

EI-17

CATHERINE GAETANO GALLIPPI

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- **ITALY: NICASTRO**
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SIGRIST: Good morning. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. It is Wednesday, December 12th [1990]. We're here with Catherine Gaetano Gallippi who came through Ellis Island in 1922 at the age of eight from Italy. Could you please state your birth date?

GALLIPPI: Yes. It's February 27th, 1914.

SIGRIST: I see. And where were you born?

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GALLIPPI: I was born in a town called Nicastro, Italy.

SIGRIST: And where is that near? What part of Italy?

GALLIPPI: That's the southern part of Italy. One city below Naples. Around that area.

SIGRIST: I see. And what was your father's name?

GALLIPPI: His name was Anthony Gaetano.

SIGRIST: And what did he do for a living?

GALLIPPI: In Italy he was in business for himself. And when he was, when, when he was in America though, he was, he worked, he was a guardman, guardman for the Highland Park Zoo.

SIGRIST: Really?

GALLIPPI: (she laughs) He worked there.

SIGRIST: What year did he come?

GALLIPPI: Let's see. He was born in 1880 and he was fifteen when he left. I imagine 1895.

SIGRIST: 1895. And he came to America before you did?

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GALLIPPI: Oh yes, yes, he was a young man when he, a young boy he was here.

SIGRIST: Do you know why he came?

GALLIPPI: Yes. He was an orphan in Italy and he had an aunt and uncle in Pittsburgh. So they sent for him and he lived with them and went to school...

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: He had already gone to school in Italy, which he could speak and write Italian fluently. But then he learned English fluently, too, so he could do both, you know.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

GALLIPPI: Her name was Rose Amendola.

SIGRIST: I see. Let's talk a little bit about your mother.

GALLIPPI: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did she, did she work in Italy?

GALLIPPI: No, she was seventeen years old, seventeen when my dad met her.

SIGRIST: How did they meet?

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GALLIPPI: Well, when he was twenty four he went to Italy to, he wanted to get married but he wanted (she laughs) someone from his home town, I guess.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: And he met my mom.

SIGRIST: So did he know her before?

GALLIPPI: No, he did not know her before. He happened to see her out somewhere. (she laughs) I guess shopping. And he asked questions as to who she was and whose daughter she was because in those days they didn't approach the young women.

SIGRIST: Right.

GALLIPPI: They approached the parents. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Right.

GALLIPPI: So he went to visit the parents and he told them about that he had seen their daughter and he had just come from Italy but he was born there, I mean from America, but he was born there and he wanted to marry a nice young girl, you know. And so they asked him to tell about himself and I guess he explained what he was doing here in America and all that. And they thought he was nice. And they said that they would arrange a meeting with their, their daughter. And they did. And they arranged a

marriage. In those days it was different than today.

SIGRIST: Yes, indeed.

GALLIPPI: You get your own, you take, you meet your own girl today. In those days they kind of matched them up, you know.

SIGRIST: What year were they married?

GALLIPPI: Let's see, (she laughs). She was seventeen. I don't know. She often said she was married on December 8th, uh...

SIGRIST: Give me an approximate...

GALLIPPI: I don't know exactly what year. I don't know exactly what year.

SIGRIST: Well, let's talk about your, your family life then. Did your father go back to America or did he stay in Italy at that point?

GALLIPPI: After he married her, he stayed in Italy for a while because she talked him into staying there.

SIGRIST: Yes.

GALLIPPI: She didn't want to come to America and she started to cry and, and she said she didn't want to leave her family. So he considered that and...

SIGRIST: So he stayed?

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GALLIPPI: . he said, "Okay." He stayed. But then after a while, after three of us were born there, then he says, "Look," he says, "I don't want to stay here. I want to go back to America. It's a better place to raise our family and you better make up your mind to come with me."

SIGRIST: You said that, there were three of you. After the three who were born?

GALLIPPI: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Who were those three people?

GALLIPPI: It was my oldest brother Bruno and the second boy was Vincent but he had died as an infant. And then after, I was born after two boys.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: And so I was just one month old, I understand, when he really decided, he said, "No, I don't want to raise my family here." He said, "It's a better place in America and there's more, more. My children will have more than they have here." And she says, "Well," she says, "I still don't want to leave my family," she says. "Why don't you go back and get settled there and then send for me and I'll come." Well, he did come back and he got settled and kept writing to her, "Well, why don't you come?" And she still played hard to get, she still didn't want to come.

SIGRIST: Was he sending money?

GALLIPPI: He was sending money, too. Oh, we lived comfortably because he was sending money every month. We'd even go to the seashore every

summer.

GALLIPPI: No. She was just a family person. My grandmother and grandfather were farmers and they farmed and they had a produce place where they sold things, I remember.

SIGRIST: Did they live with you?

GALLIPPI: No. We had a separate apartment but we were very close. In Italy they, they have all these condo-like, you know, buildings, so my mother lived in one apartment and my grandmother right in the next apartment which I always went back and forth there.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the apartment that you lived in?

GALLIPPI: Yes, I do!

SIGRIST: Could you describe that?

GALLIPPI: Yes, I do. And, uh, ...

SIGRIST: How many rooms did it have?

GALLIPPI: It was one large room. You had your bed in there and your dining room there or living room, whatever, but the kitchen was separate. And we had a balcony which overlooked the street, you know. It was really nice as I remember. And my mother had it furnished really nicely and, uh...

SIGRIST: Were, were lots of members of the family living around there? You said

that your...

GALLIPPI: Well, her mother, her mother and dad, my uncle and aunt. There were only two others in the family.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: And I guess, I guess there were other relatives which, you know, I don't...

SIGRIST: Now your father came from that town originally.

GALLIPPI: Yes, yes.

SIGRIST: Were any of his relatives around?

GALLIPPI: Yes, yes. I remember an Aunt Theresa and she had a big farm and sometimes we spent nights there. They had a home, or a barn or something that we used.

SIGRIST: Was this a small town that was surrounded by fields?

GALLIPPI: Yes, yes. Well, at that time there were about seven thousand people. When I went back, there were over one hundred thousand people.

SIGRIST: Wow. (he laughs) That's...

GALLIPPI: They had taken a lot of that farm ground and built colleges and condos and everything.

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SIGRIST: So it was much more cosmopolitan.

GALLIPPI: Oh it was, yeah! So when I went there we went to the old part of it, which the outside walls, walls were just as old, I think, as they used to be but when you went inside they had gutted out all the inside and they had electricity inside.

SIGRIST: Did you not have electricity?

GALLIPPI: We did not have, we had oil lamps, but we had electric lights out on the streets. And the reason I remember that, when we came here into America my mother complained, she says, "My God, I thought America was supposed to be something great. You have gaslights here. We had electric lights in Italy." (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Did you have running water in your apartment?

GALLIPPI: No. We had to go out and fetch the water. I remember my mom carrying these big jugs of water in the house and we had basins and one of those pitchers that you pour water in to wash, you know.

SIGRIST: Did you have a bathroom?

GALLIPPI: We had an indoor bath but it was like, since it was a condo it was like a public thing.

SIGRIST: Yes, one per hallway or something?

GALLIPPI: Yes, one right in the hallway, yes. But they had pots, kind of, you know.

SIGRIST: Slop jars.

GALLIPPI: Whatever. Whatever you call them. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Was your mother religious? Did you have a strong religious life?

GALLIPPI: Very religious. Yes. She was so worried that I wouldn't have my, what we call "confirmation." I'm Catholic. I'm Catholic. So I must have been, just before we came here she, I had a private audience with the bishop. And he, I was confirmed there.

SIGRIST: Do you remember the name of the church?

GALLIPPI: Oh, they called it a funny name and I, I couldn't even translate.

SIGRIST: Was it, was it a large church?

GALLIPPI: It was. Oh yes. I remember the steps. There was a lot of steps there. And, uh, and when I went back to Italy I did look at it again.

SIGRIST: Did you, since your grandparents were so close, did you all get together for the holidays? For Christmas and Easter?

GALLIPPI: Always. Always. And we had festive days there. Their feasts used to last two or three...

SIGRIST: Like Saint's Days?

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GALLIPPI: Oh, yeah. We had Saint Anthony's Festival. They used to pass the saint around and in front...

SIGRIST: What do you mean "pass the saint around?"

GALLIPPI: They, they had religious procession. On his name day, like June 13th is his name day, and they passed a saint on a, four men would carry him on a..

SIGRIST: Is this a statue?

GALLIPPI: One of these, a statue. And I thought this statue was so huge, you know, because I was a little girl. And we had tables in front of our homes with beautiful tablecloths and they would set the saint on this table and we would pin money on the saint.

SIGRIST: That's interesting.

GALLIPPI: And you'd see all the rows of money. I remember that. And I thought, "My God, he's so tall." But you know when I went back I went to the church where the saint, where they kept the saint and he wasn't that tall at all. (they laugh) He was just, I guess only bigger...

SIGRIST: Funny, the world perceived through the eyes of a little girl.

GALLIPPI: Oh it was so different. It was so different.

SIGRIST: Did, at these, when you got together for the holidays, for instance, did you all, let's say for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, did, did your

grandparents host a big dinner for the family?

GALLIPPI: Yes, yes. And we would have every kind of fish imaginable on Christmas Eve.

SIGRIST: I was going to ask you, tell me a little bit about the food?

GALLIPPI: All right, the food. We had a lot of vegetables. Lot of beautiful baked goods...

SIGRIST: Because it was an agrarian area.

GALLIPPI: ...because, because, yes. And fish. You had all kinds of fish. And there we had, you know, I lived ten minutes away from, near the ocean.

SIGRIST: Yes.

GALLIPPI: We were near the ocean. So we had fresh fish all the time.

SIGRIST: Do you remember going down to the wharves at all?

GALLIPPI: Oh my, yes. What I do remember, also, in the middle of this town, they had a trough-like, you know, it was a round circle thing and they had fresh fish. They had them sectioned. All the different kinds of fish and when you wanted to buy, you would just stand there and somebody there would serve you. You would just point at what kind of fish you want...

SIGRIST: And they would fish it out.

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GALLIPPI: And they were alive. They were swimming there and when you got them, the way they wrapped them, they were still wiggling when you got them home. (they laugh)

SIGRIST: What was, you said for Christmas you served a lot of different kinds of fish. Describe one of the dishes. Do you remember what kind of fish and how did, did your grandmother prepare it?

GALLIPPI: Well, we had eel I remember, and... (they laugh) Yes. They still, you know, I thought it was a snake.

SIGRIST: (they laugh) How, how was it prepared?

GALLIPPI: Well, they would cut it in chunks I guess and probably deep fry it with seasoning and all that, you know. And then we had what you call...

SIGRIST: Is that a traditional Italian...

GALLIPPI: It's traditional, yes. And we had sardines and, uh, little minnows and I remember those little fishes.

SIGRIST: Did you ever help doing the cooking at all?

GALLIPPI: Not too much at that age. I do remember my mother and my grandmother working in the kitchen, especially this one day I remember. It was Christmas Eve and they were preparing things and all of a sudden my aunt, which was my mother's younger sister, she was fifteen at the time, she says, "Catherine, come on. Let's go for a walk." And she took me for a walk. And I don't know how many hours later we come back. My

mother was in bed, she had delivered a little baby boy on Christmas Eve.

SIGRIST: Wow.

GALLIPPI: And they said, "This is your little baby brother." Evidently my mother probably was showing signs of delivery and they didn't want me around because in those days the midwife went to the home...

SIGRIST: Right.

GALLIPPI: .and delivered the babies, you know. And I was so thrilled to have a little baby brother. (she laughs) I do remember that incident clearly.

SIGRIST: Now, and you had two brothers, yes? Or there was another child after that child?

GALLIPPI: There was a little girl after that child. My mother had two boys first, then a girl, then a boy, and then another girl. And when we came to this country she had two more boys.

SIGRIST: Oh, a big family.

GALLIPPI: Yes. Seven all together.

SIGRIST: All right, how, how did your mother finally acquiesce to coming to America?

GALLIPPI: Well, after a while she did get more accustomed to America and she thanked God many times, especially when Mussolini was gathering all the

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boys, you know, to be in the military. She said, "You know, I never gave your father credit for getting us here." She said, "I'm so happy that my boys are here and that they're not subject to what is going on there now."

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: But then my three brothers did serve here in the Second World War. They were in active duty.

SIGRIST: So, did your father finally send, I'm sorry, your father is still in Italy, right? No, he's gone back.

GALLIPPI: He's gone back.

SIGRIST: He's gone back so your mother also, so did he send all the fare for you all to...

GALLIPPI: Yes, he sent all the fare. I know I paid a half fare because I was under, I was under twelve. And the two of them paid, yeah, my youngest brother and sister, they were all half and so was I. But the oldest boy was thirteen so he paid the full fare.

SIGRIST: Do you know how much that was?

GALLIPPI: It said something in that paper how much it was but I don't remember. (she laughs) I really don't remember exactly.

SIGRIST: And so...

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GALLIPPI: Something like six hundred something, I don't know.

SIGRIST: All together?

GALLIPPI: Yeah.

SIGRIST: So what port did you leave from?

GALLIPPI: Naples.

SIGRIST: Uh huh. And how did you get to Naples?

GALLIPPI: We took a train from the southern part of Italy to Naples and, which wasn't too far.

SIGRIST: Right.

GALLIPPI: And then we stayed overnight at a hotel there. I remember that. And I do remember we had dinner in a restaurant where they served spaghetti with some kind of fish sauce and I wouldn't eat it.

SIGRIST: (he laughs) Did you all stay in one room in Naples or did you...

GALLIPPI: Yes, yes we did. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Wow. And do you remember, did you have a lot of luggage with you?

GALLIPPI: Yes, we did. Yes, we...

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SIGRIST: You said you were rather comfortable.

GALLIPPI: Yes, my mother, my mother brought all her linens, as much as she could carry with her, even some scatter rugs that she had weaved herself. And we had them for years here in America. They were really beautiful things.

SIGRIST: Did you, do you remember carrying a special toy or something with you?

GALLIPPI: Well, I did have a rag doll that my grandfather had given me. (she laughs)
And I did hold onto that somewhat. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: What was the name of the boat that you came over on?

GALLIPPI: Colombo. It's spelled, C-O-L-O-M-B-O.

SIGRIST: Uh huh. And, let's talk a little bit about being on the boat. That must have been kind of exciting actually for a little girl.

GALLIPPI: Yes, it was. I do remember once we got on the boat I ran downstairs somehow and it hadn't left the shore yet and there was a porthole. I don't know, I just, I think I got on my knees, there must have been a ledge there. And I was looking through this porthole and I remember seeing my grandmother and my uncle and aunt and they were waving, you know.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: And, and then it was pulling away. That's the last I remember of that shore.

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SIGRIST: You, you traveled third class?

GALLIPPI: Yes, we did.

SIGRIST: What were the accommodations like?

GALLIPPI: There were berths. We slept in berths, upper and lower, and I do remember being on a lower berth.

SIGRIST: Were there lots of people in one room or...

GALLIPPI: Lots of, yes. There was, like big hallway, long hallway and there were double berths all the way down.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: And I do remember a lot of people were seasick. I guess they must have been seasick. They were vomiting a lot.(she laughs)

SIGRIST: What season did you leave?

GALLIPPI: This was in the fall.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: September.

SIGRIST: September is when you left.

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GALLIPPI: Yes.

SIGRIST: Do you remember, let's talk a little bit about the boat ride over. Did you enjoy the boat ride?

GALLIPPI: I do remember one exciting thing, this is why, they almost hit an iceberg. I don't know whether it was the thing, my mom probably did mention to me so many times and here the, the boat was really rocking or something because everybody got so sick. And then we were stalled there for a while. It took fifteen days to get here. And when we did get here, I guess at the harbor here in New York, the boats stood, we were, we were left on the boat for a whole day. We didn't get off right away...

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: until the ferry came for us.

SIGRIST: Were there other kids on the boat?

GALLIPPI: Other children?

SIGRIST: Yeah.

GALLIPPI: Oh yes, there were a lot of children.

SIGRIST: Did you meet anyone on the boat, anyone...?

GALLIPPI: Well, my mother didn't somehow, the two little ones she kept to herself and my brother, well, he was close to Mom pretty much because he was

the older boy and since that woman kind of took care of me all the time...

SIGRIST: Yes, let's talk a little about the woman.

GALLIPPI: She was such a lovely person. All I can remember is, she must have been a young woman. She couldn't have been...

SIGRIST: And, and she was from, from second or first class...

GALLIPPI: She was from first, she was traveling first class. She had beautiful black hair, I do remember, in a knot, you know. She had a nice, she had long hair. And she was so kind to me and she would take me on the deck and we would talk to the captain and I can't forget the captain because he pinched my cheek so hard one day. (she laughs) He says, "What a cute little girl," he said in Italian. I did understand that. I couldn't speak English at all then. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: So she, did she eat with you? Did you eat with her?

GALLIPPI: She ate, I ate with her and then at certain times of the day then she would take me back to my mom and then she would go on her own, I guess. I don't know, just...

SIGRIST: And your mother was happy to give you up.

GALLIPPI: My mother was very happy. She had become very good friends. I think this woman just befriended my mom, she was a little sorry for her because she was all...

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SIGRIST: Was she Italian?

GALLIPPI: Yes, yes. 'Cause Mom was traveling with all these little children. She thought she would help her. I think that was the idea of her taking me with her.

SIGRIST: What, what sorts of food did they serve you on the boat?

GALLIPPI: There were a lot of soups. Mom, because she had the little children, they would give her special soups for the little babies. They did have that.

SIGRIST: Yes.

GALLIPPI: And then other foods, there were like stews, I remember, and meats and stuff like that. And there must have been, either the people didn't eat a lot, but there was a lot of food left over, and I do remember...

SIGRIST: With everyone sick probably no one wanted to eat.

GALLIPPI: You know what they did, when they had this food that was leftover, they took these big tanks of food and they would dump them overboard. (they laugh) I remember that because I was curious and I would see this thing going on and I'd say to Mom, "Mom, they're throwing all that food." And she says, "Well the fishes have to eat too." (they laugh)

SIGRIST: Did you have to bring your own tableware or did they...

GALLIPPI: They gave us, when we got on the boat they issued us a cup. I think they were tin, if I remember, a dish, a tin dish and a cup and a bowl. It was a

series, and I guess spoons and knives and forks, whatever.

SIGRIST: Was there a third class dining room or did you all have to wait in line or...

GALLIPPI: We had to wait in line. We got in line and they gave us our food as we went by this, like a buffet style thing, you know, and then we went to a table.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: They were common, like a picnic table is what they were.

SIGRIST: Did you ever have to do any safety drills or anything like that, anything that you remember?

GALLIPPI: I don't recall, I don't recall anything. We possibly had lectures I think on the thing.

SIGRIST: And how long did you say? Fifteen days?

GALLIPPI: Fifteen days on that ship.

SIGRIST: Well, you must have been relieved when you arrived in New York Harbor.

GALLIPPI: Yes, yes, yes.

SIGRIST: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

GALLIPPI: I do remember seeing the Statue of Liberty. And I do remember my, when

we met my dad on shore. And he just saw, I do remember him saying to my mother, "My God," he said, "What happened to you?" She had lost so much weight. She was so thin, you know. And she was worn out with these children, you know, but...

SIGRIST: Well, here's your mother with these kids...

GALLIPPI: Yes.

SIGRIST: And you arrived at Ellis Island...

GALLIPPI: Yes, yes.

SIGRIST: The boat docks and you're ferried over to Ellis Island...

GALLIPPI: Yes.

SIGRIST: Your mother must have been relieved to be on ground but...

GALLIPPI: I think so.

SIGRIST: She still had to get all you kids...

GALLIPPI: I think so, yes. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: What do you remember about Ellis Island? Do you remember, for instance, any of the legal inspections or the medical exams or anything?

GALLIPPI: Well, that I do remember them looking you over, examining you and, but

there were so many people there. It seems like it was so crowded, you know.

SIGRIST: Yes.

GALLIPPI: And naturally our Mom would try to keep us together and, uh....

SIGRIST: Yes, frightened that someone would get lost.

GALLIPPI: Well, yes, with four of us (she laughs), you know.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you wore when you got off the boat? Sometime people remember...

GALLIPPI: Yeah, well, I know Mom put on my nice dress because I was going to meet my father and she did dress me beautifully because I was a little girl after two boys, you know.

SIGRIST: Did she make the clothes?

GALLIPPI: Oh, she made everything. She sewed and she knitted and crocheted and we, in Italy, the women made their trousseau. They did their own thing there. And when the boy married them the woman had to have majority of the things. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: I see. Now, how long, you weren't here over night, were you, at Ellis?

GALLIPPI: No. I do recall riding a ferry. It was dark. This is one thing I do remember. And after we got off the ferry I, my dad must have, must have

hailed a cab and we got on, in the cab, a bunch of us, all of us and I must have fell asleep, really, because I must have been tired. And then we, when I woke up, I don't know whether we were in Pittsburgh or whether we were in a motel, but I do remember getting to Pittsburgh, getting to this, we had to stay with someone because my dad had found a house and because my mother took her time to make up her mind to get to America, he had lost the lease or something. So we stayed with a friend of his for about a month.

SIGRIST: I see. I wanted to ask you one more question about Ellis. I assume that, that your father had already taken care of any train arrangements or anything else.

GALLIPPI: Yes, he had.

SIGRIST: But, when you were at Ellis, tell me about the woman with the long hair that you had mentioned.

GALLIPPI: Oh yes. This young woman here, she, they were examining her hair. She had it braided up so beautifully because, I guess, she was going to meet someone, you know. And they unbraided all her hair and evidently they found something there because they were clipping her hair, just cutting here and there. And she started to cry. She said, "But your cutting my hair!" She says, "Well, my dear, if you want to be in America, we want to make sure that your hair is clean." So evidently, I don't know what she had, lice maybe.

SIGRIST: Sure. Anyway, your father is at Ellis Island. And do you remember seeing your father?

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GALLIPPI: Yes I do. And he was so happy. (she laughs) He was so happy to see us and as I said, the first thing he said, "My God," he said, "Rose, what happened to you?"

SIGRIST: Well do you, did you really remember what he looked like, because you were quite young when he would have to gone back?

GALLIPPI: Yes, he had moustache. I do remember that. And he was tall, dark hair. A nice looking man.

SIGRIST: Yeah. Did you have photographs in Italy so you would...

GALLIPPI: Oh yes, yes. That familiarized him. Yeah.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: Because, oh, I have to tell you. I forgot. When he came back to Italy I was six and I didn't know he was my dad and I had got used to sleeping with my mother. So I had to give up the bed because my dad had come back and I, I could say that I thought I hated him at the time. I thought he was an intruder.

SIGRIST: Yes.

GALLIPPI: I didn't know him. I thought my grandfather was my dad, you know. Just with my grandmother, mother, and my mother, so, I had to really get used to it. But he was so kind to me. He bought me all kinds of fancy little dresses and things from America and he says, "I'm your dad. I'm your

Pop," is what he said at the time and well, I, I didn't care for him. I really didn't.

SIGRIST: Did he, when you met him at Ellis Island, did he bring little gifts and things?

GALLIPPI: Ah, yes, oh yes. He had, uh, he didn't have them with him but when we got to where we were he did have them. He tried to make up for the time I didn't see him, you know.

SIGRIST: In, in our final few minutes let's talk about how your mother adjusted to America when she finally got here and talk a little about those early years.

GALLIPPI: Okay. In those days we didn't, they didn't have hot water in the house. They didn't have bathrooms, but we moved into a house where we, where they were just starting to put the bathrooms in the house. We had a sink and a commode there and there was a place where they are going to the tub but the tub wasn't there yet. And my mother used to have one of these washtubs and fill them up and that's where she bathed us. And it was a little rough in those days. And not having hot water she'd have to have a pot, a big kettle of water on the stove all the time. We had a coal stove.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: And...

SIGRIST: Did you have electricity in Pittsburgh?

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GALLIPPI: Uh, no. They did not have electricity in the house then. They had, uh, gas.

SIGRIST: They had gaslight?

GALLIPPI: The gaslights. But they had, they had gaslights outside, too.

SIGRIST: Yes. Yes. Did you, so your mother never worked then. She...

GALLIPPI: No. She was just a home person. I know when we used to come home from school and we says, "Mom!" she was there.

SIGRIST: Did, how did you learn English?

GALLIPPI: Well, I went to Catholic school. My dad enrolled us in a Catholic school and there was a nun there that really took an interest in me.

SIGRIST: Do you remember her name?

GALLIPPI: Sister Leoncy [ph], I remember her. (she laughs) It was an odd name. That's why I think I remember. But she did, she took a lot of pains with me. I remember they used to write sentences across the board and she would pick each child to say the sentence and then spell each word. And I remember this one day she called on me and with a stick we had to read the sentence and then point and spell each word. And then when I was through she turned me around to the class. She said, "Look here children, this young girl came from Italy and she can't speak English real well yet but did you see what she has done? And a lot of children are born here. And don't know as much." Evidently I must have picked (she laughs) up

the English language real fast.

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever learn English?

GALLIPPI: Not fully.

SIGRIST: Did she try?

GALLIPPI: She tried very hard. She could write her name, she could tell time, money, everything. She knew everything about that, but she never spoke fluently...

SIGRIST: Did she ever...

GALLIPPI: ...but my dad did.

SIGRIST: Well, of course, he had been here too for a while...

GALLIPPI: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Did she ever take classes at all, night classes in English or anything like that?

GALLIPPI: I do remember that they were trying to get a lot of these women at that time to take classes but they said, "We're too busy with the children. We just can't take time." So this is why a lot of people did not learn.

SIGRIST: When, where your father lived in Pittsburgh, where you moved in, was that an Italian neighborhood?

GALLIPPI: We had Germans, Italians, and, uh, very few blacks in that neighborhood at that time.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: And everybody had, they had a lot in common because they had all immigrated.

SIGRIST: A lot of immigrants. Uh huh. We have two minutes left.

GALLIPPI: Okay!

SIGRIST: We're zipping through here.

GALLIPPI: Okay.

SIGRIST: And, talk a little bit, you had a brother who died early on.

GALLIPPI: Yes, that was the sad, that was the tragedy of our life. Things really changed then. Mom...

SIGRIST: This was by an accident?

GALLIPPI: Yes. He had gone out to get a haircut and Mom says, "Make sure you're back for supper." And he says, "Oh Mom, I'll be back for then." And here, on the way back from his haircut, he had got his haircut, a policeman came to the door and have her the news and all I remember is she just fell back. She just fell back into a faint.

SIGRIST: And how did it happen?

GALLIPPI: He was riding his bicycle and they had come to a stop sign. He had stopped and this truck didn't stop in time and pushed him and he fell to the side and I understand that the bicycle went into the air and the handle pierced the main intestine. He lived two days.

SIGRIST: I see.

GALLIPPI: And that was, all I remember mourning. My mother mourned. She kept me home from school about two months.

SIGRIST: And this is soon after you arrived?

GALLIPPI: Soon after we arrived.

SIGRIST: How long?

GALLIPPI: Two years.

SIGRIST: Two years after you arrived.

GALLIPPI: Two years, yes. And I, I was only ten but I think I aged plenty in that time.

SIGRIST: Yes, yes. Well, on that note...

GALLIPPI: Well, she depended on me. I was the, well, I was the oldest then after my brother was killed. And in those days they mourned so much.

SIGRIST: Well, it was a great tragedy.

GALLIPPI: Oh, she was so, it was, she wore black for I don't know how many years, she was in mourning. And then my father died eight years after that so there was a double mourning there, you know.

SIGRIST: So, did she curse America, for ever having come here?

GALLIPPI: No, no she didn't. She did not. All she said to my dad, "If I hadn't come to this country I would still have my son."

SIGRIST: Yes.

GALLIPPI: But he says, he said, "This couldn't be helped, Rose, you have to understand. It just couldn't be helped." So that's, uh...

SIGRIST: Well, I want to thank you very much for giving us your time...

GALLIPPI: Oh, you're welcome.

SIGRIST: ...and coming out to Ellis Island.

GALLIPPI: Well, I hope I helped you in any way. (she laughs)

SIGRIST: Oh, you have. This is, this is Paul Sigrist signing off for the National Park Service.