

EI-195

MARIA MARTONE PARILLO

BIRTH DATE: NOVEMBER 27, 1892

INTERVIEW DATE: 7/27/1992

RUNNING TIME: 23:52

INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.

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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 8/1993

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 11/1993

ITALY, 1921

PORT: NAPLES

AGE 28

RESIDENCES: ITALY: BELLONA

US: MECHANICSVILLE, NY

SIGRIST: Good morning. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is July 27th, 1992, Monday. I am here at the Moses Ludington Nursing Home in Ticonderoga, New York, upstate New York, with Maria Parillo, who came from Italy in 1921 when she was twenty-eight years old. She arrived in New York on July 4, 1921. Mrs. Parillo's birth date is November 27th, 1892. Also present is her daughter, Josie Gowett. Josie will be translating for us from Italian to English. Good morning both of you. Can we start with Mrs. Parillo giving us her full name, please.

GOWETT: Ma, Maria (?).

SIGRIST: What is her maiden name, please?

GOWETT: Martone.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

GOWETT: Okay, Ma. Ma, (Italian). Maria (?). (Italian)

PARILLO: Augustina.

GOWETT: No, no, Ma.

PARILLO: Martone.

GOWETT: Martone.

SIGRIST: How do you spell that please, Josie?

PARILLO: M-A-R-T-O-N-E.

SIGRIST: And where were you born?

PARILLO: Ma, (Italian)

PARILLO: In Bellona.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that too, please?

PARILLO: Bellona.

GOWETT: B-E-L-L-O-N-A.

SIGRIST: Whereabouts in Italy is that? You can answer if you like. That's fine.

PARILLO: Near Naples. It's a suburb of Naples.

SIGRIST: Can you tell us about what the town looked like when you were a child?

GOWETT: Ma, (whispers)

SIGRIST: That's okay. Take your time. (whispers) That's fine.

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian).

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: (Italian) Pretty good town?

SIGRIST: Was it a big town?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: Not too big.

GOWETT: Not too big.

SIGRIST: Did it have a church?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Right. (Italian) (whispering)

SIGRIST: What is her father's name?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian).

PARILLO: Augustina.

GOWETT: Augustina Gay.

PARILLO: (Italian)

SIGRIST: And what did he do for a living?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian) (whispers)

GOWETT: He built homes for people. You know, he was a carpenter.

SIGRIST: You may do that in your full voice, also, so the microphone will pick you

up.

GOWETT: Yeah, he was a carpenter. He built home. (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Yes. (Italian) He built their home.

SIGRIST: What did your house look like?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Pretty good size. (Italian) Up and down.

SIGRIST: What was it made out of?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: Stone, of stone.

GOWETT: Stone. It was made of stone, and had two floors.

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Oh. She wanted to show her kids the house but we never did.

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Yeah. (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

SIGRIST: Did you have a garden in the house?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: A little bit.

GOWETT: Do I have to translate?

SIGRIST: Uh, yeah. I think it would be a good idea.

GOWETT: (Italian) Escarole, tomatoes.

PARILLO: We had a lemon tree.

GOWETT: Oh, they had a lemon tree.

SIGRIST: Who did the gardening?

GOWETT: (Italian), Ma?

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Your mother? A little bit you, she was too small.

SIGRIST: What was your mother's name?

GOWETT: Okay. (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: (Italian) Her name was Mary Carmen.

SIGRIST: Her maiden name? Her mother's maiden name?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Sorrentino. Maria Carmen Sorrentino.

PARILLO: When she was young.

GOWETT: When she was young.

SIGRIST: How do you spell her maiden name, do you know? Sorrentino.

GOWETT: S-O-R-R-E-N-T-I-N-O.

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Okay, Ma.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me what your mother was like as a person. What was her personality like?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian) (there is a minor distraction) (Italian)

PARILLO: Yeah. (?)

GOWETT: (Italian) She said she was a good cook. She was good.

SIGRIST: What was your favorite food that she cooked?

PARILLO: Macaroni.

GOWETT: Macaroni. What else?

PARILLO: Escarole.

GOWETT: (Italian) With beans.

SIGRIST: Did you make your own macaroni?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Oh, she made it herself. She made the pasta.

SIGRIST: Did your mother work at all?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian)

PARILLO: Yeah.

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: My father.

GOWETT: She helped her husband.

SIGRIST: How did she help him?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Oh, she helped make the cement.

PARILLO: (?) together.

GOWETT: And put the bricks together, or the stones together.

SIGRIST: What that hard work for a woman to do?

GOWETT: (Italian) The women did.

SIGRIST: Did you have brothers and sisters?

GOWETT: (Italian) How many?

PARILLO: One sister.

GOWETT: One sister.

PARILLO: One brother.

GOWETT: One sister and one brother.

SIGRIST: What, what did you do for fun when you were a little girl growing up?

PARILLO: Mom, (Italian)

PARILLO: (she laughs) I don't remember.

GOWETT: You don't remember? (Italian) bicycle?

PARILLO: No.

GOWETT: No.

SIGRIST: Did you keep pets?

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Oh, they had a little buggy. And what else?

PARILLO: That's it.

GOWETT: That's all? (Italian)

PARILLO: No.

GOWETT: No pets.

SIGRIST: Do you remember going to school as a little girl?

PARILLO: (?)

GOWETT: Yep. She went to school. Okay, a little bit, Ma. Ma, (Italian)

PARILLO: Four.

GOWETT: Four years.

PARILLO: (Italian) Over there.

SIGRIST: What did they teach you?

GOWETT: (Italian) (Italian), right? To read and write.

SIGRIST: Why did you want to come to America?

GOWETT: Mom, (Italian)

PARILLO: My husband came over here.

GOWETT: Her husband brought her.

SIGRIST: When did you get married?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: In '21.

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Right. See, that was their honeymoon. They got married and came on the boat.

SIGRIST: Was your husband from the same town?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian)

PARILLO: No.

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: A small town? (Italian)

PARILLO: Bologna.

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: He's the one that bring over here.

GOWETT: Yes, I know. (Italian) He was from Bologna, too.

SIGRIST: What was his name?

GOWETT: (Italian), Ma?

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: No, no, no. (Italian)

PARILLO: Stephano.

GOWETT: Stephano Parillo.

SIGRIST: That's P-A-R-I-L-L-O. How did you meet your husband?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian)

PARILLO: I was (?).

GOWETT: I was a young girl.

PARILLO: (?)

GOWETT: Some, I think it was a member of the family, fixed them up. In those days they did. They arranged marriages.

SIGRIST: Did you want to come to America?

GOWETT: (Italian), Ma? Yes.

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: (Italian)

SIGRIST: Do you remember what the boat trip was like?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian).

PARILLO: I don't remember. Bad, bad.

GOWETT: Bad.

PARILLO: And he was in the (?).

GOWETT: It was choppy, in other words, and she said she was afraid.

SIGRIST: Did you get sick?

GOWETT: (Italian) Yes, she did.

SIGRIST: Do you know how long it took to get to America?

GOWETT: How long, Ma, (Italian)?

PARILLO: Fourteen days.

GOWETT: Fourteen days.

SIGRIST: Fourteen days. Do you remember the name of the boat?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: Provedenza.

GOWETT: Ooh, Provedenza. Probably Providence.

SIGRIST: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty when you came into New York Harbor?

GOWETT: (Italian) Do you remember that? (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: Okay. She said yes about the Statue of Liberty, that she realized she was there. And then she said she went with her husband's cousin for a few days. Can I insert something here?

SIGRIST: Sure, sure. Absolutely.

GOWETT: My father was already an American citizen. He lived in Mechanicville, in New York.

SIGRIST: Was he born in this country?

GOWETT: No, no.

SIGRIST: He had emigrated from Italy.

GOWETT: Yes, yes. And he lived, he had a family in Mechanicville. His wife died, and he had five children. And he took the five children, went back to Italy, and that's when they fixed him up, and my mother, see.

SIGRIST: So he was a big older than your mother, perhaps?

GOWETT: He was forty.

SIGRIST: And, actually, your mother was not a young girl either in terms of marriage.

GOWETT: Oh, that's right. She was an old maid. They considered her an old maid at twenty-eight. So then they courted. They fixed them up and they courted, and they came back and settled in Mechanicville.

SIGRIST: Do you remember anything about Ellis Island?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian) a New York? (Italian) Do you remember that? Yeah, Ma, (Italian). It was (Italian). You remember? Huh?

PARILLO: I don't remember nothing.

GOWETT: You don't remember nothing. She used to always talk about that, that they were herded like cattle. You still see films of that.

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: (Italian), Ma.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what luggage you took with you? What did you bring to America from Italy?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian)

PARILLO: My clothes.

GOWETT: Your clothes. (Italian) Jewelry? (Italian) Earrings, jewelry.

SIGRIST: Do you remember saying goodbye to your family in Italy?

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: It was a bad thing.

GOWETT: It was a bad thing.

PARILLO: I was (?).

GOWETT: They were separated at Naples. That's where they took the boat.

SIGRIST: It was sad saying goodbye to your family.

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: Ahh. It was bad.

GOWETT: (Italian)

PARILLO: No more (?).

GOWETT: She never saw them again.

SIGRIST: When you got to America, did you write to your mother and father?

GOWETT: (Italian) Yes, they wrote all the time.

SIGRIST: Did any of your other relatives come to America?

GOWETT: Mom, (Italian)

PARILLO: Nah.

GOWETT: Oh, (Italian).

PARILLO: I don't remember.

GOWETT: You don't remember. She has a brother and a sister, and they both came.

SIGRIST: Before or after she did?

GOWETT: This is what she just said she couldn't remember. Ma, it had to be after because she was the oldest. (Italian) Yeah, they came after.

SIGRIST: Did you like America when you got here?

GOWETT: Ma, (Italian)

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: (Italian) She always said she was grateful that we were here during the war, because she had three girls.

SIGRIST: Why don't you . . .

PARILLO: (Italian)

GOWETT: No, Ma, no.

SIGRIST: We can wrap this up, but let me ask you a few questions, Josie. Perhaps you could . . .

PARILLO: Leave me alone.

SIGRIST: In a minute, in a minute. Perhaps you could list the children yourself, and if you have any siblings, and when you were born, if you would do that, please.

GOWETT: You mean my sisters.

SIGRIST: Yes, exactly, and where you were born and when.

GOWETT: Okay. I was born in, no, let me put it this way. The oldest sister was born in . . .

PARILLO: I got to go in (?).

GOWETT: All right, Mom. All right. (Italian) My sister Mary was born in Troy, New York, December 29, 1923.

SIGRIST: So soon after they got here, actually, a year.

GOWETT: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, she got pregnant, became pregnant on the boat. That child died, and then she became pregnant for the oldest one, and she was born in '22. I take that back. And I was born in January 22nd, 1924.

SIGRIST: Okay. And where were you born, in Troy, also?

GOWETT: I was born in Mechanicville. See, that's all the same area. Then we have another.

PARILLO: (?)

GOWETT: Then we have another sister that was born May 24th in 1927, and she was born in New York City, in The Bronx. Then we moved. See, my father traveled. Then we moved to Ticonderoga and there was a boy born in Ticonderoga, but he's been dead. When was his birthday? It was September 22nd.

PARILLO: (?)

GOWETT: You know, I really can't. He was forty-five when he died. He died about ten years ago, so that would make him, what?

PARILLO: Leave me alone.

GOWETT: (Italian), Ma.

SIGRIST: Well, this is a good time, then, I think. You know, I want to thank you for letting me come out, and for speaking with you, Mrs. Parillo. Thank you for your time.

And this is Paul Sigrist signing off for the National Park Service in Ticonderoga, New York, with Maria Parillo.