

EI-1359

JAMES TASCIOTTI

BIRTHDATE: JULY 16, 1914

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D

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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: CAROLYN LEE

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

ITALY, 1929

AGE: 14

SHIP: THE CONTE BIANCAMANO

PORT: NAPLES

RESIDENCES:

- **ITALY: PRIVERNO (PROVINCE OF LATINA) AND SEZZE-ROMANO**
- **THE US: GLENN COVE, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK**

LEVINE: Today is Wednesday, December 29th, the year 2004. I'm here in Deland, Florida with Mr. James C. Tasciotti, who came from Italy when he was practically fifteen. He was fourteen years, about to turn fifteen years of age. He came on the Conte Biancamano. Say it, would you?

TASCIOTTI: Conte Biancamano.

LEVINE: Biancamano. Okay. And, at the time of this interview, Mr. Tasciotti is ninety.

TASCIOTTI: Ninety.

LEVINE: Years of age. With us this morning is Mr. Tasciotti's wife of sixty years.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: Sixty-seven.

LEVINE: Sixty-seven years, and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. If we could start at the beginning, if you would say the name you were born with and your birth date.

TASCIOTTI: I was born in Priverno, Italy, a very small, rural area. My name was Vincenzo Carmine Tasciotti. As I came to America in 1929, (coughs) by the way, I came to America from the, from an orphanage. I didn't come from my house, from my home, because I had no home. I had no family. My mother died in 1921, and she left five children to be taken care of by my grandmother. So, I was very fortunate because I was the third of five children, and because I was going to be only eight-years-old starting the first class, they decided to put me in an orphanage. The orphanage was, was ministered by, by the Silesian Order of the Catholic Church. The Silesians were, or even are, the only, the only anc-, the, the only teachers of that (?) all over the world. The Silesian monks. I lived for, that instruction of the Silesian monks for seven years. So, when I was almost fifteen, my father was here, and I said to my father, "I am finished with, with, with the early education, so why don't you call me to America. I may be more useful to you than I am here." There was a possibility that I could have become a monk or a priest. If my father was not here, I would have given the opportunity to go higher grade and so on, higher education. But this was not the case because they said, "If your father is in

America, eventually you will go to America.” So, within that year that we talked like this, my father called me, on my request, of course, ‘cause I told him that it was better to be with him. So, he called me, and I came. I embarked on the Conte Biancamano steamship from Italy, from, from Naples, in 1929. (coughs) So when I came to America, paradise opened onto me. Paradise because I am already just, just seen the, I had already seen the difference between Italy and America. Italy was a, a, a, a very bad, especially under Mussolini, very bad country to live on, live in. And when I saw America, (laughs) in fact, my first dollar was when I went to caddy for, for people that would play golf, and I didn’t know that, that they could play golf every day because the, the business people of America play golf almost every afternoon because they do their work today in the morning, and, (laughs) and they, they play golf in the afternoon. I was one of the caddy. That used to be a dollar for eighteen holes, and they usually used to give you a tip of twenty-five cents is all. But I said, how easy it is to make a, a dollar in America because there was no such a thing in Italy.

LEVINE: Can we backtrack a little? Say your birth date.

TASCIOTTI: My birth date is July 16, 1914. You told me to say it, but I didn’t.
(laughs)

LEVINE: That’s okay. That’s okay. And your mother’s name?

TASCIOTTI: My mother’s name, beautiful, Speranza Angelina Patrici.

LEVINE: Patrici was her maiden name?

TASCIOTTI: Patrician.

LEVINE: Oh, and how about her maiden name?

TASCIOTTI: Her maiden name, that's what I'm saying. Her name, this is her name. Speranza Angelina Patrici. When she got married to my father, she became Speranza Angelina Patrici Tasciotti. See, in Italy, the woman takes the name of, of the whoever she married, but she never loses her maiden name. Never. And she is known in her neighborhood by both names—maiden name and, and the other name.

LEVINE: Ah.

TASCIOTTI: And the husband's name.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

TASCIOTTI: She never loses the maiden name.

LEVINE: How do you spell her maiden name? Patrici?

TASCIOTTI: I am not a speller. We have no spelling in Italy.

LEVINE: (laughs) You want to write on...

TASCIOTTI: You want the three names?

LEVINE: Sure. Here, why don't you write it right on here because then I'll have it?

TASCIOTTI: Oh. (writing) Speranza Angelina. (writing) I don't know if you can read it.

LEVINE: Yeah, that's good. Oh, that's yours. Okay, and how about your father? What was his name?

TASCIOTTI: Chriscenzo [ph]. (laughs) They called him Chris.

LEVINE: Whoops.

TASCIOTTI: But his name was Chriscenzo. (writing) Chriscenzo Tasciotti. Oh, Speranza, do you want to put Tasciotti, the last name?

LEVINE: No, I got.

TASCIOTTI: Oh.

LEVINE: I'll know that that was her last name. Okay, well, do you have memories of your mother?

TASCIOTTI: Very little. I was going to be seven, and she died. But there was the period that my father was here (cough), and the idea was for him, he made up his mind to work, make some money, and call the whole family, a mother and five children. But she died in, in the meantime, so. The whole thing wasn't. (coughs)

LEVINE: What do you remember when you think of your mother? Do you, do you have any memories in your, in your mind?

MRS. TASCIOTTI: That hurts.

TASCIOTTI: I can't. I am ninety years old. I'm still looking for a mother. (?)

LEVINE: How about grandparents? Did you have grandparents over there in Italy?

TASCIOTTI: Only on my father's side. And that's the grandmother that I said we all went to after my mother died. (coughs) And she and my mother did not get along, (coughs) while they were mar-, when she was married to my father. So, when we went there to her house at five, we, we were really, in a way, off our own life. And that's why they put me in the orphanage, thank God, and the one four years earlier than my age, he had no schooling whatsoever because grandma took him and gave him to day work from here, there, and everywhere the farmers. In fact, my book says, he wound up with the family that had buffaloes. Buffaloes in Italy, and where we come from because the, the ground is very hard, very thick, very hard, buffalo is needed, not a cow, not a, a-

LEVINE: Goat, a sheep?

TASCIOTTI: Not, not a cow, and, and, not a-. Oh gosh. In other words, the cow and this other one were not strong enough to pull, so they have to have-

LEVINE: Oxen.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: You're talking oxen. Oxen.

TASCIOTTI: You had to have these, these were black buffaloes. Very errrh. But the strength that they had was marvelous, so my brother, as I said, had no education because that there, he would get food and

so on and so on and get a few dollars, a few pennies, to my grandmother for that. So he had no school at all. He wound up in fight when my father came after he got his citizen paper, came to Italy to take us, five of us, to take us to America. He had enough money. But his mother talked him out of it because she would lose the income.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: So what happened? He took only him that he was in a worse situation of, of, of abuse that his mother was giving, was doing to him.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: So, he had no education, he had no, no family life, he had nothing. He lived what hand oxen, you call it, what you call it, yeah, he would live with them. In fact, once from the orphanage, I was, I had a few days for, for the summer to be with the family. So, while I was there with my grandmother, he, my brother, visited us, knowing that I was there, so he wanted to make a connection with me, so he did. So after we talked (?), he said, "Do you want to come and see what I'm doing?" I said, "Sure." So we walked to an immense area of pasture, you know, and there were (laughs) ten buffaloes eating, you know. (laughs) They, that's about, about it, isn't it?

LEVINE: So you went and saw what he did for work.

TASCIOTTI: Oh, when I saw what he did for work, I realized our punishment.

LEVINE: No, don't. That'll make static.

TASCIOTTI: For my, for my...

LEVINE: Just try to leave...

TASCIOTTI: My, my mother, my grandmother, how we were, she was punishing him, for what she was doing with him. So when my father came after citizen paper 1926, he came, he wanted to take us all, but she talked him out of it. So, but he took him because he knew he was totally abused, so he came three years earlier.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: I came three years after that. (coughs)

LEVINE: Wh, what, say the name of the town and, and the province.

TASCIOTTI: Where I was born?

LEVINE: Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: It was Priverno. It goes back to the five or seven thousand years, Priverno. We were the (?) they used to fight the Roman army when Rome was founded. Every time they expanded, they wanted to get, they wanted that, they want that, so we gave them all we held for many, many years, but finally he conquered us, so we had to be under him and obey them until Mussolini came, then he took over. (laughs)

LEVINE: So what you mentioned was the province or the town?

TASCIOTTI: No.

LEVINE: That's the town.

TASCIOTTI: I'll give you the province. Again, I give you the village that I was born in.

LEVINE: Yeah, village.

TASCIOTTI: Priverno. It was originally Latin, Privernome, Privernome. If you study the Roman empire history, there is lot of mentioning of Privernome because, when Romans expanded, they always wanted to declare war, and there was, in those, those villages that were all under the Roman county, under Roman county. So Priverno was under the Romans after the Romans invaded us. But before that, it was in its own strength. So, when, when they invaded us after so many wars, they conquered us, so we became servants of them, especially because it was in an agrarian area. Most of Latio-south was an agrarian area, and that was the bread for, for the Roman empire. It came from all, from us.

LEVINE: And the province?

TASCIOTTI: The province was province of Rome.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: Until Mussolini came. When Mussolini came, he subdivided the Latio, Latium, the, because it was going quite good, you know, fast, so he put, he build two more cities, and we became under one city, which was Priverno Provinca Latina. Still under Latin name, you

see, because of the Latium. So we became born in Priverno, province of Latina.

LEVINE: Okay.

TASCIOTTI: That's it.

LEVINE: And, do you remember the name of the orphanage?

TASCIOTTI: Oh, (laughs) you kidding? (laughs) How, how, how?

LEVINE: How could you forget, right?

TASCIOTTI: How could you forget? Because of the orphanage, I had the education that nobody has here, Italian education. No, no Italian here has an education that I have of the, of the Italian language, no one. No one can translate, no one can, no one. They don't, they don't speak. If they do speak few words, it's what they got it from the mother and the grandmother, and so on and so on, but that is, that is not, that is not Italian. That is, what do you call it?

LEVINE: A dialect?

MRS. TASCIOTTI: (?) Dialect.

TASCIOTTI: Dialects. They all speak dialects a little bit, but nobody speaks Italian.

LEVINE: Right.

TASCIOTTI: We cannot have a priest saying mass in Italian because nobody can go and understand. We cannot have a, an Italian film because nobody understands. It's, Italian in America is lost. The language. The Italian in America is lost because the only way you can speak Italian is if you go to school. If you don't go to school, you'll never speak Italian. Never, never.

LEVINE: So what was the name of the orphanage?

TASCIOTTI: Oh. (laughs) Corfornotrovio di Wera et di Influenza a Sezze-Romano [ph]. Sezze is the village that the orphanage was. Romano is province of Rome. I was there seven years, and the Silesian fathers were there, and you know what? We actually had two schools. We had the school to class, the class to go to the school, a public school that everybody went, but then when we had homework from which we had homework or in Italy was on a Wednesday, on a Wednesday and Saturday because in Italy, you go to school Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: So you get clobbered with homework twice a week, not once. (laughs) So, not only besides the work that we had to do, but the work that they gave us to do besides, so actually was two, we, we were, we were educated by two, two factors—the public factor and the private factor of the Silesian fathers. The Silesian fathers are the most loved, the word, I, I could never, I could never have done in America without the Silesian education. Never. Impossible. I learned my, my English, for instance, when I, I went to school one, one year because I was, I was fifteen, so in order to make it sixteen, I went that year. (coughs) And I used to hear my father

and brother and uncles speak English that was not the same as the English I hear, I hear in school, in the class. I said, "I swear I have to learn like them, not like them." So I made my business to. Because I had the education of the one language, it was easier for me to make out, make out, make out. And every time I didn't know, "how do you spell?" When I saw the spelling, I, I worked on it to remember. (laughs)

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: And so on. As I said, I learned English very hard way, very, very hard. (?) twice with the WPA teacher during, during Depression (coughs) in evening. And every time she picked up a subject to talk about, I would always go on the opposite side, and she would say, "James, what are you doing?" "I want to make conversation, so we can learn the English language."

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: (laughs) Of course, every time we get a new one, start from scratch. Hair, nose, isn't that. But when everyone's in discussion, they didn't know what it was all about, the new ones, but the old ones knew, so they could get more. So I didn't want it, to remind, to remember always a, e, i, o, u, you know. I was very, very conscious on education. In fact, my, my, my dream in America was not only the American dream, but was to educate my children. We educated three children. They all became professors at schools. Two of them are retired already. They making money that I had never heard of. So you see, this was my dream, beautiful. So between, be, besides my wife and America, I could have, I could do whatever I did. She never said no to nothing. I went into business

for twenty years. She never bothered me in the business. And the business that I went in was a very, very hard and expensive because it was machine job. Machine job manufacturing of metals. And, (?), machines-

LEVINE: Equipment.

TASCIOTTI: Three, four, five thousand. So I did that for twenty years. I taught a lot of children that from high school graduation didn't want to go to college, so if they didn't want to go to college, I put them there, but if they had the opportunity to go to college, I said "No, I no give you work. You go to college." (laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: I stressed college. I stressed education to everybody, anyone.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: No matter who it was.

LEVINE: Do you have any (coughs), any story about the orphanage that kind of points up what it was like for you there? Any particular experience that sticks in your mind from those years when you were there?

TASCIOTTI: Well, first of all, we were there, (coughs) all in the same boat. We all needed family. Without the family, you were to make, make do, right? So, (coughs) just the way you say before about mother, and I cried, well, this was what we did in the orphanage. You never know one of the child that somebody was saying something and

mentioned their mother or their father or their sister or, he would go in a corner and start crying. You know? So, all we would do, we, like they did to me, they, they're, they're a special group of boys (laughs) to, to try to change the, the, the feeling of this person that was dejected, you know? So we had to work. They did it to me until I laughed, and then (laughs) we did it to others. This was the biggest thing in the orphanage as far as the orphans was concerned. The second thing was I would have never had the education at home with the family, even if the family was with mother and father and so on, I would never have had that education that I had with the Silesians.

LEVINE: Right, right.

TASCIOTTI: I did not understand how much money was that education until I came out from the orphanage. I went home only three months and eventually I came to America, so when I, when I found family and people around and all that, I said to myself, "Thank you Silesians, thanks."

LEVINE: Yeah. When you, when you say that you, you would, that the, they were all boys, I take it.

TASCIOTTI: Oh, yeah. Yes. A hundred and twenty boys. We had no education and all that, it was never coeducation in Italy. Always separate.

LEVINE: Separate.

TASCIOTTI: The girls would be in a different, let's say the north side, the north part of the town in the class, and the boys would be in the south part of the town. They would never meet.

LEVINE: Meet.

TASCIOTTI: They never. The boys at the, at the, at the man teachers. The girls at women teachers. There's no, different, like America.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

TASCIOTTI: Not such a thing. "Oh, why can't I do that?" "No, you can't. You're not a boy, you can't." Or "You're not a girl, you can't." And that's all.

LEVINE: I'm just curious about how, how when, when one of the boys was sad because of talking about mother or whatever.

TASCIOTTI: Oh, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: What did you do? You, you, you just, a, a group of boys would, would, would talk with him until he laughed? Is that what you?

TASCIOTTI: Until they laughed, until we start, we start to play, the whole group, and so on and so on. We had to have that because we all were in the same boat.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: So we had to find ways of turning what you're thinking around-

MRS. TASCIOTTI: And that's why-

TASCIOTTI: And accept us, accept us as a family.

MRS. TASCOTTI: And there was no fighting. No fighting.

TASCOTTI: No, are you kidding? My, my son-in-law, retired professorship from Pittsburgh University, he says "Dad, I can't understand, you never fought?" I said, "No, we were a hundred and twenty boys. We were all in the same boat. We all needed a family, and we had to study and do much, you know, might as we could, you know. Grasp as much as you can."

LEVINE: So.

TASCOTTI: We had sports. I shined in many sports, especially running. However, nobody could catch me. (laughs)

LEVINE: (laughs)

TASCOTTI: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: So, so your father came, and he took your oldest brother, and

TASCOTTI: 1920 and 19-

LEVINE: 27?

TASCOTTI: 1926, 1926.

LEVINE: Twenty-six.

TASCOTTI: He took him.

LEVINE: And then, and then, did you have an older sister, too, or another older brother?

TASCIOTTI: I had two young sisters, one, two older brothers, two older brothers, two old sisters, I was in the middle. Now, the first one, when my father came, he was not eighteen. That's why he came in 1926. After he became eighteen, he was out of the, what do you say, the possibility of coming to America because then he's with the army.

LEVINE: Oh, I see.

TASCIOTTI: The army and the navy take them. It's no more, your life anymore. So.

LEVINE: So, he took him, and then what about the second brother, the one older than you?

TASCIOTTI: That's the second brother, that's the one that worked all, that was all misfortuned.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: If you-

LEVINE: Oh. So, so.

TASCIOTTI: Totally abused by my grandma.

LEVINE: And how about the oldest brother?

TASCIOTTI: The oldest brother was a peach of a person. He was a saint. He was everything to us younger. We were very younger than him. He came to the orphanage, picked me up, take me home, take, take

me to Rome to, to the American consulate to start the papers to come to America. He was the one to take me to the train when I left Italy for good to come to America. I think that's it. Him and I understood each other fine, but I accepted him not only as a brother, but as a teacher, as a mother, as a father, as everything.

LEVINE: So he stayed? Did he stay in Italy?

TASCIOTTI: Well, he stayed in Italy, and he died at twenty-eight.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: Yeah.

LEVINE: So when you came, who were you coming here with?

TASCIOTTI: Alone.

LEVINE: Oh, you came alone. Okay.

TASCIOTTI: Fourteen and eight months, I came alone.

LEVINE: Your brother took you to the port? Did your brother take you to Naples?

TASCIOTTI: No, no. You were signed, you pay for an agent. This is all.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: Pay for an agent. You, I was brought by my brother to the agent in the morning that I was going to Naples. And in Naples, only me

and the agent for one week because the, he knows they, (coughs) there the inspection of foreign people coming to America, they had to be healthy. So, we were all examined and so on, many times, many times all during that week. Every day, some examination, physical examination of some kind, including see if you have. Very, very strict, you won't, they, they won't take you America. So, the other one was too old, the second one was beaten by my grandmother, and I was the only one in the orphanage, and the two sisters became slaves to my grandmother.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: Totally abused.

LEVINE: Oh dear. So, so, so it was really your older brother and you who were the two that actually ended up in America. Of the whole family.

TASCIOTTI: No, not my older brother, my-

MRS. TASCIOTTI: No, he never came.

TASCIOTTI: Older than me, or are we talking about the, the one that was-

LEVINE: The one just older. The abused one.

TASCIOTTI: The one that was abused.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: The abused one.

TASCIOTTI: The one that was abused.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: He was four years older than I am.

LEVINE: Oh my goodness. So, do you, did you take anything with you when you came?

TASCIOTTI: Yeah, whatever I took was stolen aboard ship. I got off the ship without my own papers, passport, release, whatever I had, they did the same thing to my sister after, in 1932. Yeah. And the, the last, the last moment, the, the, the valise can't find, I had papers in there. I guess there was a, a room for, for beds. I had no idea that it would take everything. So, my father was there to claim me as his son in New York, but I could not get off because I had no papers. When, is he a stowaway or what, they, they make a connection. They did not believe the connection because I did not even was in the register. I did not-

LEVINE: Your name wasn't on the-

TASCIOTTI: Show my name in the register 'cause it cancel out. So it took two days, three days to get all this straightened out. And finally, my father came. My book says, Ju, June 14, I, I see my father for the first time in America.

LEVINE: You had, you had some memories of him in Italy too, didn't you? You, you, you had some experiences with your father in Italy. You, you saw, you, you, that was the first time you ever saw him?

TASCIOTTI: I saw him the first time in America.

LEVINE: In America. Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: But, my father, because he was a laborer and was scarce work in Italy, he go back and forth. He come to America, and he work a year and make good money. He, he held onto it. He came to Italy, we lived beautiful, you know, like American style. But as he was running out of money, he'd do the same thing. And the last time, because they were closing the, the doors, immigration doors, that's why he wanted to take us all to America. It didn't work.

LEVINE: Did he work as a laborer in America too?

TASCIOTTI: Oh, yes. He worked as a, oh, America's got a lot, America's got a lot of millionaires that have estates, you know? And he worked for Black, Blackwell, Blackwell. (coughs) Glenn Cove, yeah, in Glenn Cove, Long Island.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: He worked. In fact, when he picked me up from New York, that's what he took me because the day, his day was not finished, so he wanted to finish his day there. Took me there.

LEVINE: Yeah, just try not to (?) that. It'll just make it-

TASCIOTTI: (?) Sorry.

LEVINE: Okay.

TASCIOTTI: So.

LEVINE: So when you saw him at the, at Ellis Island, he came and he claimed you at Ellis Island.

TASCIOTTI: (?) Ellis Island. He broke all my dreams that I was dreaming that I would be abandoned, that he would, didn't want me anymore.

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: And all that. But when I saw him, the rebirth, my rebirth in America started again. And, the first thing I noticed, he took me to the Ellis Island, Ellis Island what, Ellis Island restaurant.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: Cafeteria.

TASCIOTTI: Cafeteria. So, and then he gave, made a sandwich, he gave me a sandwich. I say, "Dad, (?)" (laughs) Oh, butter, what's this? (laughs) Oh boy. (?) America was made for me to be discovered.

LEVINE: (laughs)

TASCIOTTI: And I loved it because, as I said, I sent the kids to college, I went to building a business. My English was not perfect, but I tried to make it as good as I could because I wanted to be able to (?) Americans up at the same level if I could. But, but that's it, that's it.

LEVINE: So when you, when you left Ellis Island, how did you get to, to Blackwell? What, what did you?

TASCIOTTI: He had, he had one of these Ford-

MRS. TASCOTTI: Station wagon.

TASCOTTI: Station wagon. (makes car sounds) He had one of those. (laughs)
And he took me there. He finished his day, and then he took me to,
took me to Glenn Cove. Geez, I don't even know where we started.
What, he had three rooms already.

MRS. TASCOTTI: For an apartment, apartment?

TASCOTTI: I think yeah, all the way up in the third, third floor in an abandoned
place that nobody would get to the third floor except me. I would
run up (laughs). Yeah.

LEVINE: So you lived in Glenn Cove at first?

TASCOTTI: Glenn Cove, Long Island.

LEVINE: Island.

TASCOTTI: That is where I spend all my least five years of learning. Night
school and everything else. Going to, going to health club and
make a dollar here and there and all that. That's the beginning of
my life in America.

LEVINE: So you, did you go to regular school, public school?

TASCOTTI: No, only the first year-

LEVINE: One year.

TASCOTTI: -because I was under sixteen.

LEVINE: Right.

TASCIOTTI: But during the year, my father said, “Jim, you can’t be (?), you cannot go to school anymore because we have to both work and save some money so we can get your two sisters here.” So, came in June of that year, they gave me the paper, a working paper. They told me what the proviso that I would go to some night classes to learn English language, which I didn’t even know what the word night classes were, but when I found out what night classes, I thought, “Hey, this is it!” (laughs)

LEVINE: This is great. (laughs) So then were you reunited with your brother too? Was he in Glenn Cove?

TASCIOTTI: Oh, yes. We were reunited, three of us—me and my brother, my father. They, they got, oh, my father got a, a place, third floor, three rooms, and, and this was in June. Everybody was saying, “Wait, when you go to school, wait when you go to school.” I forget why now. Anyhow, I got up in the morning when, when, when I went to school in September. I got up in the morning, I took the bottle of milk, walked about half a mile to the farmer, the, the cows, they would milk right there in my bottle. I would go home. I would make coffee, breakfast, and whatever lunch they ask for, piece of bread or something, whatever. I made lunch for them. And then I went to school a little later. So I took care, I became the housewife.

LEVINE: (laughs)

TASCIOTTI: But, everything, before they came home from work, if I had some times, I always try to spare some time with the boys in, because

they spoke (?) Italian, Italian community, you know. But I always try to get to (?) to learn what ga, what games they played and all that. In other words, get mixed into it. I knew where, I needed help, so I got it.

LEVINE: What was your father like? What was your father's personality? What was he, what was his temperament?

TASCIOTTI: My father's personality was totally wrong, and I'm going to cry again because he had lost his wife, and he was in America. If he wanted to buy a house and has, have a, have a wife and children and all that, that he had his dream, it did not work. So, especially when the wife dies in another country and you cannot even be there, and in those days, no airships, no nothing. You came, you get there, and see them buried. Nothing, nothing. Everything was telegrams, telegrams, telegrams. (coughs) So when I revisited in 19-, when, 1977, when I visited, we took, I took a (?). When we visited, we went to see the, where she was buried, and the, the men, the men caretaker of the (?) around the, around the-

LEVINE: Cemetery.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: Cemetery.

TASCIOTTI: Cemetery. He said, "Why we have to go and register and find out what section she's in." I said, "No, you don't. I know. Section 39."

LEVINE: He remembered.

TASCIOTTI: How do you-

LEVINE: Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: (?)

LEVINE: Yeah. Tell me, do you, do you think that it made a big difference the fact that you came here practically fifteen years old, and you started over again. How do you think that whole, that whole, that whole fact of your life changed you in some way?

TASCIOTTI: Oh, that, that was a, changeful for the, the, the most beautiful thing. So, I, I would cooperate with anybody over there myself a hundred and ten percent because I knew the poverty of Italy. I didn't want it. I didn't have.

LEVINE: What do you feel very satisfied about, having done in your life?

TASCIOTTI: Everything.

LEVINE: Everything? (laughs)

TASCIOTTI: Everything. America opened the doors. In fact, who was it, the other day we came into her, who was it the other day that said, "Let me know I can help you." Doctor? Someone.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: I don't know.

TASCIOTTI: Every time they saw me any place and if I had something to do with it, they would actually take full responsibility, full charge to teach me, to help me, to lift me, to let me, you know. I said to myself, "I, I have never seen this." So, whether they notice my, my bringing up by the monks or not, I don't know. But, I never hurt anybody.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: Never hurt anybody. I helped, especially when I was in business twenty years. I helped people. Somebody was taking the car, "No, no, you can't. You can't. Oh well, he, he, he bad, he's behind five hundred dollars." "Well, come in here. I'll give you a check for five hundred dollars, but leave the car here." I did that, the boys just listened as if they were my own, you know? My nephew? Your neph-

TASCIOTTI: Your cousin.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: My cousin.

TASCIOTTI: Your cousin. I made him-

MRS. TASCIOTTI: Foreman.

TASCIOTTI: Foreman. He was foreman for twelve years because he had high school shop, shop work, and he knew how to use, so I told his father, I said, "But if you don't have work, enough work for him, why not, why don't you let him go in a machine job and get," because his father had a, had a small (coughs)

MRS. TASCIOTTI: Garment industry.

TASCIOTTI: Clothing, clothing industry. And he never had enough work for all the children, so I was trying to take one, which I did. So he came, he helped me, I helped him. I made him a foreman for twelve years, and. He got paid, and. Christmas presents.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Loaned him money to buy a house.

TASCOTTI: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: So, in other words, you're saying that people were good to you and gave you opportunities, so you gave back when you could to other people.

TASCOTTI: People were good to me as I was born to be good to others. I was born with (?), with the classic education I had with, with the-

LEVINE: The monks.

TASCOTTI: With the monks. To me, this, this was the life, this was life. Help, help, help, help, help.

LEVINE: Did you ever think you would become a priest or a monk?

TASCOTTI: Only in Italy. Only in Italy. If my father had remarried and forget about me, I would automatically. But because my father maintained, the day he said, "No, we don't want to think about it until we see what else."

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

TASCOTTI: If my father had died, they would have taken it right away.

LEVINE: Right, right. Yeah. Let's see. How about the Depression and how it affected your father and your brother and you?

TASCIOTTI: The, the Depression was a bad thing in America. But not for us in Glenn Cove because I worked seven years for E. R. (?). (?), Roosevelt had the, the son as-

MRS. TASCIOTTI: Secretary?

TASCIOTTI: Secretary. What is it? For, for the world, to, to, to work with the world?

LEVINE: The U.N.?

TASCIOTTI: No.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: Secretary General?

TASCIOTTI: General? Anyhow. When you, when the guy represents America in some place?

LEVINE: Oh, an ambassador?

TASCIOTTI: No, almost that. Well, anyhow. The one that is closest to the President administration, what's his name? I mean, what's his position?

LEVINE: The Secretary of State?

TASCIOTTI: That's it. That's what he was.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: I worked for his mother seven years. (coughs) This was the period that everybody was out of work. (laughs)

LEVINE: Oh.

TASCIOTTI: You see, America put me to work. I mean, things happen. I was so embarrassing that when I, when the driver dropped me about half a mile from my house 'cause he was going straight, I had to pass the American-born kids playing crap by, in corners like this, and I was so embarrassed that I was taking some way, but I said to myself, "But they could do the same thing that I can." Couldn't find it, you know?

LEVINE: Yeah. So what did you do, wh, when you were working those seven years, and who was it for? Do you remember his name?

TASCIOTTI: What's that?

LEVINE: Who was, who was the Secretary of State?

MRS. TASCIOTTI: (?)

TASCIOTTI: E. R. (?).

LEVINE: Oh, okay.

TASCIOTTI: I worked for his mother. I saw him many times come in. She had eighteen people working outside like me. She had about, dadadadada, and (?) when I say how they catch me. Before, before the madam would have a, a tea party in the afternoon, the house had to be. Now, their butler had seen me the way I worked

outside, and he called me, and he called my boss of the wartime workers, he said, "I want Jimmy to come inside and do his share finishing touches every time the madam has something like this." And when they saw me, the girls saw me work like that, they said, hey, he's a guy that, that we didn't have to do (laughs) the, the work that, that was assigned for it. So, the, the, the butler always called me, and the guy, because he had a son, he wanted to work his son in there, and he would, he, he would antagonize me to make it, make it hard and all. And when it got to the butler, he always said, "No, Jimmy only." (laughs) Jimmy only. (laughs) And this is all because of the orphanage. I knew how to clean. I knew how to take care anything you want because we were assigned two boys to, to clean out, to take care each, each week or two weeks, you change, you go to some place else, I mean. So we had, we had how to make the fire, how to clean out potty, that this was all. So when I went to work for (?), I can do better than the women (?) because I was good.

LEVINE: I see.

TASCIOTTI: So that's why, "Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy," they always (?). The last thing that, that they wanted, that they were talking about, was that, their, their father could not, could not understand. Before the afternoon tea to sit outdoors, I would have a, they would have a, a terrace where they would stay. And then they would have a two steps down, and then a grass lawn immaculate, immaculate. So I was to either cut that before this happened or I was to use a broom to clean the leaves because they want to see grass green, they don't want to see leaves. All these things that we came up with, and the butler, the butler would always-

LEVINE: Choose you.

TASCIOTTI: (laughs) "No, no, he's too coarse." You, he, your, your, your son is too coarse. (laughs)

LEVINE: (laughs) How about the buildup and World War II? Did that affect you or your, or your brother?

TASCIOTTI: Beg your pardon?

LEVINE: World War II.

TASCIOTTI: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did that, did that affect you? Did you serve in the military or-

TASCIOTTI: No, no. I, I saw no military in Italy or America. None whatsoever. Especially in America, I was always involved in a machine job. In other words, we make things for the war, see?

LEVINE: So you were needed.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: Defense plan.

TASCIOTTI: The, the, the superintendent always, supervisor always, touch me here and say, "Do you want another six month deferment?" I said, "Sure, why not?"

LEVINE: Yeah.

TASCIOTTI: I was married, I had a kid, you know. Sure, why not?

MRS. TASCOTTI: We had a baby already. We had a baby.

TASCOTTI: So, I've never seen that. But I was teaching the girls and boys from my school and so on and so on, how to use-

LEVINE: Use the machines. Yeah. How did you meet your wife?

TASCOTTI: Oh, she can tell you.

LEVINE: Oh, okay.

MRS. TASCOTTI: We met in my own home.

TASCOTTI: You don't mind?

LEVINE: No, that's fine.

MRS. TASCOTTI: We met in my own home. He knew music, and he played the trumpet. That he learned in the home. And my father loved music. So he had a friend, and he said, we had a big house, he says, "I want to have a party for my daughter." I was going to be sixteen. And he says, "I'd like to have the music." He says, "I'll bring the music, and you supply the food." Did he get paid? It was just food. We made sandwiches.

TASCOTTI: During Depression, that's all they want. (?).

MRS. TASCOTTI: It was three players, and you were the youngest. Three or four?

TASCOTTI: Three, three.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Three, and he was the youngest. And he spoke beautiful Italian.

TASCOTTI: (laughs) (?)

MRS. TASCOTTI: (?) just about speaking good English 'cause I'm three years younger. And, probably nineteen, you were nineteen?

TASCOTTI: I was eighteen.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Eighteen. And my mother

LEVINE: And you-

MRS. TASCOTTI: took a liking to him. She wanted to know, she called the older man, "Who is that boy that my daughter is talking to?" that she, because we were close to age. The others were older. "Oh, he's an orphan. He was in an orphanage." And then she told him what a good boy, he came from Rome, spoke good Italian, and she says, "Yeah, I see that."

LEVINE: (laughs)

MRS. TASCOTTI: She took a liking to him right away, especially when he said he was in an orphanage.

TASCOTTI: Well, she called-

MRS. TASCOTTI: It broke her heart.

TASCOTTI: She called me in the kitchen.

MRS. TASCOTTI: She called him in the kitchen. She spoke Italian, you know, but-

LEVINE: A dialect.

MRS. TASCOTTI: (?) Not perfectly. And then he decided that he would like to come to visit. Didn't have a car. He used to come by train. And the lady next door had a party. So, we meet again.

LEVINE: (laughs)

MRS. TASCOTTI: And, then he was coming over for four years. My father couldn't, I was too young to get married. So, he did that.

TASCOTTI: You had a boyfriend before you graduated grammar school.

MRS. TASCOTTI: That's right. Fine. I had American boys, but he was different.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MRS. TASCOTTI: He was more considerate, kind, a gentleman.

TASCOTTI: (laughs)

MRS. TASCOTTI: And took me all over. Took me to New York, Madison Square Garden. I wasn't allowed to go anywhere because my father kept me a very sheltered life.

TASCOTTI: Opera, opera concerts and all.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Went to operas and concerts. I saw a lot of New York that way.

LEVINE: Yeah. What was your maiden name? What, what's your first name?

MRS. TASCOTTI: Susan.

LEVINE: Susan.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Well, I was, my, I was, you know the Assumption, the Catholic religion has the Assumption.

LEVINE: Right.

MRS. TASCOTTI: I was called (?).

LEVINE: Oh.

MRS. TASCOTTI: My mother named me after the assumption. But when she took me to school, they couldn't make that out. So, they wanted to know, they figured it would be Susie, you know?

LEVINE: (laughs)

MRS. TASCOTTI: But Susie is a nickname, so when I went to Italy, they didn't accept that either. I had to go to Susan.

LEVINE: Oh.

MRS. TASCOTTI: So that's how I became Susan. My brothers all call me Susie. All my friends call me Susie.

LEVINE: And what was your maiden name?

MRS. TASCOTTI: Polesso.

LEVINE: How do you spell?

MRS. TASCOTTI: P-O-L-E-S-S-O.

LEVINE: Okay, and you have two children?

MRS. TASCOTTI: Three.

LEVINE: Three children.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Well, I had. My daughter passed away. The love of my life.

LEVINE: Ah.

TASCOTTI: The worst thing that could happen to our family.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Yeah. That, that was a downfall for us. A few years ago.

TASCOTTI: God does wrong when he, when he takes children-

LEVINE: Yeah.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Before the parents.

TASCOTTI: Before, before the parents.

LEVINE: Yeah, I know.

MRS. TASCOTTI: And she was a retired teacher.

TASCOTTI: (coughs)

MRS. TASCOTTI: She went to Italy five times. She loved it.

TASCOTTI: Oh.

MRS. TASCOTTI: She asked her father, "Why did you leave such a beautiful country?"

LEVINE: (laughs)

MRS. TASCOTTI: And he says, "Ay, beautiful now and with the American dollar. But it wasn't when I lived there."

TASCOTTI: (laughs)

LEVINE: And she wouldn't be here if she, if you hadn't left your country.
(laughs)

MRS. TASCOTTI: That's right, right.

LEVINE: So, so why don't you mention your children's names?

MRS. TASCOTTI: Well, she was, I wanted her to be born in June, and she was born in November. But I love that name, and Joan was common. I said, "I'm going to name her June." And, she was to be born on my

birthday, the seventeenth of November, but she was late. So, we have a birthday in the same week. We always went to Pittsburgh and celebrate the birthday and, and Thanksgiving. Because it's all in one week.

LEVINE: One week, right. And your other children?

MRS. TASCOTTI: And then my son came, Jimmy. Ah, I named my son after my brother. His name was James Arthur.

LEVINE: Oh.

MRS. TASCOTTI: And I said, my sister and I were pregnant at the same time, two weeks apart. And I said, if it's a boy, one of us should name him. So everybody thinks he's a junior. She had a girl. I had a boy. I said, "No, he's James Arthur." And, he, in fact, he even has the flag that I had, my mother had and gave it to me.

LEVINE: Oh, for your, for your brother.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Yeah, he was buried.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MRS. TASCOTTI: You know how they give you the flag?

LEVINE: Yeah.

MRS. TASCOTTI: And he put it on his boat. He's got a boat. He lives on the (?).

TASCOTTI: (?)

MRS. TASCOTTI: Yeah, it's on the boat.

TASCOTTI: I can't, I can't get up, Susan.

MRS. TASCOTTI: And he's-

LEVINE: Well, we're practically, the tape's practically over, so maybe you should just tell me your other child's name. (laughs)

MRS. TASCOTTI: Well, this is Jimmy, James Arthur Ta, Tascotti. And the other one was just here for Christmas with his two girls. He's Louis, after his older brother that died in Italy who couldn't come. Louis Chris, after the father.

TASCOTTI: For Christopher.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Tascotti. And this is Jimmy's boat.

LEVINE: Oh, with the flag.

MRS. TASCOTTI: And that's my brother's flag.

LEVINE: Wonderful, wonderful.

MRS. TASCOTTI: And so that's, then I had another baby, who was a girl, and I was going to name it after my mother. I had her late in life, and it was a miscarriage. No, a stillborn.

LEVINE: Oh.

MRS. TASCOTTI: So, I would have had two girls and two boys.

LEVINE: Two boys. Right.

MRS. TASCOTTI: But at that point didn't work.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, we have about a half a minute. Is there anything you would like to say before we close the tape?

TASCOTTI: Thank you for coming.

LEVINE: Most welcome.

TASCOTTI: (laughs) I hope you, you don't mind that I, that I cried.

LEVINE: No, listen. I think it's, I think when you, when you talk about something that's moving, it's appropriate, and it's real, so.

MRS. TASCOTTI: Did I tell you, he loves dancing. We took dancing in Florida, and those are the medals.

LEVINE: Oh my. (laughs)

MRS. TASCOTTI: We did, we did running, track. And we-

LEVINE: And you-

MRS. TASCOTTI: Did dancing.

TASCOTTI: Susan, look at this.

LEVINE: Wow.

TASCIOTTI: Look, look at that.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: I'm looking.

LEVINE: Oh my. Oh, that's great. Good for you.

TASCIOTTI: We danced from 1981 to '96.

LEVINE: Wow.

MRS. TASCIOTTI: We, the medals from track, we used to, we belonged to the Golden Age Seniors, and we did track, and we did danc-