

EI-1332

VITTORIA MORRONE MONIELLO

BIRTHDATE: AUGUST 19, 1912

INTERVIEW DATE: MAY 19, 2004

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

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**RESIDENCES: SAN MARCO LACATALAN [PH], FOGGIA, ITALY;
BRONX, NY**

LEVINE: Today is May the 19th, the year 2004.

MONIELLO: I think.

LEVINE: I'm here with Vittoria, who spells her name with two Ts.

MONIELLO: Right.

LEVINE: The Italian way. And her name is Moniello.

MONIELLO: Right, Moniello. [clears throat].

LEVINE: Her maiden name was Morrone.

MONIELLO: M-O-R-R-O-N-E.

LEVINE: Great. And she came from Italy when he was just nine years old—

MONIELLO: Right.

LEVINE: —in 1921—

MONIELLO: Right.

LEVINE: —from San Marco, LaCatalan.

MONIELLO: Catalan, I think. I think that's how—

LEVINE: Catalan.

MONIELLO: —[unclear].

LEVINE: Something like that.

MONIELLO: Something like that. [unclear] pick it up.

LEVINE: And the pr—province.

MONIELLO: Province, Foggia.

LEVINE: Foggia.

MONIELLO: F-O-G-G-I-A.

LEVINE: Great. Now, [clears throat] Vittoria isn't sure if the ship was called the America but it could have been. That's what you kind of have in mind—

MONIELLO: Oh—

LEVINE: —that it might have been.

MONIELLO: That was a long time.

LEVINE: And—and it's a long time but she thinks perhaps it left from Naples.

MONIELLO: Maybe.

LEVINE: Yeah, okay. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. And if we could—if you would say again, please, for the tape, your birth date.

MONIELLO: My birthday is A—August 19, 1912 and I was born in Italy.

LEVINE: Right. And—

MONIELLO: You want the name of the town?

LEVINE: Well, I think we have that. You want to—

MONIELLO: Good.

LEVINE: —say it once more?

MONIELLO: Yeah, yeah. It's—let me see if I remember.

LEVINE: San—

MONIELLO: S-A-N—S—San Marco—M-A-R-C-O L-A-C-A-T-O-L-A. Italy.

LEVINE: Okay, great. Now, [clears throat] what was your father's name?

MONIELLO: I think it was Dominick; I'm not sure.

LEVINE: Okay. And it would have been Morrone.

MONIELLO: Morrone, right.

LEVINE: Right. And your mother's name?

MONIELLO: Maria.

LEVINE: Maria. Do you, by any chance, remember her maiden name?

MONIELLO: I think, I'm not sure, it was Vadorro—V-A-D-O—oh, is it Vadu—well, V-A-D-O-R-R—I don't remember how to spell it. It's—it's a long time ago.

LEVINE: V-O-R-R-O.

MONIELLO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, fine. And what was your mother like? How do you re—when you were a little girl growing up, and especially in Italy, what—what was your mother like?

MONIELLO: Oh, they were very affectionate, very protecting, very—nothing could describe them. There's nothing like them now. [laughs]

LEVINE: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Nothing like them.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh. Was your mother strict with you?

MONIELLO: Oh, very strict.

LEVINE: In what way? In other words, what would she do wh—when she was being strict?

MONIELLO: They were very protective. You weren't allowed out to go gallivanting or anything. I was young anyway; I was only nine.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: And—

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: She was very nice. They used to teach you how to cook, how to clean, you know.

LEVINE: Did you have brothers and sisters when you were in Italy then?

MONIELLO: I don't remember.

LEVINE: Do you remember if you were the oldest child, or there were other children that were older than you?

MONIELLO: I don't remember that either.

LEVINE: Okay, okay. And how about your father? How would you describe him, his personality? How he treated you?

MONIELLO: He was like, you know, very kind, very protective.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Lovable.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Like a—a father should have been at that time. This was way back.
[chuckles]

LEVINE: Yeah. And do you remember what he did when you were in Italy? What he did for work?

MONIELLO: I think he worked on the New York City Central Railroad, if I'm not mistaken.

LEVINE: Oh, so that would have been in this country he did that.

MONIELLO: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Yes.

LEVINE: How about back in Italy? Do you know what—

MONIELLO: Oh, I don't remember. No.

LEVINE: No. You don't remember that. But how about the town itself? Can you remember San Marco? What—what it—what it was like? Was it—

MONIELLO: It was a little town with very few people. They all were friendly. That's all I remember.

LEVINE: Did you go to school there?

MONIELLO: I must have. Everybody went to school—

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: —at that time.

LEVINE: Remember what you did for fun. Can you remember what you enjoyed doing when you were—

MONIELLO: Well, like what children do. You play and you have friends and—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: That went from day in and day out.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: You went to school.

LEVINE: And how about your mother? Can you remember some things that she cooked that you liked?

MONIELLO: Well, she cooked very—you know, they all cooked very well and they all cooked the same thing. So—

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: —everything was just—

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

MONIELLO: —beautiful.

LEVINE: Were you a religious family?

MONIELLO: Oh, very.

LEVINE: Can you remember any of the observances in Italy? The things that you did around your religion that had to do with your religion?

MONIELLO: Well, you went to—to church every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligations. I don't know what else I would remember right now.

LEVINE: Did you have, like, festivals? Did you have, you know, processions with the saints and the—

MONIELLO: Oh, oh, had a lot—a lot of that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Of course, the—the towns in Italy, they all knew each other.

LEVINE: Oh, so the towns would get together?

MONIELLO: Together and meet in church and they would pray and do whatever they had to do. Holy Day of Obligation, especially, were very religious.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, describe the Holy Day of Obligation. What—what—what—what did that mean and what did you do?

MONIELLO: Well, I don't know how you would describe it. Holy Day of Obligation was the—what it means, it's a holy day and it's—

LEVINE: You go to church.

MONIELLO: Go to church.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Every week or whenever it's the Holy Day of Obligation. They have a certain day to go and they go—

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: —to mass and then they go home.

LEVINE: Yeah. Can you remember your communion?

MONIELLO: Very—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: That's been a long time.

LEVINE: Long time, I know. [chuckles]

MONIELLO: [chuckles]

LEVINE: Now, did your whole family come to this country together? Or did your father come first?

MONIELLO: I think my father came first. I don't remember too well.

LEVINE: That was often true—

MONIELLO: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: —that the father came first.

MONIELLO: First.

LEVINE: And got a job—

MONIELLO: Yes.

LEVINE: —and sent for the family.

MONIELLO: Right.

LEVINE: So then you would have traveled with your mother—

MONIELLO: Right.

LEVINE: —and—and any other children. I don't know if you traveled with any brothers and sis—

MONIELLO: I don't remember.

LEVINE: Okay.

MONIELLO: That was a long time.

LEVINE: Yeah. Do you remember leaving home? Do you remember, like, the departure? You know, going to the port?

MONIELLO: No.

LEVINE: Anything like that? How about the voyage? Do you remember anything about the ship, being on the ship, coming to this country?

MONIELLO: Not really.

LEVINE: No. And then the ship would have come into the New York harbor.

MONIELLO: Right. Ellis Island, was it?

LEVINE: Yeah, that's Ellis Island. And the Statue of Liberty. Did you see that? Did you—

MONIELLO: Yes. Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah. And did you know what it was at that time?

MONIELLO: Oh, well, yes.

LEVINE: Yeah? Uh-huh, uh-huh. And how about Ellis Island? Do you have any memories of that?

MONIELLO: I remember there was a lot of steps inside of the arm or something, and we went up there. And there was windows there. Very vaguely.

LEVINE: Oh, that's when you visited it, probably—

MONIELLO: Oh.

LEVINE: —as a—after you had been here.

MONIELLO: Probably.

LEVINE: Yeah. But Ellis Island was a great big building.

MONIELLO: Yes, tremendous.

LEVINE: And a lot of people, I imagine.

MONIELLO: Yes, and there were steps in between, inside there. The arms were—I don't remember. It's like a dream.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, when you got to New York, you and your mother, where did you settle? Where did you go to live?

MONIELLO: We went and lived in—with one of my sisters because she was in America before we were.

LEVINE: Oh. So you had a sister who was here.

MONIELLO: Yes.

LEVINE: I see. And where did she live? Did she live, like, in—in—

MONIELLO: New York.

LEVINE: In New York.

MONIELLO: In the Bronx, I think.

LEVINE: In the Bronx.

MONIELLO: It was near—was it Our Lady of Pity Church? Was near a church somewhere. I don't remember.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Now, was your father there with your sister?

MONIELLO: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So can you remember seeing your father when you got here to this country?

MONIELLO: Yeah, I remember vaguely but not that—

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: You know, because I was a teenager, nine, eight—nine, ten years old.

LEVINE: Right. Now, you said you think your father worked on the railroad.

MONIELLO: New York Central Railroad or something, I was thinking. I don't remember too well.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah. Okay, so you got, let's say, to the Bronx and your sister was there. Your father was there. And then I guess you got enrolled in school.

MONIELLO: Oh, definitely.

LEVINE: Can you remember the difference between the school in New York and the school in Italy? What the—no.

MONIELLO: Not at that age.

LEVINE: Okay. How about [clears throat] as you grew up and you—how long did you stay in school? Do you remember? Did you go to high school?

MONIELLO: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: I remember going to high school. Was it junior high school, they called it, I think.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: I forgot.

LEVINE: Yeah, a junior high school.

MONIELLO: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then did you work after you finished with school?

MONIELLO: I don't think so. I don't remember that.

LEVINE: And how about your husband? Do you remember how you met him?

MONIELLO: No.

LEVINE: No.

MONIELLO: We weren't allowed to keep company.

LEVINE: Oh.

MONIELLO: The parents were very strict.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: So you weren't allowed to go with boys or men or anything. That was a no-no.

LEVINE: Did you go to dances or anything like that when you were a teenager?

MONIELLO: No.

LEVINE: No. Uh-huh. So you came home from school and then what would you do?

MONIELLO: I used to do my homework, whatever I had to do, and then I went out to play or whatever.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Normal.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, do you remember if there were a lot of people from Italy who lived in—

MONIELLO: In that area?

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: I think so.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: I think so.

LEVINE: And did—how was it for you to learn the language?

MONIELLO: Well, it was hard.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: But you learned it because you were young and, you know, you learned fast and you kept practicing. It was no problem. And then you went to school.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: Was no problem.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how about your mother? It must have been more difficult for her.

MONIELLO: Well, she was home and she would shop and cook and do whatever she had to do.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Was she able to learn English?

MONIELLO: Yeah, she used to learn. Yeah, she spoke in broken English, whatever. She learned.

LEVINE: Yeah. And do you know if your mother and father became citizens?

MONIELLO: Oh, yeah. Definitely.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: They believed in that.

LEVINE: Yeah. Tell me some other things they believed in that they tried to pass on to you, ideas they had about life and being a person. W— what did they try to—attitudes or values? What did they try to instill?

MONIELLO: Well, the values were the same in English as they were Italian.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: They were no different.

LEVINE: Right. What—what were they? What did they try to—to—

MONIELLO: Well, they were very strict. They didn't let you go out with every Tom, Dick and Harry. That was a no-no.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: You stayed home and you went to school, and you came home and did your homework, you know, and lived a normal—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: —life.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: And we did that. We believe—you know, we obeyed our parents because we loved them.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. Uh-huh. And then at some point you met your husband.

MONIELLO: Of course, I met my husband.

LEVINE: When did you meet him? Do you remember meeting him?

MONIELLO: That, I don't remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Not that well.

LEVINE: And did you have a big wedding?

MONIELLO: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Could you say—

MONIELLO: At that time, they all had good w—big wedding.

LEVINE: Can you say anything about the wedding? What it was like or—

MONIELLO: Oh, it was a beautiful affair. That's all I remember. You got married in church and you had the bride, the groom, the—the ushers, the girls. You know, a nice wedding. They all believed in that. You had to have that. Otherwise, oh—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: You were like an outcast. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Oh, is that right?

MONIELLO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So, let's see. So you had your wedding and then did you live in the same little community that your mother and father lived in—

MONIELLO: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: —after you got married?

MONIELLO: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And at some point, you moved away from there with your husband?

MONIELLO: I don't remember.

LEVINE: Okay. Yeah, okay. Now, is there anything that you could say? In other words, do you think the fact that you and your mother and father came here to this country—do you think that had an impact on them, that they—i—it affected their personalities in any way?

MONIELLO: I don't think so.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MONIELLO: I think the upbringing had a lot to do, way they acted.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: That went with them.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: They didn't change.

LEVINE: Yeah, they kept their old ways, would you say?

MONIELLO: Oh, definitely.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: They were strict, you know. You weren't allowed to go out with every Tom, Dick and Harry. You stayed put and my mother supervised and my father supervised. You know, they were strict.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember doing things as a family? In other words, maybe on Sunday or you would go someplace or d—

MONIELLO: Oh, we would go to church—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: —on Sunday and then go home and have a big dinner together. You know, we were always together.

LEVINE: Yeah. Do you ever remember going to the Bronx Zoo or Coney Island?

MONIELLO: Oh, yes. Bronx Zoo, I remember going.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Would you go with your family or with the school or—

MONIELLO: I don't remember. I think we—with the school and with the family, both.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. How about Coney Island? Did you ever go there?

MONIELLO: I think I must have, but I don't remember, surely.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: I can't say for sure I did I did or I didn't.

LEVINE: Yeah. Did you work at all outside—

MONIELLO: No.

LEVINE: —the home?

MONIELLO: No.

LEVINE: No. So once you got married, you stayed at home.

MONIELLO: I stayed at home.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. [clears throat] What was your husband's name? [clears throat]

MONIELLO: His name was—it's—was an Italian name. It was like—it's very hard to say. August, Augustino [PH].

LEVINE: Oh, Augustino Morrone.

MONIELLO: Moniello.

LEVINE: Oh, Moniello. Morrone was your maiden name.

MONIELLO: [unclear] name.

LEVINE: Right. Augustino Moniello.

MONIELLO: Moniello.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: M-O-N-I-E-L-L-O.

LEVINE: Right, right. And—

MONIELLO: And he was born here.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. His—maybe his mother and father, perhaps came—

MONIELLO: Maybe. I don't know.

LEVINE: —over.

MONIELLO: I don't know. I forgot about all that. I—

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: It didn't sink in.

LEVINE: Okay. And did you have children?

MONIELLO: Oh, yes. I have three children.

LEVINE: And what are their names?

MONIELLO: My son was Ralph and my two daughters were—one was Rosemarie. And what was the other one? Ralph, Rosemarie. I don't remember my other daughter.

LEVINE: I'm sure it'll come to you.

MONIELLO: It'll come, yeah.

LEVINE: Wh—if it comes to you, you tell me.

MONIELLO: Probably will.

LEVINE: Okay. And—and so, you stayed at home and you raised your children in pretty much the same way—did you try to raise them the same way that you—

MONIELLO: Of course.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Yeah, of course.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh. Uh-huh. And what would you say you're very proud of that you did in your life? What makes you feel satisfied that you were able to do in your life?

MONIELLO: The way we were brought up, strict.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: We weren't allowed to go gallivanting with every Tom, Dick and Harry. We had a good home, lovable family life.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MONIELLO: A lot of love and caring.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: That meant a lot.

LEVINE: Yeah. So that's what you had growing up and that's what you gave—

MONIELLO: My chil—

LEVINE: —to your children.

MONIELLO: Right.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: What you sow-ist, you reap-ist.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Right?

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So now, do you have grandchildren as well?

MONIELLO: Oh, yeah. I have 13 great grandchildren.

LEVINE: Oh. [chuckles] Wow. Good. Okay.

MONIELLO: And I en—I enjoy every—every one of them.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: [clears throat] Excuse me.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So are you—how do you think about yourself? Do you think about as Italian and American?

MONIELLO: I think so. I went to school. I went to high school.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MONIELLO: I speak Italian and I speak English.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: No problem.

LEVINE: Do you get to speak Italian very much now?

MONIELLO: Oh, yeah. I'd like to speak Italian.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: In fact, I was born in Italy.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: And came here when I was nine years old.

LEVINE: Right, right.

MONIELLO: So I love to speak Italian. It's a different language and it's a beautiful language.

LEVINE: Yes, it is.

MONIELLO: Because it's spoken the way it's written.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: It isn't [unclear].

LEVINE: Not like English. English isn't—

MONIELLO: No.

LEVINE: —always that way.

MONIELLO: No, no.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I see.

MONIELLO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. Let's see. Do you think your mother and father had what is called the American dream, about coming to this country?

MONIELLO: Maybe they did.

LEVINE: Do you know why they wanted to come here?

MONIELLO: I guess it was the—the thing at that time to come to America and—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: —you know, be an American citizen and live here and live a decent life.

LEVINE: Yeah. Did you visit Italy? Did you ever go back and visit?

MONIELLO: Oh, yes. I went back.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: I enjoyed it [unclear].

LEVINE: Did you go back to your little town? Do you know?

MONIELLO: I don't remember.

LEVINE: How about your mother and father? Did they ever go back to visit?

MONIELLO: I don't remember that. That was a long time ago.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONIELLO: [chuckles]

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. Do you remember your father working hard?

MONIELLO: My father worked on the New York Central Railroad, which he used to work—walk to work. It was like, five, six blocks away.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. N—

MONIELLO: That's what he did.

LEVINE: Now, did he work of the trains. In—in other words, was he like a conductor or did he work on the—

MONIELLO: No, I think he used to be—they used to clean the trains.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: Whatever, something. I don't remember what.

LEVINE: Okay. Did you ever go on the trains as a—as a vacation or anything like that?

MONIELLO: I don't remember that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: I wasn't interested in all that at the time.

LEVINE: How about in the summertime? Did the family ever go away for a vacation that you can recall?

MONIELLO: I think we used to go on vacation to our friends, to Connecticut or wherever they lived. You know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MONIELLO: I don't remember all that. That's too far away.

LEVINE: Yeah, okay. So you and your husband were, what'd you say, Easton Park? Where did you say you lived before you came down here?

MONIELLO: Where did I live before I came here?

LEVINE: In Westchester County, you said.

MONIELLO: Yes.

LEVINE: And you said the name of the street. Or the—it—it was—

MONIELLO: East—oh, in Italy?

LEVINE: No, in—in—

MONIELLO: Oh.

LEVINE: —New York.

MONIELLO: East Chester [PH].

LEVINE: East Chester.

MONIELLO: East Chester Road, I think it was.

LEVINE: East Chester Road.

MONIELLO: [unclear] remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: That's too long. That's too damn long.

LEVINE: Yeah. Now, so did you come down here with your husband?

MONIELLO: Oh, definitely. I never went any—we—we've never separated.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: We didn't believe in traveling, she goes and he goes.

LEVINE: No, but—

MONIELLO: Both together.

LEVINE: —you moved down and he—

MONIELLO: Together.

LEVINE: And he was still alive when you moved—

MONIELLO: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: —to Florida.

MONIELLO: Definitely, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So did you live in Florida a long time before you came here to Bristol Park?

MONIELLO: I think so.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm. Okay. Well, is there anything else you can think of—

MONIELLO: [unclear]

LEVINE: —that has to do with—

MONIELLO: [laughs]

LEVINE: —coming to this country, living your life, meeting your husband and having a family?

MONIELLO: That seems so far away. I don't even want to think about it.
[chuckles]

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Okay. And I take it, you stayed strong in your religion.

MONIELLO: Oh, definite. I'm still a Catholic. I won't change my religion for anything.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

MONIELLO: You're born with that and you die with that. You don't change.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MONIELLO: That's a no-no.

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LEVINE: [chuckles] Okay. Okay. Well—

MONIELLO: Okay.

LEVINE: I—let me just say that I'm speaking with Vittoria Moniello.

MONIELLO: Right.

LEVINE: And it's May 19th, 2004 and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm signing off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]