

EI-238

ANGELA PATTI MINUTELLA

BIRTH DATE: AUGUST 31, 1893

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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 10/1994

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: CHARLES MITCHELL, 9, 2006

SICILY, 1910

AGE 17

PASSAGE ON "THE MENDOZA"

PORT OF EMBARKATION: PALERMO

RESIDENCES: SICILY: POLIZZI GENEROSA

US: NYC, 12 ST.

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. And I'm here today in Clifton, New Jersey with Angela Patti Minutella, who came from Sicily in 1910 when she was seventeen years old.

MINUTELLA: Yes.

LEVINE: And also here with us today is Angela Morgan, who is Mrs. Minutella's granddaughter.

MINUTELLA: Grandma, yeah.

LEVINE: Well, I'm very happy to be here.

MINUTELLA: Nice. (she laughs)

LEVINE: And I look forward to hearing what you have to say.

MINUTELLA: Well, I've got not much to, what I've got to say?

LEVINE: We'll see, okay.

MINUTELLA: Yeah, all right. You ask, and I answer you.

LEVINE: Wonderful. Okay. Why don't we start by you telling me the town you were born in.

MINUTELLA: The town, Polizzi Generosa.

LEVINE: Now, when we talk about things that might be hard to spell, maybe, Angela, you could note them down and then . . .

MINUTELLA: Polizzi Generosa.

MORGAN: Yeah, Polizzi Generosa.

MINUTELLA: I think over there we got it.

MORGAN: I think really all you need to know is just Polizzi. It's here. P-

O-L-I-Z-Z-I. Generosa, G-E-N-E-R-O-S-A.

LEVINE: Okay. And what day were you born?

MINUTELLA: What day?

LEVINE: Yeah.

MINUTELLA: 31st August 198 . . . 1893, 1893.

LEVINE: Wow. Okay. And, so did you live in Polizzi?

MINUTELLA: Polizzi.

LEVINE: The whole time, until you came to America.

MINUTELLA: The whole time, yes.

LEVINE: Now, when you think of Polizzi, what do you think of? What do you remember about when you were growing up there?

MINUTELLA: That was a little town. Everybody know each, the other one. So I lost my mother when I was eleven.

LEVINE: How did your mother die?

MINUTELLA: There was, she was paralyzed, you know. She paralyzed year before, then she live another year, and then she die.

And then we stay with my father.

LEVINE: What was your mother's name?

MINUTELLA: (a bell chimes in the background) Marianna, Marianna.

LEVINE: Maryanne. And her maiden name, do you remember?

MINUTELLA: Casper. S-C-U-R.

MORGAN: C-A-S . . .

MINUTELLA: Casper.

MORGAN: C-A-S-P-E-R. Casper.

LEVINE: Okay. And your father, what was his name?

MINUTELLA: Onosrio, Paten. Onosrio.

LEVINE: Can you spell that?

MORGAN: Yes. O-N-O-S-R-I-O.

LEVINE: And so were you, did you have brothers and sisters?

MINUTELLA: Yes. I come over here with my brother and my sister.

LEVINE: So there were just three children?

MINUTELLA: No. Two married in Italy. One in Italy, and one that was over here, my brother. My brother was over here all along, in our family.

LEVINE: We're stopping now. (break in tape) Okay, we're resuming now. So, you had a half-brother.

MINUTELLA: Yeah, in Italy.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And he was the oldest?

MINUTELLA: Yes, older one, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, so you had the half-brother.

MINUTELLA: In Italy.

LEVINE: And he was married.

MINUTELLA: Yeah, he was married, and he got children, then I got another single brother, not married brother, and he was in United States, over here, married brother.

LEVINE: And then there was your sister.

MINUTELLA: My sister was younger than me.

LEVINE: And your brother, adn you.

MINUTELLA: Yeah.

LEVINE: Came over together.

MINUTELLA: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. (the sound of dogs barking is heard in the background) Well, before we talk about coming to the United States, let me ask you, what did you do when you were a little girl? What did you do? Did you help your mother or your father, or . . .

MINUTELLA: Oh, when I was, when my mother was paralyzed, I go to school, I go to school. After dress my mother, clean my mother, and then I go to school. Then my mother die after one years, and I go, and I have to stop the school, because I got another sister that was older then me, she was thirteen, and one was younger than me, she was nine. I was in there. And the single brother. So my single brother, when my mother sick, he got to go in the army, at that time, in Italy. They have to do three years in Italy in the army. And we stay all the sisters, my mother and my father. Then when my

brother was in the army my mother died, and we were all alone, you know. My father, my brother come, you know, like a lifesaver, to come for forty days, because the mother died. The army sent him home, he stayed forty days with us, and then we stay all alone. I have to stop the school, because I've got to go, I've got to help my older sister to do the housework and the clean. That's all, that's what we're talking.

LEVINE: Now, you were what age, then?

MINUTELLA: I was eleven.

LEVINE: Eleven, uh-huh. What do you remember about the school?

MINUTELLA: I go to school. I got a nice teacher when I go to school. Everybody love me, all the teacher love me. Even I was left handed. And when I got first class, we (?). I, she learned me to write with the right hand. She said to me, (?). My teacher, she was a young girl, you know. She was never married, I think. And she was write, she learned me how to write with the right hand.

LEVINE: And did you do that?

MINUTELLA: Yeah.

LEVINE: You learned how to write?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, I learned. Yeah, I learned. Then I was, well, I was, over there, over here it's a different in the class, you know. But they wanted me to go to school, because I was good in school, and they wanted me very bad to go. Even they called my father. They says, "If you don't got no money to send your daughter to school, we take care, you know, of all things." My father said, "Not without, I can't leave the other one all alone home, because she got the other sister."

LEVINE: Describe what kind of a little girl you were when you were in school in Sicily. How would you describe yourself?

MINUTELLA: Well, I describe myself, I think I was a nice little girl. Everybody loved me, even the doctor. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Even the doctor?

MINUTELLA: Even the doctor because sometime, you know, they walk around in there. And I was, in the summertime, just, I can't work. But pass like, he stop me. They get, sometimes they get candy or something. Everybody loved me. (she laughs)

LEVINE: And do you remember, did you, do you remember like any games you played, or what you did for fun? Do you remember that?

MINUTELLA: I never played games.

LEVINE: You never played any.

MINUTELLA: When I was a little girl I remember my mother buy a doll, my mother living, you know. I played with a doll. My family, I had three dolls, because my mother, she was good (?), you know. And, but then I can't play no more because when we come to this school, I remember a little girl, we got to crochet. We can't go play in the street or something. She learned us to make crochet, even I make a bedspread. But when I was still a little girl. But I take a long time to finish it, because my mother happened to die, and then I started again.

LEVINE: What did, di dyour mother crochet?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, my mother crocheted. Everything, she do.

LEVINE: Now, would they do, would people in the town do that for their own use, or would they sell those things?

MINUTELLA: For own use, no. For own use. My mother worked for only

us.

LEVINE: And how about your father? What did he do?

MINUTELLA: He, I can't explain you. You know the highway? And he got to take care of the highway. It's such a place, you know, so many kilometers, I call over there. They had the highway. And (?), somebody have some things fall down there in the street, in the highway, you know, then he make a telegram to Palermo. At that time you got no phone. And they sent a man to work, you know. That's how my father put so much men to work and they clean the highway.

LEVINE: I see. Did he work for teh government?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, for the government, he worked. Even they (?), they come from Palermo, because in the Palermo they had the (?), where I lived. (?), you know, have to put Palermo.

LEVINE: So he was really maintaining the highway and repairing.

MINUTELLA: Yeah, maintaining the highway.

LEVINE: Okay. So then how about, were you a religious family?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, religious family all the time.

LEVINE: Can you remember any religious celebrations?

MINUTELLA: My father was, yeah. The religion was sometimes (?). Some also, you know. And my mother, she's going to church all the time, she goes any time, on holidays, you know. That's the way I remember.

LEVINE: And did you go to church?

MINUTELLA: OH, yeah. When I was a little older, I had a sheer dress made like that, the white clothes, you know, and go after the procession. Like over here that was some time, too, this country. Yeah, she was very religious.

LEVINE: Now . . .

MINUTELLA: And I was religion too, now.

LEVINE: How did you, do you remember the house you lived in?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, I remember the house.

LEVINE: Could you describe it?

MINUTELLA: Well, that was almost, it was like a two-family, because I know one family, she lived downstairs with steps, go up the second floor, then it got six rooms, I think. After my mother

died, we got more rooms before my mother died. But, anyway, (?) over there. And when we let it come in the nights that we still were there, let it to somebody else. And then we were upstairs, and the people, woman, she, yeah, many woman like that, one children. I was upstairs, up the (?), when she was seventeen, she died, the older sister.

LEVINE: What did she die of?

MINUTELLA: She died of pneumonia. IN those days, even they operate and all, they can't help. And there was the kind of (?). And they tried to do, the doctor tried to do the best they can, they can't help that. When she was six days before seventeen, she died.

LEVINE: Were you close to her?

MINUTELLA: Huh?

LEVINE: Were you close to her?

MINUTELLA: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: What was she like?

MINUTELLA: Well, she was beautiful. She was, I was the short one in the

family, I mean, the short one in the family. But my sister, she was tall. She was a nice, beautiful sister. When she was seventeen she died, it was (?). After three years, my mother died, when my brother come back from the army.

LEVINE: Now, can you tell me, did you have, like, grandparents also?

MINUTELLA: No, no. I never, only one I seen grandmother one time.

LEVINE: Oh.

MINUTELLA: My father's mother. But because she lived in another town, and on account of my father's job, my mother got to move to Polizzi. That's why I'm born in Polizzi. But year around that town (?), you know. My mother fther, any job that you work over there.

LEVINE: Did you have aunts and uncles?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Did you get together with . . .

MINUTELLA: Oh, yeah. Every day. The one that, the (?) born, they come then to Polizzi. But my mother found, they stayed all the time in (?). They come maybe once a year or six months, you

know, just to stay the (?), and then they go back.

LEVINE: Would you ever go there to visit them?

MINUTELLA: On the holidays. When they make the holiday, they invite us to go over there.

LEVINE: Can you remember any of those holidays, going from . . .

MINUTELLA: Well, that's, you know, the holiday, because they make a feast for the saints. That's the holiday there. And then, of course, they made the Easter.

LEVINE: Then how would you go to their town? How would you travel there?

MINUTELLA: Sometimes, when not too far away, we walked. That's why the (?) go to the near town, the (?). The (?), I got a godmother who baptized me, she got, how do you call, donkey over here. Yeah, she had a donkey. And she asked my father, he says, "All right, you take." Because we don't like walking. (she laughs) He says, "You take her, you bring her."

LEVINE: So you went on the donkey.

MINUTELLA: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was that fun?

MINUTELLA: Yeah. That six hour, I think, travel. But in the mountains, not in the highway, you know, in the mountains. You got to go straight away to walk around. And my father once told me, that's why when I see my mother, my grandmother, I was six years old, and my father says, "All right, I'll take you." Because one was big, one was small, even all the time take me. And I loved to, because I had one with my father, and my godmother gave me the donkey, and that's why I remember. (they laugh)

LEVINE: Okay. So were you near the mountains?

MINUTELLA: Well, the (?), yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember the name of them?

MINUTELLA: Huh?

LEVINE: Do you remember the name of the mountains?

MINUTELLA: Well, near Mount Etna, Mount Etna. Near that. But then a mountain (?). (she laughs)

LEVINE: Okay. Tell me what your father was like. Could you remember any experiences with your father when you were a little girl?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, I remember. Like everybody, naturally like everybody, you know. He was part of the family, because he never (?) was any trouble with my father. He never remarried again. He says, "No, I don't want to, because I don't want nobody to mistreat my children."

LEVINE: So he raised you.

MINUTELLA: Huh?

LEVINE: He raised you.

MINUTELLA: Yeah, yeah, he raised his children. We got to do the housework, the cooking, you know, we do that things. And when we come here, I supposed to cook too and everything, that (?) from the job, you know. That bring it far away, after Palermo. So my brother used to come to the house, he don't want us to go over there because he says, "Nobody know my sister over there." And then when the two sisters, you know, they anger. And, you know, in the little town everybody know you, and they respect you the way you are, you know. But

my brother said with my father, "Nobody know my sister."
And my father got up, he go out in the night, you know. He
says, "Maybe sometimes my sister alone over there, you
know, I don't want nobody to touch my sister." And that's
why we come over here.

LEVINE: Was this brother the one that came over with you?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, yeah. He says, "All right. WE got a cousin over here."
And my brother, he says, "All right, I take my sister United
States."

LEVINE: Now, what was that brother's name?

MINUTELLA: Antonio.

LEVINE: And you came, and what was your sister's name who came?

MINUTELLA: Josephina, Joseph.

LEVINE: And your father, did he come with you, or did he go before?

MINUTELLA: No. My father stay in Italy because he got the, he got the job
over there, you know, he can't quit. But my brother tell, after
six months that we're over there in the United States, we
send you, we're going to call you over there. So you take the

family over here in Italy. They live with each other, just after six months I live with each other. And then he, if you like, stay, if you no like, go back to your job. Instead he get married. (she laughs) He married before six months, because he was alone, and he married.

LEVINE: So then did you see him again?

MINUTELLA: No, I never see my father no more.

LEVINE: Well, do you remember leaving the village to come to America?

MINUTELLA: What?

LEVINE: Do you remember when you left your town to come?

MINUTELLA: Yes, I remember. It was in June.

LEVINE: Do you remember what you brought with you, what you took, what you packed up to come to America?

MINUTELLA: The clothes we got. YOU know, clothes, linens and things we got in Italy. I remember we have things, but all the clothes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So did you keep in contact with your father after you came?

MINUTELLA: OH, yeah. All the time. Every month we write. That time the letter take one month, you know. And we write all the time.

LEVINE: And what kinds of things did he tell you in those letters?

MINUTELLA: Well, he's all alone, he's all alone. He says I have no right to the place over here, you know. I never see my father again.

LEVINE: And then did he keep writing to you after he got marreid?

MINUTELLA: Oh, yeah. He write all the time. We send some money, you know, because he got, then he got five children with his wife.

LEVINE: Wow.

MINUTELLA: With his second wife. I never know them, you know. And then he died, because he marry a young woman.

LEVINE: Did you know the young woman? Did you know the woman?

MINUTELLA: No, no, because he marry in another town, you know. He marry a woman from another town, I never know. But my brother, he go to Italy before me, and he see the woman.

LEVINE: Oh. And what did he have to . . .

MINUTELLA: After my father died. He didn't see my father neither. He says she was a very good woman. Yeah, you know, that woman, very quiet, and that's why she got five children.

LEVINE: She was very young then.

MINUTELLA: Yeah, she was very young.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. As young as, how old, what age difference, do you remember?

MINUTELLA: No. That was a lot of difference. He could be her daughter, you know, his daughter, I mean. (they laugh)

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, did you feel, how did you feel when you were leaving? When you were leaving to come to America, how did you feel about leaving?

MINUTELLA: Well, I was young. I cried, I cried too months, because I never go out from the town, and then you go out, I come over here to, I don't know nobody. My cousin, I see (?). And my brother. And after, but when I go to my father before we leave, the place where my father, where he live, you know. But I (?), and I cried all the time over there. I want to stay by my father. He want me to enjoy Palermo, see Palermo, you know, because it's a beautiful city, and this and that. But to

me nothing, nothing was, I cried that time.

LEVINE: Did you, had you heard some things about America before you left?

MINUTELLA: Yeah. I told you. My brother was here about three years, I think.

LEVINE: And what do you remember that he told you? What did you think . . .

MINUTELLA: He didn't write to me so much, because he got a family, and he sends the letter to the family. That's why, you know, the (?), because he write all the time to the family.

LEVINE: Do you remember what you expected when you were coming to America, what you expected it to be like?

MINUTELLA: Nothing, I expected nothing. I tell you the truth, where they take me I go. I go where they take me. Only we suffered too much when we come, was that time, you know, where the boat stay so long.

LEVINE: Do you remember the name of the boat?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, Mendoza.

LEVINE: Mendoza.

MINUTELLA: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. And do you remember, how did you get to the Mendoza? How did you get . . .

MINUTELLA: Well, my brother write, you know, which boat to leave, which boat to get a ride, and then they send this. We go to Palermo, you know, because we lived in Palermo.

LEVINE: HOw did you get to Palermo?

MINUTELLA: With the, I don't know how you call, with the director. Like a littel truck, you know, but it got a horse, you know.

LEVINE: A horse and carraige?

MINUTELLA: Yes. And one neighbor bring us, because we bring something, some goods, some (?) my father took, see. And that took, I think, a couple days, because I remember one night we go to the hotel to sleep. And then the next day we leave, and my father, he know the way because when we got over there, and wait for us. Then there was another, my father's friend, in another city. And he says, "All right, I can't bring you home, because you got no time, because the man

with the carriage is here." I got (?) over there, on the (?) there. I don't know how you call. And he says how many days I can stay with you. And then, and then my father know a firned.

LEVINE: So that's how you got to the boat.

MINUTELLA: Yes. Not to the boat, to go to Palermo to my father. Then we take the carriage over there. Because in Palermo before they got the carriage with the horse, and they take you to the port.

LEVINE: And when you, did your brother arrange for everything, for you to get a visa to come?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, my brother take me. We was kids.

LEVINE: And, let's see. So when you got to the boat, did you have any kind of examinations while you were still in Italy?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, the eyes, they examined the eyes. And when you come over here too, before you would get out of the boat, they examined your eyes, the first thing.

LEVINE: What did you hear about that examination?

MINUTELLA: Nothing. If you got good eyes, you pass. They will give you a think that says "pass." If you got something in the eyes, they put you on the other side, they won't pass, and they send you back to Italy.

LEVINE: Well, how about the voyage itself? Whata do you remember about being on the ship, the Mendoza?

MINUTELLA: Well, (she laughs). I remember I told you it was like dogs over there.

LEVINE: You were like dogs?

MINUTELLA: Well, because there you got everything. They got one big room with the women, one big room for the men, and there was a bunk beds, one on top of the other, all one room, you know, twenty-two days you travel this way. And then when you go, when we got there, we ate the food. Now they terrible, when I go after fifty years they got a terrible (?). Over there, you got to go like soldiers, they give you plates, tin plates. YOu go over there, you take, and then if you find a seat, you sit. If you no find, at that time a lot of people travel, if you don't find no seat, you got to sit on the floor. That's why I said that's no human things, you know. But the people try.

LEVINE: Was the food, how did the food taste?

MINUTELLA: Well, that wasn't so bad, yeah.

LEVINE: And so you were down in the bottom of the ship?

MINUTELLA: Well, in the ship, you know.

LEVINE: IN steerage. Did you go up on the neck, where, up to the air?

MINUTELLA: Oh, yeah, yeah. At the same time we stay over there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what . . .

MINUTELLA: In the daytime. Just for sleep, you go down.

LEVINE: And what did people do all day for twenty-two days?

MINUTELLA: Well, they walk around and at that time, you know, when the boat goes this way and that, a lot of people vomit or something, you know. But me and my sister, we sit down in one place, one time, we don't move. We stay nice and quiet.

LEVINE: Did people sing or dance?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, some people tried. Some, they got (?),

and they played cards, passed the time.

LEVINE: Was it a rough voyage that you had?

MINUTELLA: Huh?

LEVINE: Were the seas rough? Was the water rough?

MINUTELLA: Rough? Sometimes, sometimes, it depends how the place it was, you know, very rough, yeah. We left Palermo, right away the water was rough. And we got to sit down, you know. The trip not so bad because we sit down, that's all. We don't get up no more. Some people got up running, and they throw up too much.

LEVINE: Do you remember when the boat came into the New York Harbor?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, I remember.

LEVINE: Do you remember what you thought when you saw New York?

MINUTELLA: Well, the first thing was the Liberty Statue, the Liberty Statue, the first thing. And we started hollering, "The Liberty Statue over here." We start, everybody feels sad, and was happy.

Then the boat stop, and I remember I'm on the, we stayed in the port, you know, before we get out. And my brother was over here. They were, how do you call the (?), the little . . .

LEVINE: A little boat, you mean?

MINUTELLA: A little one, just take the two people, you know. And my brother come to the, right at the bottom of the boat to say hi. He had a (?), you know. And he don't live in New York. He live in (?) at the time. He worked over there.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: Now, do you remember Ellis Island?

MINUTELLA: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Tell me your impression of that, what it was like for you.

MINUTELLA: Well, I see so, well, at that time, you know how it is, I see so many people they come in a boat, overseas, you know. But they can't get in, the boat, just they examine the eyes, you see the family.

LEVINE: Wait, say that again.

MINUTELLA: You see the family after they examine your eyes. There was a doctor over there. After you see the family, the family will come, they take you from the boat. They ask my brother if he got money, because we got to bring so much money each. You can't come without the money. So my brother showed the thing, everything was all right. And then the eyes was all right. That's all, for me and my sister. My brother, I got a little picture. Go up in there, you know where I got the make-up mirror, open the drawer in the top, and you find a little one, a little picture.

LEVINE: So did you have to stay overnight at Ellis Island?

MINUTELLA: NO, no, a couple of hours, I think. And then we get out.

LEVINE: Do you remember what it was like for you (a clock chimes) with all the people and . . .

MINUTELLA: Well, a lot of people was over there, and I remember the window, around the window thing, the way I said. Then I see one (?), you know, to work around. (?) they go on a train, because at that time there was we got to go in the train. And I said one family take it, my cousin Abner, I never see him never see him before.

LEVINE: What was his name?

MINUTELLA: My brother, well, after there was my, because I was young, I was single. Then there was my brother-in-law. Yeah, he was my brother left. But in the time that he married my cousin, he come to the boat, and he take the luggage. And I told my brother, "Look, that man taking the luggage. What are we going to do now?" And my brother, he was the one who was over here and understand, say, "Oh, that's your cousin Abner. Don't worry."

LEVINE: What was his first name?

MINUTELLA: Mingenza.

LEVINE: Mingenza?

MINUTELLA: Yeah.

LEVINE: And that was his first name, or his second name?

MINUTELLA: No. He was Mingenza Minutella. Then I met the brother when I was over here. I lived with him and the wife. Not this year, no. No, no.

LEVINE: This isn't . . . (referring to a photograph)

MINUTELLA: Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's the one. That's the one, my brother, my sister, they (?) a couple (?) was over here. YOu know, when we go to the five and ten, over there they take a picture. That's how we take the picture, all three.

LEVINE: Now, what was the name of your brother who was here when you came?

MINUTELLA: Philip.

LEVINE: And so you got on a train after you left Ellis Island?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, yeah. WE got on a train, yeah.

LEVINE: Well, do you, what do you remember about when you first came to America, some things that struck you as different, things you'd never seen before.

MINUTELLA: I tell you the truth, at that time, nothing impressed me, I think, I was so, like when you lose everything, you know, we got to pack the house, we got to do, and you're all alone in the world, look like you're alone in the world. I tell my cousin that it's very good.

LEVINE: They treated you very good.

MINUTELLA: Then they look for a job with the horse.

LEVINE: Your cousin, that's where you went to live?

MINUTELLA: YEah.

LEVINE: And where was your cousin living?

MINUTELLA: My father's sister and mother. The mother of this cousin, that was my mother, my father's sister.

LEVINE: Oh. Okay. Well, where was, where was that? Where did you go?

MINUTELLA: 12th Street, in New York.

LEVINE: 12th Street in New York.

MINUTELLA: Yeah.

LEVINE: I see.

MINUTELLA: And we lived with them, because when we come my brother, the one who come with us, he don't know what to go to work. And the other brother says, "All right, no work, come with me

in the (?) and you work with me." And we, all two sisters. See, that's why, after we see Depression and everything, nothing bothered me, you know, nothing. And my brother goes to (?), we stay only me and my sister.

LEVINE: You and your sister were with your father's sister?

MINUTELLA: No. My sister. NO, my father, my father's sister, she's in Italy. She got two daughters, and they come to the United States. Then they marry over here. When I come over here, they was married, all two.

LEVINE: So then that's where you . . .

MINUTELLA: Yeah, that's where we stayed.

LEVINE: And your brother went with your other brother.

MINUTELLA: That's, yeah. That's where we stayed.

LEVINE: I see. And how long did you stay on 12th Street?

MINUTELLA: Huh? Oh, we stayed, we stayed long, till I got married. I married in the 12th Street, 12th, uh, in the church on 12th Street.

LEVINE: I'm sorry?

MINUTELLA: I get married in the 12th . . .

LEVINE: Street.

MINUTELLA: City church, because they just a little Italian church.

LEVINE: Well, how long were you here in America before you got married?

MINUTELLA: Oh, I think about eight months, twelve months.

LEVINE: Wow. Tell me how you met your husband.

MINUTELLA: By the brother's house, because my mother-in-law was in Passaic, live in Passaic, with a son, got a single son. And the other son was in New York, I tell you, married my cousin. And I lived with them. That was two sisters, I lived together. And then we come, and we're together with them.

LEVINE: I see. Do you remember the first day that you met your husband?

MINUTELLA: Yes. He come with his mother in New York. This (?) because it was, Daniel, my brother Philip, the one who was over here, he said, and then the daughter of one cousin, and my mother-in-law says to her son, because they (?), this son

and mother, says, "Come on, we'll go to New York because Philip's sister." That's why, but I never think, you know, he get, he get in love with me, you know. Because I never think to get married at that time. I was so young.

LEVINE: Did you like him when you first met him?

MINUTELLA: No. (they laugh)

LEVINE: No.

MINUTELLA: No. I married because they tell me to marry. Otherwise, that's why my brother and them, they come for that back, you know. Then come my brother, they talk and tell him, well, we was over here in July, and then the wedding, then the eleventh I get married.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, now, was it, was that the way it would have been if you were in Italy? Would your family kind of have arranged who you married if you had stayed in Sicily?

MINUTELLA: I don't know. (she laughs) Because I wouldn't . . .

LEVINE: Okay. We're going to stop here for an interruption. Just a minute. (break in tape) We're resuming now. In other words, your father's brother . . .

MINUTELLA: Not my father's, no. My father's sister. My father's sister.

LEVINE: Okay. Let's start this way. Your brother was friends with your husband, and you . . .

MINUTELLA: Yeah. All the family.

LEVINE: And there was a cousin who was related.

MINUTELLA: He know my cousin, you know, that's why.

LEVINE: Okay. So everybody wanted you to get married, apparently.

MINUTELLA: Oh, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: And you weren't that particularly enamored with your husband whne you married him. You just felt . . .

MINUTELLA: Well, you know, I'll tell you why (?). I'll tell you why (?).

LEVINE: Okay. And so you were feeling pretty depressed when you first came here.

MINUTELLA: Yeah, I was very depressed, because I never go out from that town. The first time, and (?) and all. You know, I do everything myself, I got nobody, I directed the house pretty

much from younger. Because my mother died and then my sister died, and (?) to the house, everything. And then over here, you know.

LEVINE: Well, where did you go when you got married?

MINUTELLA: Oh, I come to Passaic. My mother-in-law was over here in Passaic. And I lived with them. My mother -in-law and my husband.

LEVINE: Well, then do you remember when you started feeling better, when you started feeling more happy a little bit?

MINUTELLA: My mother-in-law make me happy.

LEVINE: YOur mother-in-law?

MINUTELLA: Yeah. My sister come with me, too, live with me, you know. And my brother, Nellie, he stay in New York, my brother. But he come every week to my mother-in-law. And she was a very nice woman. She just make (?), my sister, my brother, very (?). Yes. My sister after, for a while, get married, too, you know, after another year, after one year my sister married, too.

LEVINE: What happened to your sister?

MINUTELLA: She died. She died a long time ago. Well, she married, and then she got to move from there, but they're go live at Dover. When she married she moved to Dover.

LEVINE: And did she have a good life here in America?

MINUTELLA: Yeah. I mean, her husband died when she got three children. She come back to Passaic after. And her husband died after she got three children.

LEVINE: Well, so, when you were with your mother-in-law, did she keep some, a lot of the customs of the old country?

MINUTELLA: Customs?

LEVINE: Customs, ways of doing things? Did she, would she do things as they did them in Sicily, or did she become like a . . .

MINUTELLA: No, we're just a regular, like over here, you know. It's a regular, like over here. And then she got a son in Italy, and she wanted to go back. She says, "Before I die I want to see my son again." And that's why she go back to Italy.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And how, what, were you, was that when you were young, or how old . . .

MINUTELLA: Yeah. Well, when he was a child yet, you know. She wanted to come back, but she knows (?), you know. And she can't come back any more. She died over there in Italy.

LEVINE: So what was your husband's name?

MINUTELLA: Salvadore.

LEVINE: Salvadore. And tell me what he was like. What kind of a person was he?

MINUTELLA: He was a good man, quiet. Yeah. That's my father, my husband had two sons.

LEVINE: And then you had children? How many children?

MINUTELLA: Just two children, two boys.

LEVINE: And what were your son's names?

MINUTELLA: One, he died, that's the one, with my daughter-in-law. He died in October. And (?).

LEVINE: What were their names, your son's names?

MINUTELLA: One Joseph, one Onobrio. Lenny, they call over here, because over here, when I moved to Passaic, and I got, the

first one, when I got a job. I live near a Jewish family, and right away she come here, you know. She was so nice with me, and (?) when the baby born, the last time I got home with the baby, she take the baby, and I have this woman, she was in the house. And soon that day was like another daughter. She got, I think, seven children, or six. A boy, or two girls. And she was a very nice woman. She was very nice. She learned me how to talk, you know.

LEVINE: Was it hard for you to learn English?

MINUTELLA: Well, it's very hard because I go to school that time, because I was young enough to go to school. Yeah, I worked a lot of time, but mostly Italian, you know. And we start up Italian, and that's why I didn't go to school at that time.

LEVINE: You did go to school?

MINUTELLA: No, no. We, in Italy, yes, but not here.

LEVINE: Not here, uh-huh. And then did you become a citizen at some point?

MINUTELLA: Yes, I become a citizen after. And there was, I think, only when she was an Irish woman, and (?). And they build a house, and the other one, I forget the name.

LEVINE: She helped you learn English?

MINUTELLA: Huh?

LEVINE: This person helped you learn English?

MINUTELLA: Well, we talked, yeah. She was twelve years in that house, and she was . . . and then I gotta go to work, because there was the Depression. And she taked my children, yeah. That's usual, she was very nice.

LEVINE: And what did you do for work during the Depression?

MINUTELLA: I worked in a men's coats. And then I started to travel, I go to New York. I go work in a dress.

LEVINE: Did you sew?

MINUTELLA: Yes, I sewed on dresses before I go by 34th Street, I think, I worked. Then I stopped over there. And I find another job, in umbrella, 42nd Street. And I worked twenty-five years.

LEVINE: And what was that job?

MINUTELLA: Dress.

LEVINE: Oh, making, sewing dresses.

MINUTELLA: Twenty-five yeras you worked with.

LEVINE: Twenty-five years, and then the shop close. I'm already to Passaic when the shop close altogether. Because they go out, there was Italian, a Jewish man, you know, (?). Then they close the shop, and I come back to Passaic.

LEVINE: Tell me the name of the shop again.

MINUTELLA: (?) I got a pencil over here.

LEVINE: Okay. We'll write it out. So when you think back on your life, what are you most proud of?

MINUTELLA: What?

LEVINE: What are you most proud of that you did in your life? What makes you feel proud of yourself?

MINUTELLA: Nothing. I worked. I raised a nice family. I'm proud of my family, because I've got nice children. I'm proud of my children and grandchildren.

LEVINE: And how many grandchildren?

MINUTELLA: Five. And nine great-grandchildren.

LEVINE: Wow.

MINUTELLA: And I'm proud because everybody's so nice. Nobody go into trouble.

LEVINE: Well, great.

MINUTELLA: Thanks God, thanks God for that. I thanks God.

LEVINE: Now, you worked after your second son was born?

MINUTELLA: Yeah.

LEVINE: When he was a baby?

MINUTELLA: Yeah. Because there was the Depression, my husband lose a job. At that time we worked for six dollars a week.

LEVINE: 1930? '13?

MINUTELLA: No, before.

LEVINE: 1913 my baby is born, and then (?) all my boy. Because my husband lose the job. I got to go to work. How the money come? And I go to work, once I start work I never stop any

more.

LEVINE: Did you try not to have more than two children?

MINUTELLA: Yeah, I tried, because I can't support the children. I says, "Why I got to make suffer my children? At least I give everything they wanted when they was young."

LEVINE: Oh. So did you practice birth control?

MINUTELLA: I don't take no pill, no control, nothing. I just want no more children. Taht's all I learn, I don't want no more.

LEVINE: So when you were first working after your second son was born, how did you take care of him when he was an infant?

MINUTELLA: My sister take care because in a little while my sister move over here, in Passaic. Before she live in Dover, then she moved back to Passaic. She take care of my son, and I go to the, to work, I go home, I nurse the baby, and then I go back to work. Then when he was a little bigger, I bring him to the day nursery, because that was about two blocks in Passaic, two blocks from where I live. After I start, when he start the day nursery, I worked in New York. And then the Jewish people, the husband got a sister, they got a candy store about, they got the candy store next house, where I live in,

close to, the store, where I live. He got the clothing, the second clothing store, second-hand clothing store, and a candy store. The son got the candy store, and the father got the clothing store. And every morning he got up early, that time he was supposed to open, and no more. And (?), he locked the store, and when the children go down and worked there, the woman was in the house, in the store. Then I delivered the money to the Pop, he give it, (?), you know. I give the money, and then he sent it day nursery.

LEVINE: Well, good. Well, now, when you look think back over your life, coming here from Sicily and living your life, how do you think about it? Are you glad you came?

MINUTELLA: One thing, you know, I tell you. Whole time I wasn't (?), another time. Beore I die I want to go see Italy another time, after fifty years, years after my son get married also. My little son says, "You wish to go, you got to go." So thanks God I find, you know, my little brother was living in Italy. He died, I never seen him no more, but he got a daughter. When I come this country, she was two years old, and I never know the girl, the little girl, you know, two years old. But when I go Italy, then they, she married one of my cousins, and she says whole time I want to see you, one time. But I understand my

father daughter, a son. When I go after fifty years, I go and visit that half-brother's daughter, I call my niece, and her husband was my cousin, and I go there by their house, because they got a big house. The husband thought I was all rich, you know, I got money, too. And I go with her. I stay with my husband three months over there. And my husband got a family in Palermo, too. She live in Palermo at that time. My husband got a Palermo family. The brother's daughter, but he wouldn't see the brother no more, because he died, the big brother. Only the sister-in-law is there. And that's the way, you know, we had a very good time between the two families. They got money, and I was here, I had no money, because, and then I see my father, son and daughter.

LEVINE: Now, how many children did your father have after?

MINUTELLA: Five.

LEVINE: Five.

MINUTELLA: She got a two boy. One boy died, I never know, I never see him. The other one I see, and he come to the boat, when we reach Palermo. Then while we wait, he sits by me, and he started talking, and I talked with him, but I don't know who he is. He know I was his sister, because he knows I'll come

back. Then he said, "Well, you don't know me? I'm your brother." I was so surprised. Then when I go in the house I find the sister. Then another sister, she lived in Yugoslavia, the young one, the young, my father's daughter. The husband was in the war, when (?) the war. He was a prisoner in Yugoslavia. So when the war stopped in Italy, they was very poor, they got no money, no work, nothing. And the husband says, "All right. If you want to come, we go to Yugoslavia." And I find a job over there, and we go to Yugoslavia. And these days, before I leave Italy, she comes to see. She says, "I pray God to see you." That was very nice. We take a lot of picture, you know. She comes then to the boat when I leave, and I, that's why my father says, "No, the whole trip." And then they write to me all the time. When my father died, we never forget them. Me, my brother, my sister sent money all the time, every month, and we sent so much, because they got no money, you know. We sent money. All the children, my father left.

LEVINE: Do you remember during World War Two?

MINUTELLA: The one, the first one.

LEVINE: The first World War?

MINUTELLA: A little, yeah. The second one.

LEVINE: The second World War. Did you send money then?

MINUTELLA: Well, either before, after my father died, we sent money, everybody. We made so much money some time, we don't earn money for ourself. I would send so much for your family, so much for my family, so much. And we tried to do the best. But my father left five children, and they can't support, you know. And we got to send them money every month. My brother, me and my sister, and the brother, the older one, some time he got money and he give money too, you know. The other one, they're grown up, after they get married.

LEVINE: Is there anything else, the tape is nearly over now. Is there anything else that you would like to say? Are you enjoying your old age?

MINUTELLA: Now?

LEVINE: Yeah.

MINUTELLA: No, because I lose my son. I had (?). My son and I got along, because I love him terrible. I can't believe my son was someone (?). (she is moved)

LEVINE: I guess you're happy you got back to Italy before . . .

MINUTELLA: Oh, yeah. And then 1980, before we go, 1960, after my husband died, my niece was the one who was three months over there. She says, "I wish, I give everything, I see you another time." And I got a chance one cousin from Brooklyn, from Italy, she called me on the phone, she called my son and my father, she says, "I'm going to Italy. If you want to send your mother with me." I was eighty-seven. Yeah. And I go over there, in Italy. And I stayed all month until I, but they got a big villa, and I stay in North Palermo in a villa. (a clock chimes) But my husband's family come and take me once in a while, they take me Palermo, and they take me back to my, to my niece.

LEVINE: (a clock chimes) Let me ask you one last question before we finish. Do you remember any stories, or any songs?

MINUTELLA: Songs?

LEVINE: Songs or stories that you knew when you were a little girl?

MINUTELLA: Oh, yeah, we sing all the time, my brother sing all the time.

LEVINE: Can you remember a little bit of some song?

MINUTELLA: Well, we put my brother sing (Italian).

LEVINE: Let's hear it. Could you just sing a little bit?

MINUTELLA: I don't remember, no. I don't remember (Italian). I learned to sing it because my mother loved to sing.

LEVINE: She did?

MINUTELLA: My mother was good at singing. After I was (?), my mother make a fortune, to sing. Yeah, she was a good singer.

LEVINE: Well, maybe that's a good note to end on. I want to thank you very much for talking with me. You have a wonderful, interesting story to tell.

MINUTELLA: Yes.

LEVINE: And thank you.

MINUTELLA: You're welcome. (she laughs)

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service.

MINUTELLA: And this, what they do with this now?

LEVINE: And I'm here today on December 8th, 1993, and I've been

speaking with Angela Patti Minutella, and we're in Clifton,
New Jersey, and I am signing off.