

EI-206

**MARJORIE (MAGGIORANA) CORSI NOTINI**

**BIRTH DATE: JUNE 24, 1914**

**INTERVIEW DATE: 9/1/1992**

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**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.**

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**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 10/1994**

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**ITALY, 1920**

**AGE 6**

**PASSAGE ON "THE DUCA D'AOSTA"**

**Port: Naples**

**Residences: Capestrano**

**Hyde Park, MA**

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm here today in Hyde Park, Massachusetts, with Marjorie Notini, and we are going to talk about Mrs. Notini's immigration experience from Italy, leaving December 1920 and arriving in this country in January 1921, and she was six-and-a-half years old at that time, and today is September 1, 1992, and I'm very happy to be here, and I'm sorry that we had to postpone this so many times, but finally I'm here, and I want you to start by saying your full name, in English and in Italian.

NOTINI: I was born Maggiorana Corsi, and today I am called Marjorie Corsi Notini.

LEVINE: And where were you born?

NOTINI: I was born in Capestrano, which is fifty miles northeast of Rome, and it's in the Appennini Mountains, the highest peak of the Appennini Mountains.

LEVINE: And what is your birth date?

NOTINI: My birthday is June 24, 1914.

LEVINE: And you mentioned earlier about the culture of the town where you were born. Would you like to say what about that is meaningful to you?

NOTINI: It's very meaningful. I was born in a town that has a great deal of history, and I have brought that, I was very lucky to have parents who brought us to respect Italy, and they taught us much of the Italian culture. Our town is one of the oldest, well, maybe I'm prejudiced, I feel it has an awful lot of history, and we go way back, before the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was started by the shepherds of Abruzzi, of the Appennini Mountains, with the help of the shepherds from Greece. They fought the Semminiders [ph] in the town of Carufa [ph]. And that was, they threw them out, and that was the beginning of the Roman Empire. From there the Roman Empire started. And our people

say, "Italia (Italian) Abruzzi." "Italy was born in Abruzzi." Our town had the first church in Capestrano, of St. Peter. This was the first church before St. Peter at Rome. At one time it had been a pagan temple. The altar, which we saw the last time we went, is stained with blood of the virgins that were sacrificed. It was a pagan temple. Then it was consecrated by a Pope. They took the centerpiece from the altar and put a white marble, and they consecrated it, and it became the first St. Peter church before St. Peter of Rome. And here the princes of Aragon and other great people who made history were married, and it really has a great deal of history the more you look into it. I'd be here forever all day. And then . . .

LEVINE: Why don't I ask you about your family members when you lived there, and then, as parts of the history of the town are significant in your describing your childhood you can mention them.

NOTINI: Okay. All right. Well, we'll start . . .

LEVINE: What was your father's name?

NOTINI: Our family goes back way before, I have pictures over

here that show that Pope Pious II was a Minniorati Pallomini. Here is the family coat of arm, Pope Innocent VII and Pope Peter V, they were the proper ones. And Pope Innocent II was Cosimo Minniorati [ph] [ph], and he was Pallomini as well, and my grandmother's name, my father's name, my grandmother's name was Minniorati [ph], and she was also a Corsi. My father was a Corsi Minniorati [ph], and the Corsis were people who came from Tuscany, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and they bought over the estate of the Pallomini, and they ruled over our town. That was, from the House of the Medici. This family here were born five boys. They were called Cinque Corsi. One of my grandmothers, just how far back I really don't know, because we have a scroll in Capestrano which tells all this history. My cousin sent me some, but not all of it, and she did send me the names of these cousins, and they worked with, they were connected with the House of the Medici. And they were sent as commissioners, or whatever, to Austria. They ruled part of Italy. They were called El Cinque Cane Corsi, The Five Corsi Dogs, and they ruled very sternly, and this is our background. Oh, by the way, go on from one thing to another. Here it is. "Italia (Italian)

Abruzzi." "Italy was born in Abruzzi." So they came into this town. They were Florentines, okay. So this is my father's background, and my father was born in Inabelli [ph]. His father married a woman from the next town because they have lands, and this was how marriages were formed. She was a very wealthy woman who came, her name was Isabella . . . Hmm, I can't think of her last name now, but however, he lived there. But then the family came back to Capestrano to live. And the last time that I was in Capestrano, which was three years ago, I really was stunned to go into the bedroom where my grandmother was born. All the houses of the family, especially this one here, it struck me more than anything else. This was Italian. They all had oval ceilings and painting, and the parlor was just as large as our whole house here, and they're all with beautiful paintings. And the house where I was born, that had paintings, too, and that had oval ceilings. And that was not in the piazza where, you know, the castle is, the Pallomini castle is, or where the Minniorati [ph]. But I was born in, it may have been a palace, I don't know. But during the time of my grandparents, they had a ballroom there, and when I was there I remember I lived with

grandmother, and we had a great, big winding stairway, which is this one here. And here, this is where I was born, and the ceilings in our bedrooms were oval and they were painted, but the last time I went I saw them. It has been neglected. And you can see the moss, because it's right inside the Appennini Mountains. The back of the building is enclosed with the mountains. And so I really felt very, very bad when I saw, you know, the condition it was in. There's something, I've lived in many, many houses, but it never affects me like that. And when I looked in and I saw that, I really felt like crying, and I heard that it was sold. And what I was thinking, that the government helps to build, rebuild these historic places, and maybe they help you, you know? And I know that it would have been impossible for us to keep up anything like that. But I found out that a man from Rome came, and he's having the whole thing reconstructed, the courtyard is being reconstructed. The confessional was taken into the bottom hallway there where you see that foyer coming down, and the confessional is being reconstructed, you know, artists are coming over to do it over, and it will be a library for rare books.

LEVINE: Now, what, this was a home, strictly a home?

NOTINI: This is where we lived. This is where I was born.

LEVINE: And it had a confessional in it?

NOTINI: Oh, we had a courtyard. And in the courtyard we had the church of Santa Rosa, a little chapel. Our people not only had, you know, their homes, but they also had, you know, churches connected with the house in the courtyards.

LEVINE: Now, who would attend such a church?

NOTINI: Well, at that time they had priests that lived with them, you know. Not when I was born. By then it was gone, you know, things were going down.

LEVINE: But before that.

NOTINI: Before that they had, like, the apartment, when I went to the Corsi Palace in Capetrano I went to visit my cousin. This is where we stayed. And this is where, you know, there's a great deal of history behind that. What happened, that when, in the great, big parlor they had, and there, again, they have oval ceilings and, you know, paintings, but they're all faded, you

know. But they opened these great, big portals, these great, big doors, and there is the altar, and it has, the top of the altar has a slab of marble from Jerusalem, so it has a great deal of history there. But each house had its own chapel, it's own church. And one of those places in the house of Capestrano, Casa Corsi, they call it, they also had an apartment for the priest. The priest would live with the family, you know, but in his own apartment.

LEVINE: Now, would the priest be strictly a priest for that family?

NOTINI: For that family. Right, right. But that's going way back, you know. That was, in my father's time, before that, things like that. And what they would do at night, they would all gather together, open in this great, big parlor, and there they would say the rosary, and that they were closed, they would be converted to a parlor again.

LEVINE: Why don't you tell me about your grandparents and what you remember about them?

NOTINI: My grandmother was a very, very stern person, and she, you know, we had to walk just so, talk just so, and

one time she told my mother she was taking the children to visit my grandfather's sister, and when we, of course, my mother was frightened as heck, she'd get us, had us all dressed up and, you know, she coached us and all that. And I remember when we went to see my grand, my great-aunt, she was in this great, big bed, and her sister was beside her, the servants were beside her, and when we approached her we all had to bow before her, and she was lying down in bed. Big fat woman, but, you know, she got all the respect. We had to bow before her and kiss her hand, and then step back. But my grandma was the one that would coach us and tell us what to do. We were brought up very strict, but then we were very normal children the other way, you know. So grandmother was, she was feared by everyone. She wasn't very compassionate, because she had been brought up, I always think of them as Marie Antoinettes, you know. When she was a young girl she never combed her hair. There was always someone to comb her hair. And they had, when she arrived from Inabelli [ph], where my father was born, where they had lived and they came back to Capestrano, I remember people telling me when they saw, you know, horse carriage coming and the baroness

came. She was a baroness, and my grandpa, they were (Italian). And they came to live in Capestrano, okay. And so our memories of my father's, and then my mother came from, they were . . .

LEVINE: What was your grandfather, mother's name? The one you just . . .

NOTINI: Dona Nodina. Baronessa de (Italian). She came from the Minnioratis, and this was the highest rate family, you could, you know, it was a family of Capestrano. And my father was a Corsi who, they were nobilities from Florence, Italy. My father's family's Florentine. But somehow the blood between both of us is the same because they intermarried within the family, they were not allowed to marry outside the family, and some of the conflict might be that my mother was not within our family, my own personal family, that my mother came from middle class people. They were (Italian). Like her grandfather was, my grandfather, (Italian). They traced their family to the Egyptians, you know. They may have Egyptian blood. But if you saw my grandfather, he looked more like a Viking. They're all, my mother's family were all tall, blonde redheads, you know. And my

grandfather had a wholesale house. Also he, and they sold shoes. He had twenty-two boys just working (Italian) who worked making shoes for surrounding towns. They would come from all over to buy his products and things like that. And all the girls in my mother's family, I know my mother, since she was a little girl, she was sent away to private schools. They were not left in the house. Because there was so much business going on, and plus he wanted them educated. And he never allowed them to speak the dialect. They were to speak the pure Italian, and he had a, he played the violin. I think Strebanatus [ph], something like that, that is a very famous violin.

LEVINE: Stratavarius.

NOTINI: Stratavarius, yeah. I get the Italian mixed up. He had the, and my uncle in New York, uh, in Pennsylvania, he played for the Philharmonic Orchestra. He played in the concert there, that my mother's youngest brother did use that violin, you know. So my mother came from a highly educated family, but there was a conflict because you do not marry outside of your own kind. And I remember

leaving Italy. It was really, it was heartbreaking, you know.

LEVINE: Before we talk about your leaving, let's say, what do you remember of your childhood before the decision was made to leave? What did you do? What kind of life did you have, specifically, in Italy?

NOTINI: Well, my father was in America. My mother had gone back because this aunt, which I told you that we knelt before her, you know, bowed before her, she was the administrator, and my grandmother, Dona Nodina, she wanted my father to go back, so they would divide the estate, because the grandmother, the great-aunt was dying. She was in charge of everything. And my father figured he would be working here, and he sent my mother back with the children to take care of them. What happened, my great-aunt did not die. The war broke out, and my mother could not come back to the States, so she was left there, from one thing to another, you know, we, it was after six years before my mother could come back to the United States. When my mother went back to Italy this time, she was pregnant with me. She was eight months along. And I was born a month later. ( background noise ) So then

my mother wanted to come back to the United States and she couldn't because the war broke out, and she was left there with the six children.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, tell me first, when did your father go? Did he and your mother go . . .

NOTINI: My mother, my father and his brothers, they all, my father and his brothers came when the great big flood, everyone was coming, a great many people were coming to the United States. They were sent to Consolata Italiano in New York. They all worked. Now, whether he was the consulate, I'm not sure, but he was the baron, he was the one that inherited the baron, Don Serapino. That was my father's oldest brother. And they were four brothers, they were all sent over by the government to run the consulate in New York. And then my uncle saw the lifestyle here and what he had been used to, and the way that, because today people are more educated, you know, it's a different, and we're simulating with one another. But there was a great difference, there was a great contrast from the lifestyle that they knew and what his children had, were to live. And so when his eldest daughter was twelve years old he returned to Italy. He says, "No,

this was not for them." So he went back, and then later on the other two brothers went back. My father stayed, but he was the type that couldn't be held back because my, you know, to a strict job. He was very, he had his own lifestyle. He was used to, he had studied to be a priest. He was a seminarian, and he left because they were very strict, and he wrote a book about it. And while he was in the seminary with his cousin they would select one boy from each branch of the family. One was to be a priest. The other one was to be a soldier. Each one was designated to a certain position. So when he was sent to the seminary with his cousin, he had been given a lesson by one of the priests, you know, and the two boys, the tutor, had left them alone, and they were to study. And the two boys, they did their lessons, and then they start boxing one another. And the priest found them. When he came, he took both their heads and he banged them together. Years ago they thought nothing of whipping the boys or anything like that. Well, my father was a very independent, he became very angry, he got the inkwell and he threw it at the priest, and he had it all over himself, and then my father got his cloak that he had, he ran away. The cloak, all the clothes

of a seminarian, and he threw them in the river and he ran away. Then he went into the, he was a lancer. He went into the service, and he was a lancer. And I think you can see from the picture over here he served there. But he was always a rebel.

LEVINE: Tell me, wait, first, when did he first come to the United States?

NOTINI: He came here right after he left the cavalry. He came here. Then he went back to Italy because he was not used to doing for himself. He was always demanding money from his cousin, who was then administrator, to send him money. And his cousin says to him, "If you want any more money, if you have to make a livelihood . . ." Because when he came to this country he married my mother.

LEVINE: Here?

NOTINI: He married, when he came here to work at the Italian Consulate, he met my mother through pisans, whereas they would never have come into the same society had they been in Italy. There was definitely a cross there. And when he came here they invited the baron, you know, they were barons, that's why they call us

all barons, you know, to the festival that they had, and there he met my mother.

LEVINE: I see.

NOTINI: And he married her. She was supposed to marry someone else, and he was supposed to marry someone else. The other man, the man who was supposed to marry my mother became a scenario in Hollywood and he never married. And the woman that my father was supposed to marry, which was his first cousin, married someone who looks just like my father, and these are the Minniorati [ph], well, I'd better not say the name.

( she laughs ) And, because they are very, and I don't want them, you know, exposed. But, so when he wanted more money from the uncle who was the administrator, the uncle says to him, "We have a mill in Capadacua [ph]." This is right, this church here, the mill was right near, where was it, oh, St. Peter's Church, the first St. Peter's Church was right near there. It was called Capadacua [ph]. And he opened up a mill. And what he would do, whenever the people came whether they had money or not, my father would give them the food regardless. He felt that why did these people, why were these people in this condition?

Why should his family own so much land and so much territory and so much, and so he was the type that gave everything away. Because when he was a boy, they sent, you know, to live with these, with the peasants, to find out how to cultivate the land, how to maintain. Because they had what they call (Italian) overseers. Because they did not take care of the land themselves, and they wanted him to learn. And when he went to live with them and he realized the different lifestyles of his way of living and the way these people lived, he became very rebellious. So when he went back to Capestrano and his uncle . . .

( Dr. Levine speaks off mike ) His uncle said, no, his first cousin, that was Admiraglio Corsi, Admiral Corsi, he said, "You have to come back and earn your living." So he ran for, while he was running the mill, and he treated his servants and his workers, employees, as family members. He was told, well, they asked him to run for mayor, because all the people loved him. When he went to city hall and he found out what he had to do, he said, "I don't want the blood of the poor people." (Italian) He couldn't see the manipulation. He couldn't see the thing. So he packed up, and he came back to the United States. So

that was the second time he came.

LEVINE: Do you have any sense of what year he came, left, you know, came to the United States, left the United States and then went back?

NOTINI: Well, I have some documents, but now I, you know, I really don't. The exact dates, I know I have papers, but I'd have to go through the whole thing, and I don't think we have all that time. But it was during the great flood. You know, not only from Italy did all these people come but it was, I believe, from 19, 1850 to 1901 that this great overflow came. Because when my mother and father came, when all these people, all the young people of our town came, they all came in a group together, cousins and everyone, and the older people were left in Europe. It wasn't just Italy, but Italy sent the most. And from our town, it cleaned out our town.

LEVINE: Well, when you were, when you were, when your mother came back to Italy, and she was pregnant with you, and then you were born, was your father in Italy the whole time?

NOTINI: My father was in America.

LEVINE: He was in America until, you didn't see him until you actually got to America.

NOTINI: I didn't know my father. We went to live in my grandmother's, that's my father's mother's home. We lived with Grandmother there, the baroness. We lived with her for a while.

LEVINE: I see.

NOTINI: And then we had an earthquake when I was about six months old, and my uncle came to pick us up, because the house was shaking, you know. We had an earthquake in a nearby town, but it shook up our place, and my mother said that, you know, she could see everything moving about, and my father's brother came to take us to San Giovanni, which was higher up in the mountain. This is the church of San Giovanni, and my grandmother would not let us go. She said that, you know, the peasants were there, and she didn't want us to mingle in. And that was the division between my mother and my grandmother, and my mother never went back to the, to the home of her, you know, of my ancestors. She went to live in the house where her father had lived, and he had lived, and that house had

been sold, and we lived there for a few months because my mother refused to return to my grandmother's home.

And then we went to live at Palazzo Celli [ph], which was owned by my father's cousin, and that was a great, big place where, you know, they had stores underneath, and then upstairs they had all these departments.

They had marble floors and great, big rooms and everything like that. We lived there until we came back to, uh, my mother came back to the United States.

LEVINE: Now, how many, did you have brothers and sisters?

NOTINI: We had three brothers and three sisters. Stefano was the eldest, Stefano. Sylvia, Yole [ph], Giovanni, Mario and Margiorana. And we all came back together to the United States after six-and-a-half years when my mother had left the United States.

LEVINE: Well, now, can you remember, like, as a little girl, what you did? What did you do?

NOTINI: I remember going to school, in this castle right here they had the school right in back here, the kindergarten there. And I remember that I had cousins that were Minniorati [ph], this is the old family. These are the first cousins. These are second

cousins. Then the first cousins came with us, too. We were a whole group, all about the same age, and my brother Mario, who was the closest to me, he was just a year-and-a-half older than I was, we all went together to school. And we were seated separately from the other children, but my mother, being very democratic, that's why we had a lot of problems with my grandmother, because my mother was a different type of a person. What she would do at night, when she had the six children, she would open the house. We had a great, big parlor, an enormous parlor, and she played the piano and the guitar. And she would have all these girls come into the house, and she would teach, read them the history of Italy, teach them songs. And when I went back the last time one girl says to me, "God bless your mother. She was so good." She says, "She'd have us over there. She'd have us play (Italian). She taught us how to sing. And, you know, she studied history and all that." She came over, she kissed me. And that really impressed me very much. You know, I says, isn't it wonderful to have memories like that. And then I went to the, what is it, casa de riposo, rest house, which the elderly, and this is across from the Corsi house in Capestrano, right on

the piazza. And that was given by Admiral Corsi to the state, and it was named after his mother and his father, who were Stefano and Sylvia, and his mother was a Marchesa. They were all very well-to-do people.

And what happened, when he, and this is getting back to the admiral, my father, and my father was in America, and he wanted money, and he wrote to the admiral and says, "I want money." And this cousin became very angry because he felt that he really should, you know, do on his own and work at the place there. So he became very angry, and something else. They had wanted, he had wanted to bring his mistress to Capestrano. He was dying. And he asked his two sisters to please let him bring his mistress for his dying days.

LEVINE: Now, this is your father's . . .

NOTINI: First cousin.

LEVINE: First cousin, uh-huh.

NOTINI: He was the administrator of all lands. And what happened, this, he had fallen in love with a married woman. And in those days they had no divorce, so he lived with her, and the sisters refused to accept her

into the family, even though he was dying. He made a will, and he saw that the others were, you know, they really were not taking care of the estate and all that. With one strike of the pen, he gave five million dollars, millions. In those days it was millions a day, to the orphanage in Napoli, in Naples, because he was the admiral in Naples. This is where, the family came from Capestrano, but this is where he, in the Bay of Naples there. And he gave five million to the orphanage of Capastrano, and he also gave that home . . .

LEVINE: To Naples? To Naples?

NOTINI: In Naples, right, in Naples. So he, this is the family crest. And this is the place where I sleep when I go, this is where he lived. This is where we go, where I used to bow before the aunts and things like that, right, in the piazza. They got their sons . . .

LEVINE: Now, does your family still own that?

NOTINI: Yes, my cousin. She's the one who writes me all the letters and gives me all the details. But, see, we don't have all day here, but I had them all set up,

all ready to show you. Here they are, right over here. ( a rustling is heard ) It tells you some of the things I can translate some. Do you have time?

LEVINE: What is this that you . . .

NOTINI: Well, she gives him the background of the family. This is the woman who lives in this house, the Corsi house, where he lived.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I'll tell you what. What I would like is, I think maybe if you could xerox that we'll put a copy of that with the transcription of the tape rather than your saying it on the tape, because I think we'd better move along here to your life.

NOTINI: Okay, fine.

LEVINE: Before you left, and then coming here and everything.

NOTINI: See, the home of the aged was Stefano and Sylvia. They were named after his parents, and she was, the Marchesa. How, the Corsis got into the thing, I don't know how the connection was, but there was this young girl, nineteen, fifteen years old, (Italian), whenever they wanted more land, they would marry her off to someone, and then they repossessed all the land. So

one of my grandmothers, she was fifteen years old, and they married her to this Marchese. And he was a great landowner, and he was very, very old. So when, on the wedding night, somehow he died. She was a virgin. She was still a virgin. Then they presented her to one of my grandfathers. Just how far back it is, but that was the beginning of, you know, this dynasty. And then they had, the Cinque Cane Corsi, the five Corsis who ruled, through Italy and Austria and places like that. But before that, when she came to Abruzzi, she says to the queen, she says, "You had this marriage performed, and here I am, and my children, I have five boys. What am I going to do with them now, in this town? There isn't any, you know, any prospect for them." So they were taken as pages by the queen, and from there they became rulers. Now, what does, who this girl was, there's a mystery, this fifteen-year-old. But there was a connection there somehow with the royal house. We don't know, maybe the family knows. I don't know. But this was one of my grandmothers, who married my grandfather, one of my grandfathers.

LEVINE: I see. Well, now, what did your father do? His

cousin didn't send him money when he requested it.

NOTINI: Well, so he went back, and he ran the mill in Cabadaqua [ph] in Capestrano, near St. Peter's Church. Remember I told you?

LEVINE: Well, wait a minute. This was, when was, he was at the United States, and you didn't see him at all until you came here.

NOTINI: I didn't know my father, no.

LEVINE: Right. But this is before you were born, you're talking about?

NOTINI: This is before I was born, when my father was a young boy. And he left the military, he was a lancer, right?

END OF SIDE A, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE B, TAPE ONE

NOTINI: Then they sent the Corsi boys, my father and his three brothers, sent them to the Italian consulate in New York.

LEVINE: Right.

NOTINI: They were running that. As a matter of fact, this is how, the connection came with that this man became Commissioner of Immigration. Because my uncle, Il Baron de (Italian), was a friend of Edison, and he heard about this boy who had come from our town. He was a Corsi. His father had been, let me see, he came from Tuscanny, and he fought for the rights of the people, and he was exiled to Switzerland. For five years he could not enter into Italian soil. When he came back, he was allowed to come back. He was elected Senator of Fivozzamp/ This is in the north of Italy, in Tuscanny. As he took his, as he was making his acceptance speech, he dropped dead. So then the family, they were left, because people, well, idealists like my father and people like that, they don't think of money, or the future. They put everything into their dreams and helping people and all that. So when he died, when he accepted his position as senator, he dropped dead. He took a stroke and he died. His life, his wife was left with two children, Eduardo, it was really Nerino, but then in America they started calling him Blackie. Nerino means black, like Nero Caesar. And he had a sister, Liberta. So they came to the United States, and my

uncle, the baron, introduced them to Edison, and Edison's wife sent this man to a seminary to be a priest, they paid, to a very exclusive place. But when he grew up he says, "I don't have the vocation."

You know. And she said, "It's all right. Then do what you want." And he then became Commissioner of Immigration, and later on, after, when Roosevelt took over, Roosevelt appointed him Reconstructive Financier, which meant that he would go to Europe, and he collected the war debts of the First World War. These are people you don't hear about. These are the people that do the work behind the scenes. And then he came, later on he became Commissioner of Immigration of the United States. And, as I said before, he resigned because they would not let a certain amount of people come from Italy. They had differences, and he resigned. Then he became a writer. This is the man right here.

LEVINE: Edward Corsi.

NOTINI: Edward Corsi, yeah. He was a great man.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, let's get on, now, with your, anything else that you remember. Like, do you remember any,

when you think back of your childhood, before you left for this country, are there incidents that come to your mind?

NOTINI: Well, I remember playing in the piazza, like something what we call Ring Around The Rosy, everyone is together like that. And one woman, I think she wasn't quite there, she got, she would get in the middle and she would start clowning and all that. You know, I remember that part there. And I remember going up to the stairways to go up to our apartment, you know. And I think, it may sound crazy, but I think I flew, because I told the same story, I heard my mother saying the same thing, and my elder sister said the same thing, how they were on one landing and they found themselves on another. Now, I had never told anyone until I overheard my mother say that and my sister say that, and this is in our town. It happened in this house, (Italian), right in the piazza.

LEVINE: So, in other words, you would be on one landing . . .

NOTINI: And I would find, and it happened once, and it happened to, my sister happened to be talking about it, and she said that, and my mother spoke up, and she

said the same thing, and I said the same thing. Now, then, maybe it was supernatural. And I honestly believe there is a supreme power. I honestly believe. I feel there is something, there is something supernatural.

LEVINE: Based on incidents like that . . .

NOTINI: Incidents like that, yes, yes. They claimed that my grandfather, now whether it's true or not, would call with so many men that they would speak to the devil. And one day, it was the day of the Immaculate Conception, and the answer that they got, it is the day of my mistress and your Madonna. I do not appear on this day, you know, leave me alone. Now, it may be a lot of supernatural things, but I honestly believe things that have happened to me that there is a supreme power. What it is, I don't know what it is, but I believe there is something. There is something very strong.

LEVINE: Do you remember any other incidents that were of that nature from your childhood before you came here?

NOTINI: Well, I remember my mother always playing the guitar, singing, you know. And then she was extremely strict,

as far as that goes. We had the thing that the girls couldn't move and the boys could do whatever they wanted to do, you know, like that. But, and then I had a brother who was my favorite. That was Mario. And, to be born after someone who is a genius and is exceptionally good-looking and everything else like that, it's a pretty hard act to follow. And he, here he is, right here.

LEVINE: What was he like in relation to you?

NOTINI: We were very much alike. We were very much alike. But he was, he was king, he was boy and he was king. You see, the four generations right there, my father and Mario, his son, Richard. And then there's Joseph Corsi, the great-grandson, is in my father's arms, you know.

LEVINE: Now, is Mario alive?

NOTINI: No. Mario died about six years ago, was it?

MR. NOTINI: He died in 1984.

NOTINI: 1984, yeah.

MR. NOTINI: '85, '85.

NOTINI: He was a contractor. He was a house builder. And I think, like he said, a lot of the ideas that he got was because he had seen all these beautiful homes in Italy. Mario didn't study architect, but he did it, you know? And everything he touched, it was really beautiful. My mother's family came, like one of my grandfathers was an artist, so we believed, and my mother was very artistic, so I believe that Mario derived from that, you know, where he loved beautiful things, loved beautiful homes and things like that. Now, I had all that, and I loved the culture, but I always took second place because, you know, the boy gets all the lead, he gets the better pieces of meat. He gets the better pieces. I remember that. One day my mother was serving us, and I see my brother getting a great, big piece of cake, you know. I says, "Oh, boy, I'm gonna." I says, "Ma, how is it Mario's cake is bigger than mine?" You know, the piece that you gave. She said, "Well, he's a boy." She says to me, "What do you expect?" So she worshipped him. She really, she was, he was everything anyone would want. He was so smart. But then he had his faults, too. You know, there's no question about that. But he was a genius. And then there was Steve. Steve went in

the tailoring business. Steve was a genius, but he was very reckless. There's something I've got to say about my family that, what happened. They were not brought up to save and skimp and take care. I believe that when people inherit something and they have not worked for it, they're not going to hold it. And it's been the same with my cousins, because I asked about, we were talking about my cousins. The boys were given all the privileges. They could do, and they would marry who they want and they would be accepted. The girls would not be accepted. My grandmother, on my aunt's wedding day, what she did, she was walking down these stairs that I showed you, because they were going down to the courtyard. And she was marrying a professor. And my grandmother thought that she was lowering the family standards. And as she was going down those stairs my grandmother says to her, "I'm disinheriting you. You're not getting any inheritance because you're marrying him." Then she wanted to commit suicide, and my father grabbed her and took her down the stairs, and she married, and she went out. And I understand, they were not left anything, and the boys were left everything. This was the custom. The girls really, you know, they had to, either they had

to marry in the hierarchy. And, I mean, today a professor's a big shot to me, you know what I mean, but it wasn't to my grandmother. And she didn't have the feeling for the girls as she did for the boys. It may sound strange, but that's the way it was in a lot of these families. And my cousin verified that. She said that they were in Africa and her brother, who was the baron, inherit the title and everything else, that he was landing in Africa, and she told someone who had a saloon, she said, "Would you please tell me when my brother arrives?" You know? And he says, "But señora, how will I know your brother?" She says, "When someone comes into the bar room and says, 'Free drinks on the house for everyone,' that's my brother." And, sure enough, she says, an hour later the man said, "Señora, your brother has arrived." She says, "How do you know?" "Well, someone here is buying drinks for everyone." And this is what happened to a lot of them. They had no, money didn't mean that much to them. And, to be honest about it, it made it very hard for our family. It really did. It made it very hard, because they, and they say, "Why?" You know, they didn't know what it was to go without things. And it seemed as though it didn't bother my father at

all, because he gave away, oh, what he did, an illegitimate brother, uh, cousin of his who should have been the family, this was his father's eldest brother, he was the baron, and he had illegitimate children. And the eldest one, they were not, you know, they could not associate with one another. As a matter of fact, what they would do, they would give them a house, they would give them land, and a peasant would be proud to marry the girl and take the children, whatever. So when they came to America my father met him, and I saw, we were living in East Boston at the time. He came, my father had all the, you know, fine features and good manners and all stuff like that. And his cousin looked like him but he was very rustic looking, you know. And my father said to him, "Are you happy here in this country?" He says, "No, I'm not. I'd love to go to Italy and live, you know, but I can't afford it." My father gave him all the vineyards that he had. He said, "That's his." He says, "You know, these are sins that we will have to pay for." He was very much, you know, I'm very proud of him. He didn't give us any material things, but I'm a lot like him. I don't believe in taking things from people. I believe if you can help someone that

you do it, you know. And he felt that this money was blood money. He would say, "Where did my people get all these hands?" Because one time his brother came home from the service. That was the one that became, that was to become the baron, and he went to city hall and he said, "My goodness, what we own here!" We own, and they didn't know what they owned. He went to city hall and he found all these lands belonging to them, because they always had what they call (Italian) caretakers. And they would dominate and they would know. So they were left, because the thing, you see, they were royalists. They were associated with all, you know, the great royal people and all that. They didn't know how to take care of land. They knew about battles and wars, you know, when they were, you know, when it did count, and things like that. But then there was a turn. It takes a while for things to change. They still had their dreams. They're so proud of their heritage. They were so proud of everything. But they didn't get used to the change of times, and my grandmother would give my brother money, my brother Steve, who we considered the spoiled one who caused a lot of problems. My mother said, "Please don't give him money." But my grandmother would teach

him how to gamble. My grandmother loved to gamble.

LEVINE: Was your grandmother here afterwards?

NOTINI: No, no, no. My grandmother, my father's people, none of them are in this country. They came here, they went back. Their lifestyle was different. You know, they would never accept this kind of a lifestyle. Things have changed here in America today. But there was a great deal of contrast between Europe and America because . . .

LEVINE: Can you say what the contrast was?

NOTINI: Well, because most of the people, not all, but things were hard, and what happened, the Italians were mistreated because we did not speak, our people did not speak the language. Like my people spoke Latin, they were highly educated. But if you didn't speak English, you were out, you know, you took secondary jobs, your position was lower. And that's why it was hard for people who came from the upper crust to come here and, you know, you didn't have the opportunity of really expanding, you know, being yourself, you know. People came from England and Ireland, and they could take, step into these positions, because of the

language, right. But because of the language barrier, our people had to take minor jobs. So we couldn't go in, you know, our people couldn't go. Like my mother was highly educated, but where could she go?

NOTINI: Well, now, when your father was here and he couldn't get back to Italy . . .

LEVINE: He went back once. First he came as the Italian consulate, to the Italian consulate. Then he went back and he ran for mayor of Capestrano. Then he was disillusioned, because he was an idealist, like this other cousin that was sent to Switzerland and then became senator and all that, they were idealists. It was the time of the revolution. People were changing. You know, the peasants were rebelling. The upper crust had to fight more to maintain what they had. And what happens, like all revolution, it's usually the younger people that see the side of the poor people, right? And this is what happened. My father starts seeing, you know, the way these people were treated, and he would have a servant sit at the table with him, like I have a, I don't want to go into it further, but servants that did live with them, they sat at the table with my father, which was an

absolutely nut.

LEVINE: Well, now, did your father, did he make a successful bid to be mayor?

NOTINI: What happened, he came to, he was here, and he was a contractor in Newton, and he was doing well. And the Depression came, and he was completely wiped out. ( a dog barks in the background ) So, and then he was too old to start anything else. And then my brother went into the building business. My brother . . .

LEVINE: Wait, that's after you were over here.

NOTINI: That was after you we were here.

LEVINE: Let's just say now, when he was over here, how did it get decided that you and your mother and your brothers and sisters would come?

NOTINI: Because my mother was only to stay in Italy until the aunt died, because, you know, you couldn't take possession of the land or whatever, probably, until the death of this aunt.

LEVINE: She didn't die . . .

NOTINI: She didn't die. As a matter of fact, she died about

five or six years after we returned to the United States, so that trip was wasted, because my grandmother demanded that someone go back to Italy and see that things were done right. So my father said to my mother, "You go, and I'll work." Because he had to work, you know, to maintain the children. They had five children, and I was on the way. So my mother went there, and the war broke out. Even if she wanted to come back, she couldn't come back. And things were pretty bad at the time. And then when she was able to, she came back to the United States.

LEVINE: Okay. So your father, when he went back to Italy with your mother, he ran for mayor.

NOTINI: Yes.

LEVINE: Then he didn't win the mayorship, but he said, "I'm . . ."

NOTINI: Oh, he did, he was the mayor! Oh, no! He was the mayor!

LEVINE: So . . .

NOTINI: He renounced it because he didn't, he didn't like what was part of the job, because he believe in, you know,

in helping people. He didn't believe in, you know, maybe taxation, or whatever it was. He believed in helping the poor people.

LEVINE: I see. So after he won the mayorship, then was it right after that that he decided . . .

NOTINI: Yes, right after, yes, yes.

LEVINE: And then he went back, now, he really didn't have, did he have the money, ( dog barks in the background ) or did he, he didn't have?

NOTINI: No, because he just came, you know, because until they were, you know, someone would die and leave him something, before that they had been sending him money to New York, right? And then this cousin says to him, "That's it now." And so they stopped it until there's inheritance, because he did not have any heirs. Whatever he would have would go to, you know, his cousins.

LEVINE: And what was his name?

NOTINI: This was, Simimi. Emilio Corsi, admiral, in Naples.

LEVINE: Okay.

NOTINI: This is the one, right here.

LEVINE: So your father went back, and he was earning a living here.

NOTINI: Yeah.

LEVINE: What was he doing then?

NOTINI: Well, he was doing odd jobs, nothing really spectacular, until he became a contractor in Newton.

LEVINE: Okay.

NOTINI: Then he put, he got some inheritance money. But he gave practically everything away in Italy. I don't know why. He gave some to his sister, because the mother did not leave the sisters anything. The two, and the brothers, they all contribute towards the sisters. Because the sisters, you know, they don't work there. They have to, and, well, they needed the money, let's put it this way. They married professional people, and they got, not only that, they thought it was unfair that the sisters would not receive anything.

LEVINE: I see. Okay, so then did your father send money for

you and your mother and your brothers and sisters to come, or how did you get your passage when it was decided to come?

NOTINI: Well, then my father sent for us, and we came to the United States, when things straightened out, you know, after the war. But it was tough because, you know, he was, another thing, he was used to living alone, and he was, he was like . . .

LEVINE: A handsome, striking figure.

NOTINI: Exceptionally striking. You know, I've had girlfriends that said to me, "If your parents divorce, I'd marry your father." He was exceptionally good-looking and very debonair, and all that. And then he had the polish that people didn't have in this country. You don't lose that.

LEVINE: Yeah.

NOTINI: You can lose your money. You can lose everything else. But that's like an education. When he sat down he, you know, would pare his thing with a knife and a fork, you know, like that. And certain things never left him. You know, they were there. Like he could

say, he was very, everyone was his friend, everyone was his friend. They all loved my father. He had that certain polish that you don't see around. He had the looks, he had the polish, he had everything like that. And sometimes, you know, people like that, it's all right when you're with the upper crust and you have an awful lot of money and everything like that, but it did make a hardship for the family because we had it very, very hard. We did. Because when my father lost everything, I was only fifteen. And . . .

LEVINE: Okay. But he still had some money when you and your mother and brothers and sisters came to this country.

NOTINI: He couldn't touch that money, no, until the aunt died, until, no, not the aunt, my grandmother died. When my grandmother died, then he inherited the family home? Remember, did I show you the picture of the family home. Then he inherited that, and he gave that away for a song. And then he inherited vineyards, and he gave things away, and it made it very hard for our family. And he felt maybe that, you know, we could take care of ourselves. But he wanted his family to keep up that position. You understand? He just, there was something about him, and what I used to

resent, I admire today. You know, he gave me something about pride, and something about not stepping on people's toes and helping people and respectful. The big, the great thing with him was respect. And he was extremely honest. He had a lot of faults, but he was extremely honest.

LEVINE: And he respected other people, or he demanded these things from other people?

NOTINI: Oh, no. He would say we had to respect people. Like all the people, we went to live in Newton where there were pisans of ours. He never told us, "Let them respect you." He said, "Respect them." He respected, he had the highest, maybe that's why he was so loved. And, you know, as I became older, and I see the crookedness of politicians that I am disillusioned, and when I went back to Italy my cousin verified, she says, "You know, your father was the mayor of Capestrano." My mother told me about it but, you know, it just slipped my mind, and that was that. And she said, "Down at city hall, your father's name was over there." And then I start thinking that when I go over there, I don't have to be ashamed of what my father did to the people. I'm very proud of him, you

know, because, like I said, he's not perfect. I even have a poem about him called Papa in the book that he wrote, and I say how there's something that you can't, there are things that you can't buy. He left me a legacy that all the money in the world, all the schools can't give you. And he, you know, we sat, we had to sit just so. He taught us manners. He never let go of his old style. He still had, you know, that finesse. Even though he was a (Italian) but within our house I've never heard a word out of the way from my father. I mean, there should be more of that today. We're seeing an awful lot of things going wrong. But he was, as far as I remember, I never heard my father say an off-color word or joke. It just wasn't his type. He was always a gentleman. He had his faults. You know, like everyone else. But the thing that I loved about him was that he would not take from anyone. He had a good heart. I used to resent it as a child, but now that I understand life and I know what it's all about, there are very few people that are in a position to be honest, and they're not. It's just like Les Miserables. You see people in jail for a loaf of bread. Meanwhile the big shots are there and they're corrupting, and they're

stealing millions and everything else like that, and they're out floundering, oh, big shot. And I'm disillusioned about that. Because I was an idealist.

I used to, I was always the club leader. I was always, you know, president of this and president. I ran an organization of professionals and non-professionals. I was the president so many times, and I knew parliamentary procedure, and they wanted to, and I was so proud. And then, as time went on, I became very disillusioned with a lot of the leaders, with a lot of the people that I, you know, you looked up and say, you know, "This is so-and-so," and really, it's not there. My father was, you know, just an ordinary man, but I admire him. That's something you can't buy, you know. You can have all the money in the world, and you're still, am I prejudiced? Maybe I am, but this is the way I feel. I feel that he gave me something that I wouldn't change for the world.

( she gets out a piece of paper ) Here it is. This is just a little thing that I wrote. Let's see.

( she reads ) "I can still see him standing there with his enchanting smile and silver hair. Though he was tall and very strong, like a small child, in my eyes, he could do no wrong. When he was eighty,

filled with energy, he would saddle his horse and ride off most majestically. Some fathers leave wealth of silver and gold to make life easy and quickly grow old. That kind of life would never do me. Like Papa, I like action, that's plain to see. I enjoy fighting for life and liberty. Papa left something better for me. The legacy of love, and a soul that is free." That's my conception of my father.

LEVINE: Very nice. Tell me about your mother. What, when you were leaving for this country, what was your mother like?

NOTINI: This was my mother when we were leaving for this country. ( she shows photograph ) When she married my father, she was a very, she was a tall, auburn-headed woman, and she'd come to marry her fiance. And when my father saw her, well, see, in those days there were very few girls that came to this country that were highly educated, and she, I guess she was playing the guitar and singing, you know, and he fell in love with her, and they were married. I think they were married three times, because then when they returned to Italy they would not accept the marriage because America was the place of, you know, very low people,

and American marriages were, you know, were not accepted, within my father's family, let's put it this way. Because they had popes in the family, they had, you know, they really, they ran the whole show. So when my, one of my, my mother was pregnant, she returned to Italy. The first child died here. That was supposed to be the heir to everything, and he died. But he had demanded that my father go back to Italy. My mother remained, she couldn't go, she was so heartsick that the baby died. And then my grandmother tried to break the marriage, get an annulment, because, they could do it. Even though they were married in a church, they were in a position where they could do whatever they wanted to do, you know. And my grandfather was against it, and my father was against it, so she went back and she had a little boy, and he died, too. So then they went to the mill, they went to live in the mill. But my mother, before she had married my father, I didn't realize until years later, because she was so reserved, she was such a lady. Everybody called her Dona Pia, Lady Pia. And my mother never said a word out of the way, you know. She was always a lady, she was always, I don't know why, I don't take after her,

because I like to dig in the ground, you know, and I look like heck in the morning, you know, I'm digging with shorts and things like that. I never saw my mother's arms naked. And when she became ill for a number of years, I realized she was the most beautiful, her skin, she was so beautiful, it was unbelievable. But she lived a very, she was a lady, you know what I mean? She held herself high. She always walked very tall and very, you never heard a word out of the way from her. But she had, like a redhead, you know, she had her energy, and with my father, one day we were angry, they spoke pure Florentine, you know. That was the thing. She had been sent to school since she was four years old, and she studied until she was about nineteen, twenty. They'd only come home for vacation. And then she came to America to marry her boyfriend and fiance, and my father met her and he married her. But of her life, I really, see, I was brought up in Italy with my father's family, not so much my mother's family. Now, I can, when I go back to Italy, like the first time I went there, I went, as I was coming off the train one of my cousins screamed across the tracks. She said, "(Italian)." "I recognize the blood." And I hadn't

seen her for forty-two years, and she screamed across the tracks, "I recognize the blood!" You know? And I went, and I saw this cousin. Her name was Onarina, just like my grandmother, and she got me. And when I went to these people, I feel comfortable with them. I feel I'm at home. I go to my mother's people, and they say I look like my father's family, I act like my mother's family, and my sisters fit with them, they can relate to one another, you know. But somehow I don't feel as comfortable. There's one cousin that I go to in Capestrano, I feel very comfortable with them, you know. With my mother's family, I mean, they're good people, they're nice, but I can't relate to them. Because with these cousins, they're like me. We like to talk about history. We like to talk about, you know, we get together, and this man that married my cousin, he's an admiral. I go to their house in Naples. They're the house that I, the cousin that I see all the time in Capestrano lived in the Corsi house that was his. Her daughter married an admiral from Naples. And the reason I think he found out who she was because in Naples he's well-known. And when he, she went there because a cousin of mine died, his name was Corsi, naturally, and his daughter,

he was an officer. They sent them to school if they die in the line of duty or something like that. So she went to the marine to speak to those in charge. And when this admiral saw the name Corsi, and Corsi was very well-known in Naples, because they showed me the castle where he lived in Naples, but he was a big figure. And when he found out, he did research and he found out who she was, so he went after my cousin, and he married her. So this is the one I go to. The other one, the other admiral, when we go to Naples, we go to him. But he does a lot of research on the Corsi family. He has books, you know, from way, way back and all that. He comes from Spanish royalty.

LEVINE: And what's his name?

NOTINI: Uh, Alonzo, Ricardo Alonzo. Admirale Ricardo Alonzo. These are the people that, you know, we used to see when we were over there. So when I go to my mother's family and there, you know, it's a different background, but I'm very happy there, and they like me. And I can see some of the hostility, more or less, in, I just can't, I try, and they look at me as if I'm an odd figure, you know.

LEVINE: I see.

NOTINI: So . . .

END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

LEVINE: I want to ask you some specific questions, because I want to make sure to get certain information on here.

NOTINI: Can I just tell you one thing, how I feel about being Italian-American?

LEVINE: Okay.

NOTINI: What, are you in a rush to know?

LEVINE: No, it's just, wait . . . ( break in tape )

NOTINI: But we go on to our life.

LEVINE: Okay. We're resuming here, and then we'll be going right along with the Ellis Island story.

NOTINI: All right. This is a small article which my father wrote when he was, wrote that book, (Italian) about the unification of Italy. But this is what he wrote about himself. ( she reads in Italian ) Now, it says how he considers himself an Italian, uh, an American

citizen, and he is grateful to America for giving him the possibility of giving, of earning a living and taking care of himself, and he has only love and respect for this country, but he can never forget the motherland, who gave him birth. He remembers his uncles who were (Italian), they were officers, and how they fought for the country. He remembers Florence, Rome, Naples and the mountains of Abruzzi. And he remembers his mother in the balcony overlooking the Appennini Mountains, and as she said her prayers, her rosary, as the nightingale sang in the night. And I pray that one day the motherland would return grand, potent, respected and feared as it was at one time. Then it's signed Giuseppe Corsi de Touri. Isn't that beautiful?

LEVINE: It's very nice.

NOTINI: I like that more than the whole book put together. But that is about unification of Italy, that he wrote. He got honorable mention, and they were going to make a movie in Hollywood. And Senator Burke, who lived just a few doors down, was taken to Washington, they were having a big reception with all the dignitaries from Hollywood, and my father died, and that was the

end. They were going to make a movie of this picture here, (Italian). It's about the war of, unification of Italy with Garibaldi.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, I'll ask you a series of questions, and if you would just stick to the . . .

NOTINI: Yeah. I'm trying to go from one thing to another. There are so many avenues.

LEVINE: You have so many interesting things to say.

NOTINI: Right, right.

LEVINE: So, but we'll just, uh, what do you remember of what your mother packed when you were coming to America? Do you remember any specifics?

NOTINI: Well, no furniture, that's for sure. And what she did do was to get clothes for us according to the station where we came from. She had velvet dresses made for us, naturally, and with angora trimming. And we had the nicest clothes, really. The reason I'm saying this, because when we landed at Ellis Island . . .

LEVINE: Wait, don't, let me get you, I'm going to try to go, leaving Italy.

NOTINI: Okay.

LEVINE: And then the voyage.

NOTINI: Okay.

LEVINE: And then Ellis.

NOTINI: Okay.

LEVINE: Okay. And then that, so.

NOTINI: I can tell you about the night that we left. It was raining, it was thundering. And we were in la piazza de Capestrano. And along came a black carriage with four horses, and we were six children and my mother, and someone that my mother was going to see over, a young girl, excuse me, that was traveling with us, and whatever we had. So it wasn't too much that we took.

It mainly was just clothes, nothing else. And we arrived in Naples. That night it was really, I didn't think anything of it, but years later it made me feel very sad when I thought of leaving the town. At that time, I was just a child, I didn't realize what effect it was having on me. I remember we went to this house, La Piazza, where my uncle, my father's brother, the baron, was, and we stayed with him till the

carriage came, and we left. And we traveled, and my brother Steve was singing a song, (Italian). "The steamboats are leaving our native land for a land, for an unknown land far away." It was one of the most popular songs. Makes your hair stand up, sing, "What is our destiny? Where are we going?" And just now in our club, I hadn't heard it for years, they're, we're going to repeat it for, you know, the thing of Columbus. I'll be singing it, you know, at the banquet. And, you know, I remember that song all the time. "We're leaving for parts unknown. Where are we going? We're going to Naples, we're arriving to Naples."

LEVINE: Can you sing it? Can you sing it?

NOTINI: I do sing. I . . .

LEVINE: Can you sing it for this tape?

NOTINI: I don't know. I'm so emotional just now. I don't know anything. ( she sings in Italian ) These are people crying as they're leaving their homeland. "We're going away to lands unknown, but we'll always love Naples." This is a dialect. I do not speak the dialect. I speak, you know, the pure Italian. But I

do sing, I have groups, that I, I do sing myself, and I've been a dancer. I've been a model, I've done everything. You ask me, ( she laughs ) I've done everything, you know. But when it comes to Italian songs, my soul goes to it as something. I've been a den mother, I've done a lot of things in the American line, you know what I mean, things pertaining to things like that, but Naples, Italy, you know, is something, and I never realized when I was going, and then as time went on I could always hear myself singing these song. Then once I heard about the Sons of Italy, the Sons of Italy, they were stunned, because they never heard a girl my age speaking the pure Italian and singing the Italian songs. And I became like a glamour star, you know, for the Italian community. As a matter of fact, I represented Columbia, and that's how it got started. I have books here with all the different things, you know. And because it had a lot to do, like I say, my parents did not give me a formal education, but what I got from them, the history I could convey to them, because I was a supervisor of the Junior Division. And most of the children came from Paris, who were illiteral [sic], who hadn't studied or anything like that. And

most of them were ashamed of being Italians, and by the time I got to tell them the story of Italy and, you know, gave them the songs, we did plays, I'd write my own plays, you know, with three songs, make little operettas, you know. And one girl had gone to (?). She says, "You know, Marge," she says, "you make me proud of being Italian." Because it was a time when the Italians were having a hard time. But she says, "We knew where we were coming from. You made us proud." Italy is the cradle of modern civilization. I made them understand, and I said, "Who are the Italian people? We are every kind of people. We are the melting pot." We had every race, every nationality.

LEVINE: It sounds like you carried on your father's ideas.

NOTINI: Oh, that's it. What he gave me, what my parents gave me is something, I have gone to schools, and I did teach Italian culture in what they call workshop. I have no degrees, I don't have any, but I've done, in different subjects I have done workshop, even psychiatric. I've done workshop in that. But it's just that I love what I'm doing. I love people, I love nature, and I believe that if you can help a

fellow man, you do it. But be careful sometimes they don't knock you right back.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, let me ask you this. If you can put yourself back into the little six-year-old girl that was coming here, what did you think or know or believe about America before you actually got here?

NOTINI: Well, the real thing with me, I remember I was in this what they call Palazzo Cieli, in la piazza of Capestrano, I would look out to the mountains from the balcony, and I would be singing and saying, "I'm going to America, and I'm going to meet my father. I'm going to meet . . ." This was the big thing. "I'm going to meet my father." This was the biggest thing. Nothing else, except that I was going to meet my father. It's what you don't have that you want, you know. And when we arrived here, the first time I saw my father I was kind of disappointed because my uncles were so, you know, they were so polished. He was but, I mean, he didn't have, you know, uh, well, he had lost some of the style, you know. Because he was living as a commoner, and his brothers I would see parading, they call a (Italian) in the piazza with white suits and with canes, you know. So it was, you

know, kind of a shock. And he came with a rowboat to see us when we were in Ellis Island, and we were all dressed up. My mother had special clothes made. It was going back to, you know, how we were dressed and what we brought. The girls all had white, green belted dresses with white angora, white stockings and white shoes, and the boys were all dressed as well. And we waved to my father, you know, that's the first glimpse I saw of my father. And then as we were about to board ship to go land in New York, they stopped us because someone, a member of the family, the vaccination didn't take. Because years ago they waited till you came to this country, and then you were, you know, given the shots, and find out what the story was. They vaccinated one of my sisters, and the vaccination didn't heal. So we had to stay there for ten days. And they took us off ship, we had to go back to the island, and there we started eating Italian food, American food, which we didn't like. And I remember my brother Johnny, he died right after that, he who was getting cocoa, he was putting bread there, and butter, we were looking into these things, it was just horrible. And then there were no paved streets. It was all dirt roads.

LEVINE: First let's go . . .

NOTINI: Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Tell me first about anything about the voyage. Was there anything, what was the ship you came on?

NOTINI: Oh . . .

LEVINE: You wrote it, I believe on here, Il Duca . . .

NOTINI: Il Duca D'Aosta. Il Duca D'Aosta. Yes, yes.

LEVINE: And what do you remember about the voyage?

NOTINI: I remember that I got, I was given a licking by my mother because I ran over the rail. I was a little bit daredevil. I did that in the balcony of Capestrano. We lived in the piazza there, and we lived on the second or the third floor, and those floors are very, very high. It was on the balcony, and everybody was screaming, "Maggiorana is going to fall!" And I didn't think, I think I take after my father, you know, and I was doing tricks on the balcony. And then when we were aboard ship, someone went to report to my mother that I was doing that aboard ship. I was jumping over the railing, back and

forth, you know. And then my mother got a hold of me there, and then I paid for it. And when we, as a matter of fact, when we got to Naples, Naples was different years ago. They all had carts, you know, and they were beautiful. All the fruits, they were decorated. And the pastry. So I ran out of the hotel room, because we had to stay in Naples for a few days before embarking for the New York. And I was so enchanted, you know. I was always a dreamer, you know. And I kept looking at all these things. Oh, the hotels back there, the hotels back there, and all the places looked alike. And then suddenly I felt one slap across my face, and it was the girl that was coming to America with us. They found us, they were going crazy, they couldn't find me. But I got lost in Naples. I didn't realize I was lost. And then she took me back to the hotel. But I almost remember Naples, how beautiful it was. All those carts were so beautiful. I didn't see them now. Now, we went to the churches, we went to a lot of places in Naples, and it's really, there's a lot of history, and Naples is really beautiful.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything else about Naples from that

time, before you embarked?

NOTINI: No, because we didn't stay there too long, and my mother kept us very, you know, close to her, but I did see a great deal when we come back a few times, quite a few times, you know. But this cousin who's married to the admiral from Naples, she's the one that took us.

LEVINE: Don't tell me about Naples now, because I want to make sure to get everything in about your trip.

NOTINI: Okay.

LEVINE: Now, okay. So you came on the, and then do you remember coming into the New York Harbor?

NOTINI: Yes, yes, yes.

LEVINE: What do you remember about that, when you first . . .

NOTINI: Well, we were six children, and my mother was holding on to all of us before we all scattered. Because we, I was the quietest one, in spite of the fact that I jumped over the railing and things like that, I was the quietest one. The others were exceptionally lively. They were my father's children, you know.

And my mother had her hands full trying to keep this together, and when we finally got to New York, you know, to the place, my father was there, and he took us to his brother's house.

LEVINE: Well, let's, did you see the Statue of Liberty? Do you remember seeing that when you first came in?

NOTINI: Frankly I don't remember that.

LEVINE: Now, what do you remember about Ellis Island?

NOTINI: Ellis Island, we, as I said, we were all dressed up in our best clothes. And after being held there for about a week, eleven days, when we arrived we were what you would call the real down-and-outers, because our shoes were gone, our clothes were tattered. There was no bathtub. The roads, there were no roads there, and we were very lively children. We played around, and everything else. So there was no laundromat, there was no place to take a bath.

LEVINE: At Ellis Island, you mean?

NOTINI: Yeah. There was, there wasn't anything, no. We didn't take baths. We couldn't wash our clothes. We couldn't do anything.

LEVINE: Where did you sleep?

NOTINI: In bunks, bunks.

LEVINE: In a big dormitory or a small room?

NOTINI: No, I believe it was a big dormitory. I could be wrong, but I think it was a big, I know we were always together. The family always stuck together wherever we came in.

LEVINE: The boys . . .

NOTINI: We all slept together, right. They were all minors. They were all, the eldest was fifteen years old, and you couldn't trust them, you know, on their own. But we were let loose on the island, you know, because there was nothing else to do. The island isn't that big anyway. But, you see, there's no paved roads there. There's no place to take a bath.

LEVINE: Did your father come and visit you after you were detained there?

NOTINI: No, no, no, not until we landed in the island, you know, in New York, in the port of New York that we were . . .

LEVINE: Had you seen him, then?

NOTINI: He came with the rowboat. We were ready to leave, and he came, he couldn't wait. He brought some flowers and things, you know. But we couldn't wait. We waved, and then they told me, "That's your father over there." He waved to me. And that's the first impression I got of my father. And, like I said, you know, I expected to see something like my uncles. You know? But, like I said, you know, he was a commoner then. You know, it was a different. But as I grew to, as I grew older, you know, and I started to understand things, he, it sounds crazy, he became my idol. You know, everything I think about, I think of my father. I don't know why, but he wasn't very warm when we were young. I think he was too much involved with himself. My mother said he was very warm before she left him, you know, because he was a young man, the children were small. But when he came he was used to living alone.

LEVINE: Now, what was it like being, for him to be with you, but also what was it like from your point of view to being with your father?

NOTINI: He was extremely, what I call brutality, I, maybe I'm his daughter, and I think, I like, because we had to sit just so at the table. We had to use the right fork, we had to, you know, keep our mouth shut, you know. He really was a discipline, this is the whole thing. He didn't believe in fooling around. We had to act just so. And then he would be very angry, and he'd say, "Why, I called my father his, `Your Excellency.'" And then later he would say, "Yeah, but we're not living the life of excellency here." Papa was what we called him. But he was used to that lifestyle, and so we were not living that kind of a life. See, I think it was, I think it was hard for my father and my mother to make adjustment. It's easier for a person who's never had anything and what they have is a plus, but a person who's had servants, who's had all these advantages and they come here, and they have to start from scratch. He didn't resent that life, you know, but I'm saying it was harder for him to get accustomed. I think life was easier for me because I didn't mind it. We were not living the life with servants. We were not living the life that, so I grew up that way. As a child we were given certain respect because of our class that we came from and all

that, but then I think maybe life was easier for me than my brothers and sisters because I was the youngest, and I could simulate more with the children.

I was always, even, I don't know when I learned to speak English, but I'd always have people say, "Why don't you join the club? Why don't you do this?" You know, and people of different race, and I think some of it might have been because I was a very friendly nature to begin with, but it could be because they didn't identify me as an Italian. They think of an Italian, I think I told you over the telephone, was dark, short people, right, dark skins. And we weren't that way, and my mother was very fair. When people say, "But you're Italian, look at your mother." And I said, "My mother's Italian." You know, "We are Italian." In our town, like, you see my nieces and nephews, you know, a lot of blondes. We have brunettes, we have things like that, but people have that stereotype. I look at my mother's passport. (?)

Her skin is so fair, you know, it's unbelievable. But on the passport, because I think a lot of the people who got these jobs, even though they were not educated, but they were of a different, either Irish or English, they had the opportunity of getting these

jobs and they would, you know, they didn't know the difference. You're Italian, you're short, you're dark. This is so, it's not true, because we are a melting pot of many races. We look at our background, we have so many races, just like the American race today. Two hundred years from now you won't be able to tell where people came from. You know, we're all going to be the same.

LEVINE: Well, tell me, do you think it was difficult for your mother and father to be together after all those years?

NOTINI: Yes, it was. Yes, I think it was, because my mother still was a lady. She still held, you know, in spite of, you see, a lot of the women went to work in factories. My mother didn't. I think somehow it would have been better if she had gone out. She would have, you know, simulated more. But she was still the lady that she always was. And a lot of things, I think, that I probably, they couldn't understand me, because my sisters got married, you know, to what they call pisans, people who came from the same town, or people who knew somebody. And I was, I wasn't getting married. They were frightened for me because I was, I

don't know, I was different. I became more Americanized, I guess. I don't know what it was. And then I'd, it was hard for me, too, because I could not date like an American girl. You know, like say a boy wants to take you out to a prom? I couldn't do that.

I'd have to stay with my own class. Finally, it's a wonder that they didn't just ruin me completely, you know.

LEVINE: You mean, because your father was strict about it?

NOTINI: Yes, yes, yes. The first person who came to my house as a date, I had been asked, you know, by different people. You know, because I was more like a glamour girl, singing, this and that, but then when it came to, you know, boy-girl, there was a line. And finally he showed up, you know. And already they were saying, "No, no, no." And I said, you know, I said, "This is the case," I says, "I'm going to elope, and I'm going to get married anyway." I was twenty-six when I got married, and he was the first man that came to my house and met my parents. I was twenty-five when I met him. But they still kept, they still wanted the status quo that, you know. But, see, my husband was a cook, and one thing I have to say of my father, my

father was very understanding. Of course, then he was from Tuscany, and he came, he came from a better class, too. When he came to America, his, before that his father owned stores and things like that. And he came, he was about fifteen, Louie? And when he came, his father lost, it was during the Depression. His father lost everything, and he died, and he was left alone. He was only fifteen years old. So he had to take whatever there was. It wasn't like the opportunity of today, that you would take a job as, you know, you had unemployment compensation. There was nothing. You just did whatever you could. You worked in a restaurant, you know. And I went to work in a factory myself. My father lost everything. I was fifteen years old. There was nothing. And so I went to work in a factory, and then I went to school at night. That's one thing that they allowed me to do, was to go at night, to go to school. And then I went to night school, I went and I took different courses, and went on to other things myself. But I worked in a, and I'm proud of it. Because I can handle things, and when I was there I wasn't unhappy. I was singing. I was on a sewing machine, and I was one of the best workers going, and I was working at

night. I was going to school at night. I was studying. One thing that was my salvation, I think the thing that helped me the most was we were brought up to read, and the library was my best friend, so I always read. I can read three, four books, even now I'm ready three or four books. I like Russian history, Italian history, the beginning of the old Western stories and things like that. But I love history, okay?

LEVINE: Did your mother and father become citizens?

NOTINI: Yes, both of them were citizens, yes.

LEVINE: So they went to night school, did they, or how did . . .

NOTINI: My mother wanted to go. My father forbid her. My father would not let my mother go out at all. She . . .

LEVINE: In what ways was your father strict?

NOTINI: He was strict, and the girls could not go out, and that was it. Absolutely not.

LEVINE: Well, how were you going, how was it expected that you

would ever meet somebody if you couldn't . . .

NOTINI: Well, because the family had a lot of, see, what happened, a lot of people, if they send their children to school, like my sisters had a lot of opportunities with professional people, because their background was different from ours, and a lot of people did go for their background. Like, say they sent their son to school. The friend that is Patrossi [ph], you know, Alfred E. Smith, they were a friend of Patrossi's, he ran for President of the United States. Okay, these people really came into money, and a lot of these people wanted to marry into the, you know, into the family. My sister married a contractor. They knew who the family was. He was pretty well-situated at the time. Then the Depression cleaned him up, too. And then another sister married a man from our town. He was my brother's friend. He was an architect, and she married him, you know. But you didn't have to go out to meet people. People knew us.

LEVINE: I see.

NOTINI: And you had, and I didn't, you know, I just didn't happen to fall in love with my own kind, you know.

Now, he came from Tuscany. If you're from Tuscany, they kind of look up to you. I don't know if you're aware of that. If you're a Florentine, it's something a little. And my father's family came from there. My father spoke Florentine, and at that time I thought that he was a handsome man. They looked at that, too.

In those days they didn't look so much for things, my parents seemed to go more for looks. Now, today girls don't do that. You know, I mean, we've changed. I mean, but in, say, fifty, sixty years ago, a man had to be tall, dark and handsome, or just plain handsome.

A girl had to be beautiful. Well, today it's no longer that way. They want to know, "Hey, what's inside the head?" Right? We communicate with one another. With him, we're different in a lot of ways, but he understands me. He gives me the option to go, if I'm on a show, he's the first one to applaud, he's the first one, he's there, he'll take me there.

Whatever it is, he's always backed me up. And then we do have a common link, you know, because his family is somewhat, is similar to mine in the background, in Europe.

LEVINE: Well, how did you meet?

NOTINI: We met at a, what happened, I was in the club, and my brother's, my sister's husband's nephew which they were trying to, you know, put together. One of them was going to be an aviator, they were having a dance for his brother. And so my brother-in-laws were going to the dance without my sisters, because they had a sewing circle, and they asked me to go. I says, "I'm not going because I'm in charge of, you know, decorating the hall for the banquet." And they says, "You're nothing but an old maid, and you'll always be an old maid, because you never go anywhere, you never do anything." But I wasn't allowed, you know, I wasn't used to going to public, I was very popular. But going to a public place and being picked up or something, you know, dance like that, that wasn't, even I, even though my people were strict, but even I did not, I couldn't do a thing like that, you know. So I went to this dance and I had several people asking me to go out. I'd had other experience but, I mean, as far as going out dating, that was out. But, anyway, I don't know what happened that night. Sometimes you don't have anyone asking you. That night several men came. They said, you know, they wanted to date me. And I said, "No, no." Then I

started to think, "There's something wrong with me. You know, why am I not, you know, I'm not reacting right. This isn't normal." And I did want to be married. I did. But I didn't want to just get married for the sake of marrying. So then I see this tall man standing, this young man. And I says, "Oh, my God!" I says, "That's what I'd like." You know? But I had been talking with an Irish fellow and he, I said, "I'm going to go out with him." Because there's someone, he was a nice looking boy, he was very polite, and I think he had a better, I know he had a better position than my husband's. He, you know, I said, "I want to give it a chance." I was ready to say yes, and I looked up and I saw Louie. And I says, "I don't know. There's something about him that I'd like. I like Florentine, I like Italian." I don't know what it was. But I said, "He'll never ask me. I don't know him from a hole in the wall." I turned around to say to this man yes, you know, I will go out with you, and my girlfriend taps me on the shoulder, and she says, "Margie, this is my brother-in-law's niece. This man has been looking at you, and he wants . . ." And she knew him. "And he wants to meet you." And I looked up, and I saw the fellow that I'd

been looking at. Oh, my God, you know. That was it. And then he starts speaking Florentine, starts speaking Italian. Because I studied Italian I love it, you know. And he's, at that time he had all that accent, "Señora, Italian," and all that. I said, "Oh, my God!" I said, "This is right up my alley." I don't know where he came from, but this is just what I want. So I waited a long time, but I'm not saying everything's perfect, but I thank God for every day we have together. I really do. I think we're, I consider myself very lucky. That's our life. Right, Lou?

MR. NOTINI: Fifty-two years.

NOTINI: Fifty two years.

LEVINE: You must be doing something right.

NOTINI: Right, right, right, right. I mean, we've had our ups and down, but I think in general, you know, like we go out with, we belong to the senior citizens, we belong to the Sons of Italy. But in general we live a very quiet life. Because I surround my home with things that I like. like downstairs I have a little section where I have the Italian culture. I have books there,

and everything else like that. And he's with it. We're only eight people. But we discuss it later, and we have songs, you know, and dances, things like that. Just eight, it's just enough that it makes for a close circle that we relate to one another, and we all come from the town, from the state of Abruzzi. And so we have a common ground. And this is the thing that, we try to do things together. We do things together, we do. At one time I did it on my own because he didn't, it was not far, because I was way out, you know. And, as a matter of fact, when we were going together, we were getting married, I says to him, I was supervisor of the Junior Division in Hyde Park . . .

END OF SIDE A, TAPE TWO

BEGINNING OF SIDE B, TAPE TWO

NOTINI: I would teach dancing and plays and things like that, and he said, I says to him, thinking of my family, and my sister's husbands, and my brothers, the way they were, you know. They could do whatever they wanted, but the woman had to stay in the house and not move. And here am I, singing out loud, on the stage. And, you know, I said to him, well, I says, "When we get

married, I'm going to give all this up." He says to me, "You do and I'm not going to marry you." He says, "I like who you are. You're not going to change, and that's it." So I, for a while I stopped, you know. But then later on I went back to it. And he's been very supportive. To me, it's a big thing. I mean, this is my, some people like gambling. Some people like horse riding or whatever, jogging. I love cultural things. Not only Italian. Italian is the main thing, but I love other cultures as well. I'm very interested. I like to see in Polish dances. I like to see, anything that's colorful and beautiful. Like Sunday where did we go? We went to the Paul Revere's house, and they had a little skit, Hamlet, you know. And I love things like that. Maybe it's because I was brought up with history. This is the whole thing.

LEVINE: What is your husband's full name?

NOTINI: What is he what?

LEVINE: His full name.

MR. NOTINI: My full name.

NOTINI: Oh, his name is really Julio Notini, and his name, his mother's name was Buonocorsi. And I'm a Corsi, and they claimed that all these Corsis, Buonocorsi, Corsini. They all derive from the same family. And the Corsis that are in Abruzzi really derive from Tuscany, from where these people come from.

LEVINE: Now, do you have any children?

NOTINI: We adopted two children.

LEVINE: What are their names?

NOTINI: One boy died, the boy died. And the girl, she lives in Quincy. And, of all things, maybe it's my fault, I always used to look at the horoscope, she's a fortune teller.

LEVINE: Really? ( they laugh ) What's her name?

NOTINI: Pia. She's named after my mother, Pia Angela. Yeah. And she is definitely today's girl. I mean, I have, I have lived in this country a long time. It isn't just myself, but I think that my age has a lot to do with it. I'm of the conventional old set ways. I love a good time, but I'm very conservative. In spite of the fact that I sing, I believe in conventional

things, you know. My daughter is a very modern person. She's today's woman.

LEVINE: Do you think that her fortune telling goes back to the . . .

NOTINI: Egyptians?

LEVINE: . . . to your idea of flying in the stairway? I mean, do you think that there's some . . .

NOTINI: I don't know. But I did tell her that, I always read my horoscope. I read my horoscope. And she's seen me do that. I think that was it. And she has two children. One is a beautician. The other one is a social worker. Oh, and what I did to put her through. She was gonna give up.

LEVINE: And what are their names?

NOTINI: Pardon?

LEVINE: What are their names?

NOTINI: Oh, I have Marjorie, who's named after me. Pia Angela, who's named after my mother, and then there's a boy who was named after his father's father. And, but Marjorie was more like, you know, my, she was my

baby, the first-born. But Pia's the one that I really worked with because . . .

MR. NOTINI: They're really tall. But they're tall as my wife. five feet seven. Marjorie and Pia, they're very tall.

LEVINE: Tall.

NOTINI: Two extremes. Pia is off the handle but, you know, Pia is the brain, Pia's a brain. And so she was going to give up school, and, "I can't afford to do this." And I says, "Look, I don't care about anything," I says. I know what I'm talking about. Without that piece of paper, because I've had experience. I do not have a degree. I've taken courses, and I've done jobs that other people could pay for for what I did. They copied the thing, fine. I'm glad that they gave me the opportunity to do this work. I did group therapy. I did things like that. But when this girl was going to stop a few times, you know, I says, "Look, I don't care what you have. You can have all the money in the world. Without that piece of paper you're not going to get anywhere." "Grandma, I don't have the money." I said, "I don't care what I have to do, you're going

to go." And so finally, you know, to me, when she finally got her degree, bachelor degrees at Suffolk University, I didn't even know she got it. All I was doing was praying, "Please, God, let . . ." I says, "Pia, no matter what you have, that's all going to disappear. An education will be with you forever." I can see from my parents. They didn't have money like the other people. I wouldn't change speaking with my parents. All those people. I may sound like a snob, they don't compare with my parents. They may have the most expensive clothes, the most expensive houses, I'd listen to my parents, and I wouldn't trade my parents for the world. So I than God that at least we, I had one. I had Pia that, you know, I really drilled with her, and I talked to her. But the others, you see, you can take a horse to the well, but you can't make him drink. She was the only one who would really listen and would really, you know. The others were smart but they, you know, they, it just wasn't in. It's got to be in them. You cannot force them to do something that's not in them. But I'm grateful to God that at least we got Pia that is following. She's doing what I would have, she's a social worker. She's doing what I would have loved to do, and I'm grateful

to God for that, you know.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, we just have a little time left. Is there anything you'd like to say before we close about coming to this country and being in this country, what your life's been like. Sort of any comments that you'd like to close with.

NOTINI: Well, I will always love Italy. Italy is my motherland. I will always love her. But, like my father, she's taught me a great lesson. I have the greatest respect and love for America. And a lot of the work that I do, I feel that we owe this country a lot. I'm not out for what I can get from it, because it gives me the opportunity, whatever I've done, and if I didn't do it, it was my fault. But it has given me the opportunity to study, to mingle in socially, to do a lot of things that I really am happy with. This country has given me the opportunity. And whatever I do, whenever I do any act of volunteer or charity, I feel I have to give back to this country for all the wonderful gifts that it's given me. I'm very grateful to the United States of America. And see how I speak about Italian culture. I am just as proud of being an American. I only become angry when people do things

to distort the country, bad leadership, because I think we deserve the best. This country deserve the best. And I say, "God Bless America for all its done for us."

LEVINE: Well, thank you very much. It's been a pleasure. You certainly have a rich story, and I'm happy to have been here. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I've been speaking with Marjorie Notini here in Hyde Park, Massachusetts, at her home, and thank you.