it was also restricted as to where he could live in town, wasn't it? An Italian couldn't buy a house anywhere in town could he?

Mr. Marra: No.

Interviewer: People wouldn't sell you a house would they?

Mr. Marra: You didn't have the money to buy even if you wanted to buy one.

Interviewer: Even if you wanted to buy it you couldn't afford to buy it?

Mr. Marra: Yeah, you can't afford to buy.

Interviewer: But the fact remains even if you had the money you couldn't buy the house wherever you wanted to?

Mr. Marra: No, you can't buy a house where you wanted to.

Interviewer: I see, okay fine. I think that ought to pretty much take care of it.

Interviewer: Alright, where were you born?

Mrs. Marra: Olevano sul Tusciano, Provincia De Salerno.

Interviewer: What was the name of that town again?

Mrs. Marra: Olevano.

Interviewer: Olevano? Olevano was the name of the town where you were born.

Mrs. Marra: The town and...

Interviewer: Olevano.

Mrs. Marra: Olevano sul Tusciano.

Interviewer: sul Tusciano?

Mrs. Marra: Provincia De Salerno.

Interviewer: Provincia De Salerno. How far was this from the City of Salerno?

Mrs. Marra: About 20, 25 miles.

Interviewer: About 20 to 25 miles? Did you go to school in Italy?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah I went to night school.

Interviewer: You went to night school? How old were you when you started going to night school?

Mrs. Marra: Well, my brother went in the army I think when the war start.

Interviewer: Around 1914 then.

Mrs. Marra: And my mother didn't have anybody to write to my brother, so she made me go to school then I learnt for me to write a letter to him, back and forth.

Interviewer: So in other words before your brother went to the army in Italy, it wasn't felt that it was very important for you to go to school because you were a girl?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: And I suppose most people felt that was in Italy, right? It wasn't important for a girl to have any form of education.

Mrs. Marra: No.

Interviewer: So you went to night school, what did you learn in night school? Just how to read and write or did you also learn the history of Italy and other things?

Mrs. Marra: No not too much just enough to read and write and that's all.

Interviewer: And this was about the extent of your night education?

Mrs. Marra: That's right?

Interviewer: Now what did you do besides going to school in Italy? Did you do any sort of work or did you work around the house?



Mrs. Marra: No worked in the field with my mother.

Interviewer: Did you have a farm of your own? A land of your own?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did your father work there too or?

Mrs. Marra: My father died when I was five years old.

Interviewer: And so it was just you and your mother?

Mrs. Marra: And one brother and three sister.

**[00:40:01]**

Interviewer: And you all worked the field, right?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Now, eventually you came to the United States. What decided you to come to the United States?

Mrs. Marra: Well I had a brother here and I was the youngest one of the family. And I didn't like to work to the field and I asked my mother that she would send me here because the people near the Sunday used to say America was so good, you didn't have to go to work. You didn't have to work outside in the field you go to work in the factory; you go to work in the different places. So I wanted to come here.

Interviewer: And so you did come?

Mrs. Marra: Yes.

Interviewer: Did your brother send you the money?

Mrs. Marra: No my mother gave me the money.

Interviewer: Your mother gave you the money so that you could come to the United States?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Now what year did you leave Italy to come to the United States?

Mrs. Marra: 1921.

Interviewer: 1921. Where did you leave from Italy?

Mrs. Marra: Naples.

Interviewer: You left from Naples? How far was the town that you lived in from Naples?

Mrs. Marra: About 35, maybe 40 miles.

Interviewer: About 35 to 40 miles? How did you get to Naples?

Mrs. Marra: By train.

Interviewer: By train? The train left where Salerno?

Mrs. Marra: No Battipaglia.

Interviewer: Battipaglia? How far is Battipaglia from the town where you lived?

Mrs. Marra: About 10 miles.

Interviewer: How did you get to that town? To Battipaglia?

Mrs. Marra: By...

Interviewer: Horse and burgee?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Horse and burgee? How long did it take to get there?

Mrs. Marra: I think about a half hour.

Interviewer: Were you the only one that was going there to catch a train to go to Naples?

Mrs. Marra: No I followed because I was underage I couldn't come by myself. I had to come with somebody responsible to come here.

Interviewer: I see and somebody accompanied you to...

Mrs. Marra: With the *[inaudible]* [0:41:54]

Interviewer: Right now when you got to Naples id you go directly aboard ship?

Mrs. Marra: No, we were there three days before we board the ship.

Interviewer: What did you do during those three days?

Mrs. Marra: Just look around.

Interviewer: Just look around?

Mrs. Marra: Just look the city over.

Interviewer: And just wait for the time you get on board?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Now when you did go aboard were there any problems? Did you just go aboard the ship when the ship got there is that it?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: What was it like aboard ship for you?

Mrs. Marra: Well it was an American ship.

Interviewer: It was an American ship?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah, it was fine. Everything was clean, the name of the ship was President Wilson.

Interviewer: The President Wilson? That was the ship and it was an American ship?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: What were you, in a compartment by yourself or with other people?

Mrs. Marra: No, we were in the third class, I mean all together.

Interviewer: What was it one big compartment would you say?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: How many people would you say were in that compartment?

Mrs. Marra: I can say *[inaudible]* [0:42:55] maybe 15, 10 or 15.

Interviewer: Maybe 10 or 15 people? And these of course were women, right?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Now when you had your meals aboard ship. Did you go to a dining room to eat?

Mrs. Marra: Yes.

Interviewer: You did eat in a dining room then? What was the food like, was it American food or Italian food?

Mrs. Marra: To tell you the truth I can't tell you about the food because I was sick from the day I board the ship till we reached New York.

Interviewer: You were sick? *[inaudible]* [0:43:30] Now when the ship left Naples it comes straight to the United States or did it stop in other countries or other ports?

Mrs. Marra: It stopped a couple of places, at one place it stopped to get coal, another place it stopped to get grapes.

Interviewer: Grapes? You don't remember where it was that it stopped? You don't remember what countries?

Mrs. Marra: No.

Interviewer: Do you remember how long it took to get to the United States?

Mrs. Marra: I think it took about seven days.

Interviewer: About seven days? That's not bad, now when you arrived in the United States where did you land, in New York?

Mrs. Marra: New York.

Interviewer: Did anybody meet you there?

Mrs. Marra: Supposed to but didn't.

Interviewer: Who was supposed to meet you there?

Mrs. Marra: My brother.

Interviewer: And he never did show up? When you did get to New York did you have to go through any governmental processing there?

Mrs. Marra: Sure.

Interviewer: What sort of...?

Mrs. Marra: They see what you brought here.

Interviewer: They checked everything you had with you?

Mrs. Marra: Find out how much money you have with you *[inaudible]* **[0:44:28]**

Interviewer: Did they also give you a physical examination and everything?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: They gave you a physical. Now after you went through customs and through the health inspection what happened to you?

Mrs. Marra: Well the follower was with me, he stopped in New York and somebody says if you don't have four hundred Lira we couldn't let you out of the boat, let you go through. So I had some but he gave \$20 American money because he went first. And then he gave me the \$20 American money, he said take this with you because they'll want to see if you have any money. So have this with you. And I waited but he was in another room, he says and I'll see when you come out. But when I came out he stopped the New York they put in one section the ones that were going in different places they had to get the train to go different section so I didn't see him no more.

**[00:45:35]**

Interviewer: You never saw him again?

Mrs. Marra: No. And I lost track of him for about five weeks and he wait and wait out there.

Interviewer: He waited for you out there?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah. And then he went to his brother up there. But when I came here I had this money with me.

Interviewer: You say when you came here, when you came to Wilmington?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: You came from New York directly to Wilmington?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah. I was afraid out there because I didn't see him anymore and I didn't know where I was going.

Interviewer: Well how long did you wait for him out there?

Mrs. Marra: Maybe a couple of hours or somewhat there. But then they said the train was coming and we had to get on, we had to get on the train and I was afraid to get on the train because I was waiting for this fellow.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Marra: And so he didn't come, they told me I had to get on the train wherever I was going I had to go and I was afraid, I didn't want to go. So there was another fellow out there he says, "Don't worry about it, I'll take you." He says, "Because I had to pass through Wilmington." He was going to Pittsburg. I don't know why he was coming through here.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Marra: And he says, "I'll take care of you and where is the place for you to get off," he says, "I will try to get off." He says, "I'll tell the conductor to get you off and get somebody that would take care of you at the station or to call somebody where you are supposed to go." And I came here, I went to sleep on the train because I was so darn frail. And when I got here, before we reached the station, he woke me up. He says, "So get up." He says, "It's time for you to get off." But this fellow... there was another fellow there he was coming here too, he had people here.

Interviewer: He had people here?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah. And when we get off the train this old man that was going someplace else he says to this fellow, he says, "Will you take care of this girl?" He says "Make sure that she gets home or where she's supposed to go." He says "Alright." So when we get out of the train, there was nobody

around, nobody, no cafes no nothing after being on the stage *[inaudible]* **[0:48:00]** somebody.

Interviewer: *[inaudible]* **[0:48:00]** station?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah the *[inaudible]* **[0:48:02]** station. But at night there was nobody. That was about 11 o'clock. We started to come down the steps, we didn't know where we were going. So we came down where the taxi used to go up, you know on the lawn. And I says to him I says, "We're lost." He says, "I don't know where we're going." He says, "If we find some place we say where we've got to go." So he looked down the corner the drug store was still open.

Interviewer: That was the drug store *[inaudible]* 0:48:30]

Mrs. Marra: So we went down there and he showed the address to this person where we were going. So one of the woman come out of the drugstore and then show us where we were supposed to go, the Italian people. So we went out there, it was the first time I saw a color person.

Interviewer: The first time.

Mrs. Marra: The first time *[inaudible]* **[0:49:00]** between Delaware Avenue and 14th Street and when I saw this colored man come down the street I was scared to death. I says to him I says, "Who's that? That can't be a person."

Interviewer: It can't be a person.

Mrs. Marra: I said sure it's a person, he says no. So we walked on and we were talking, we were fighting because I wanted to go to my people first and he says he wanted to go to his people first. But I was scared because I never saw this man on the ship. I didn't know he was a complete stranger to me. So we were walking and we were arguing and somebody on the porch sitting on the porch with his wife he says, "Hey, where are you going? What are you two fighting about?" He says, "You just come from the other side, huh?" He says, "Yeah, yeah." He says, "Where are you going?" He says, "We've got to go to this place." He says do you know the name of his brother? She says, "Yes, we know them."

So they come down from the porch and they took us down on 5th and Lingen or 5th *[inaudible]* **[0:50:08]** that's where his people lived in. So from there she says now you can take this girl where she's supposed to go. And they took me down near the graveyard, that's where my brother lived.

[00:50:22]

Interviewer: That's right the South Union Street, or rather *[inaudible]* [0:50:25].

Mrs. Marra: Yeah and one week after my brother says, "Where do you come from?" He says, "We just come home from the Pennsylvania station." I said we told you we were coming off Pennsylvania but he was supposed to pick me up in New York.

Interviewer: Yes but instead he didn't go to New York, while he was waiting for you at Pennsylvania station you came in at the B and O?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah.

Interviewer: So what year was this? 1921 when you came, how old were you then?

Mrs. Marra: 17.

Interviewer: You were 17 years old then. Now, once you came here what did you do? Did you go to work?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah, after two weeks I was here I went to work.

Interviewer: Where did you work?

Mrs. Marra: Top Kiss.

Interviewer: What did Top Kiss do?

Mrs. Marra: A shirt factory.

Interviewer: A shirt factory? This factory is not here anymore?

Mrs. Marra: No.

Interviewer: It hasn't been here sometime. How long did you stay there?

Mrs. Marra: Just about one year till I got married.

Interviewer: Now, did you ever go to school here in this country? Did you ever go to night school or English classes or anything?



Mrs. Marra: No, but one time there was a teacher come over the house. She came there for about a year, once a week. But I guess I was too old then to learn to read and write in English.

Interviewer: You felt that you were too old to go to school to learn?

Mrs. Marra: **[inaudible] [0:51:42]** I can read the newspaper, I can read the letter and everything but I can't write.

Interviewer: I see, in English. What was life like for an Italian when you came here? How would you interpret life for an Italian?

Mrs. Marra: It was not too bad. Because when I came here like everybody was working and people were making pretty good money because I was making, it was not much the way it is now. 15, \$18 a week.

Interviewer: But in those days it was enough to live and have some left over?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Did you work with all Italian people?

Mrs. Marra: No, just a few.

Interviewer: Just a few Italian people there?

Mrs. Marra: It was all mixed.

Interviewer: All mixed, well Polish, Irish, English everything?

Mrs. Marra: That's right, well in fact they were all mixed.

Interviewer: How did they treat you as an Italian?

Mrs. Marra: Well alright. I saw one Polish girl was there and she couldn't speak English either and she just tried to hoard the work all by herself she used to curse me out.

Interviewer: In Polish?

Mrs. Marra: In Polish. **[inaudible] [0:52:53]**.

Interviewer: Were you ever aware of any discrimination against you because you were Italian?

Mrs. Marra: Not that I can remember.

Interviewer: After you got married, what was life like?

Mrs. Marra: Just playing housewife that's all.

Interviewer: That's all, nothing extra ordinary? Just live day to day life?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: When your children started school did they ever experience any bias because they were of Italian parentage?

Mrs. Marra: A little bit.

Interviewer: A little bit. Did they ever complain about it to you?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah because where we live they were all Irish people down there.

Interviewer: Where was it that you lived, you lived in 40 Acres?

Mrs. Marra: Yeah 10 years there was no Italian people there at all only about three families in the neighborhood. But it was not too bad because my husband was born and raised in this country.

Interviewer: I see.

Mrs. Marra: And he was raised in a community it was not too bad for the kids. But sometimes like when a new kid started school they used to call the kids wasps and guinea and stuff like that then the kids come home and say "Mama why they call us this, mama why they call us that?" That's all.

Interviewer: I see. But other than that there was nothing extra ordinary that you could think off to relate to your life here in this country?

Mrs. Marra: No.

Interviewer: Since your husband was born here, what were his feelings towards many of the Italians who were coming over here at that time from Italy?

Mrs. Marra: He didn't, no.

Interviewer: He didn't have anything against them?

Mrs. Marra: Not against them, no.

Interviewer: What did he think about Mussolini when Mussolini first rose to power?

Mrs. Marra: He didn't think nothing of him. He just didn't care I mean he was with this country not from the other side.

Interviewer: But he didn't think that he was good for it, I mean did he ever make any comments? Never anything about him? So he never even thought anything about him at all anyhow?

Mrs. Marra: No, we didn't neither one of us really.

Interviewer: I see, so to you politics was completely out of your life? You had no thoughts about it one way or another?

Mrs. Marra: That's right.

Interviewer: Is there anything you'd like to add to what we've gone through here right now?

Mrs. Marra: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Okay [inaudible 0:55:08]

**[00:55:09] End of Audio**