

EI-077

CARMELA PASCULLI ROSSIELLO

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Oral Historian's Note: There is a constant mechanical clicking sound, perhaps from a nearby appliance, throughout the duration of this recording. Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Director of the Oral History Project, 2/8/1994.

LEVINE: With Carmela Rossiello, who came through Ellis Island from Italy in 1923 at the age of twenty-one. Today is August 27th, 1991 and it's about ten o'clock in the morning. And I'm very happy to be here with you.

ROSSIELLO: Thank you.

LEVINE: And why don't we start by your telling me where you were born.

ROSSIELLO: I was born in Provincia de Bari, Provincia de Bari, Italy. Bitonto was my town.

LEVINE: Bitonto. Okay.

ROSSIELLO: Bitonto.

LEVINE: And that's B-I-T-O-N-T-O. Okay. And can you tell me your birth date?

ROSSIELLO: When I was born? New Year's Eve, January 1st, twelve o'clock in the night.

LEVINE: Really. And what year?

ROSSIELLO: 1902.

LEVINE: Okay. Great. And can you remember, now, when you left, were you living in Bitonto when you left for America when you were twenty-one years old?

ROSSIELLO: Yes. I was still in Bitonto.

LEVINE: Okay. So you lived all the time in Italy in that same town.

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yes. Yes, in the same town.

LEVINE: Okay. Could you describe that town for me? What was it like there?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, I can't tell you, it was beautiful, you know. For me it was beautiful. Where we used to live, we used to live on the second floor. There was the balcony where we used to see all the feasts and everything in the street, you know. That's all I can tell you. I can't describe everything. There was a big, big arch for the Immaculate Mary, the Virgin Mary. Because before the war everybody used to, you know, they used to fight at that time. And when they went to the soldier over there to fight they say the first regiment came and told them, "Don't touch this town because of my eyes." And the captain was, wait. I don't remember the name. I don't remember the name of the captain. And they say all the horses that carried the soldiers, they all lay down, and they stopped the war. And that's where, before was close there, then they make a whole big, a little town, you know.

LEVINE: Tell me, you said because of the eyes? Did you say because of the eyes?

ROSSIELLO: The Blessed Virgin Mary say, "Don't touch this town because it's blessed of my eyes." But she was watching that town, you know. And that's why she say that. I always remember the name of the captain. I forgot now.

LEVINE: You mean the captain in the army?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. The one that was fighting with the soldiers, you know. They got a

whole big beach over there with the soldiers all laying down and the horse, and beautiful. They make a big, big feast when this Immaculate Virgin Mary. Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: And you can remember that.

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah. I remember.

LEVINE: You saw that.

ROSSIELLO: I remember. I remember because that's what they used to tell us all the time, you know.

LEVINE: So you felt like you lived in a sacred town.

ROSSIELLO: That's right. (she laughs)

LEVINE: And could you describe, now, you say you lived on the second floor, and there was a balcony.

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. Was a, see, there was six families in that big. They used to belong all to my grandfather. There was all the family there. My father's brother, the sister, they all together we used to live, you know.

LEVINE: Now, in your immediate family, in the house, who was living there? Your mother?

ROSSIELLO: My mother, my brother, my sister. All together.

LEVINE: In other words you, there were three children in your family?

ROSSIELLO: No, no. There was, wait. Let me count. There was three girls and two boy. Five. Rafaella, Giovanna, Theresa, me, Nicolina and Anna. Six children. There was four girl and two boy. And when the, see, when I got married my husband, had over here the aunt and two brother in America. And one day he turned around to me and say, "You want to go to America?" I say, "Well, if you want to go, I come with you." You know, what I can say, you know? And that's the way we decided to come over here.

LEVINE: Before we get into the voyage of that, tell me, what was your father's name?

ROSSIELLO: Pasquale.

LEVINE: Pasquale.

ROSSIELLO: Pasquale Pasculli. My father was dead. He died when I was twelve years old, yeah. And my brother used to take care.

LEVINE: I see. And then, so your father's last, no, your father's name was Pasculli.

ROSSIELLO: Pasculli Pasquale.

LEVINE: Pasculli Pasquale. And your mother's name?

ROSSIELLO: Maria Tarrantino.

LEVINE: Now, was Tarrantino her maiden name?

ROSSIELLO: Yes.

LEVINE: Okay. And when you lived in this house with your brothers and sisters and mother and father, in the other apartments in the house were other . . .

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. Everybody used to, if it was the first or second floor, you know. We was on the top. On the last floor we was, you know. And everybody had a balcony. We used to see the feasts in the street, everything. Oh, it was beautiful, it was.

LEVINE: And what about, and can you describe, what kind of a street was it on? What kind of a . . .

ROSSIELLO: Corsa Vittoria Emmanuele Segundo. The name of the king. They called Corsa Vittoria Emmanuele Segundo.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And was there a courtyard in your backyard? Was there a courtyard?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, no. There no was no yard. That town was all built, total house, you

know. There was no . . .

LEVINE: And did you have like a garden?

ROSSIELLO: No garden, no, no.

LEVINE: And what did . . .

ROSSIELLO: Far away was the villa, we used to call. That's where everybody used to go and pass time and enjoy, and there was all the flowers. That was far away, at the end of the town, was that.

LEVINE: And what did your father do for work in that town?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, my father, they used to build the lime. He used to make the lime. He used to make the lime. He used to make, you know, they used to build like a castle, and then they used to throw the fire inside all night and day for one week until stone that was cooked, and they make the lime. That was his job, his business.

LEVINE: And your mother, did she work at all?

ROSSIELLO: No. My mother was just take care of us. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Okay. And did you go to school there?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah. I went to school in all the, public school. Now, when my father

die I went in the convent. See, I have a cousin, okay, who used to live on the first floor, and we used to play all the way together. What happened to this girl, she was a little cripple, and the mother, she feels so bad because she was getting sick. And the doctor tell her, her husband say, "If you want your wife to live you'd better put your daughter away." And she put her in the convent, you know. That's why when she went to the convent I wasn't going without, because. And my father say, "Till I'm over here, you stay with me." My mother, too. But when my father died the first thing I ask my mother, "When am I going in the convent with Theresa." And I stayed four years in the convent.

LEVINE: So you went in when you were twelve?

ROSSIELLO: I was twelve years old, yeah. I come out, I was sixteen.

LEVINE: And what was that like, being in the convent?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, it was beautiful. I learned to embroider silk. That was my job. Then the nun who used to take care of me, she used to love me. She used to call me "La mia bebette." "My baby," she used to call me. Then she went away. When she went away I didn't want to stay there no more.

LEVINE: And what kind of a convent, what was the, what was the kind of convent that it was? I mean, what branch of Catholicism was it?

ROSSIELLO: Catholic, it was, you know.

LEVINE: Was it like Jesuit, or was it some . . .

ROSSIELLO: No, no, no, no. No. It was just a, I don't know how you say it. (?), you know, they used to wear the coronet, they used to call, you know, the white thing in the head. That's what they used to.

LEVINE: And you, did you have a particular job in the convent, like that you were supposed to do?

ROSSIELLO: Sister Charity, yeah. My, the name of my nun was Suor Paulina Mozzarelli. When they sent her away I told my mother I want to come home. She used to love my mother, too. When she used to come, my mother used to come and visit two or three times a week, maybe more. And the nun used to come and talk with her. When it was, the guy used to work in the yard over there, you know. And they know my family, my uncle. And when the nun went away I give him the note, I say bring this to my mother, and my mother came. And the first thing she say, "Where's Suor Paulina?" Because she always there. Well, I say, "Mama, that's the reason I call you." I say, "She went away. I don't want to stay here no more." My mother say, "Okay." When the Mother Superior came and my mother tell her "I want to take her home," she say why. She say, "Well, she learn enough." She don't say why. We don't want to make no trouble.

LEVINE: Now, when you went into the convent, did you think you were going to stay there for your whole life?

ROSSIELLO: I think so, because I love her. Maybe for the, if the nun don't go away, maybe I be there, too. (she laughs) It was beautiful.

LEVINE: What did you do, like, on a regular day, when you were in the convent?

ROSSIELLO: A regular day, embroider, work. We used to make the dress of, everything, they used to sell. The blanket, the sheets, you know.

LEVINE: And what town was this convent?

ROSSIELLO: The same town, Bitonto. Bitonto, yeah. They say The Convent de Carmine. The Blessed Virgin of Carmonda, Carmel. That's why they call the Convent de Carmine. De Carmine, they used to call.

LEVINE: So what did you do, then, when you went out of the convent?

ROSSIELLO: I stayed with my mother. I embroider, make sheets, things for my sister, just for the family, you know.

LEVINE: Now, let's see. So you had, you mentioned your sisters' names before. What were your brothers' names?

ROSSIELLO: Nicola, Gaetano. My brother Gaetano, over here they call Tommy. He came with me in the United States. He was eighteen years old. When I came he came with me. He came, he stayed with me, you know. When we came we went to

Canarsie. That's where we stay.

LEVINE: Let's finish with Italy first. What did you, what did you do? Did you have friends? Did you play games? Did you . . .

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah. I have plenty friend. We used to, see, my brother, he have a lot of friend, musician. That's the way I met my husband, you know. My husband was a musician. He used to play the clarinet in the orchestra, you know. Now, when it was a holiday, I think, we used to have a dance in the family. We used to make a turn one time in my house. Another time at a friend's house, you know. Nobody come alone, no boy come alone. With the family, you know, because it was strict in Italy. And my husband used to bring the sister and his mother, and that's the way we met, you know.

LEVINE: So it was at a festival of some kind, or it was a family gathering?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah, yeah. Family, but all friend, you know. When it was a carnival and had the feast, we always used to be together. But they always used to make the turn. One time in your house, one time in my house, you know. That's all.

LEVINE: So he came with his mother and sister.

ROSSIELLO: The mother and the sister used to come with him.

LEVINE: And who introduced you?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, we used to introduce, my brother used to introduce all the friend, you

know. When they used to come, we used to introduce ourselves. That's where we met, started to fall in love, that's all. You, I have another. This is funny. See, we used to sit all the girls on one side and the boys. Because we used to fool around, you know, the way we used to talk. All the musician, they used to make the turn to dance because, you know, when the dancer used to do one, the other dancer, the other guy, then the next. My husband never used to get up. And the girl would say, "What's the matter with that guy?" You know? We say, "We better try to make him dance." And we threw the number, you know, and we count who come out, come pick him up. What a come out I was. (she laughs) That was so exciting. I was shaking, but nobody noticed because we used to be in love, you know. Anyway, I went to him. I say, "Joe, you want to dance?" Joe looked, he got so red, and we danced together, you know. From that time on he used to do the turn, he used to do like everybody else.

LEVINE: So did you see him for a while before you got married?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah, yeah. Then, you know, see, Italy was strictly. Oh, and he went my brother, he told him he love me, he wants to marry me. Then he went to my mother. And me, I have a brother and sister older than me, and my brother now turned around to my sister, say, "(Italian), no, let her go. Let her go. They in love, let her go." And that's where I got married before my sister older than me.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Was it, in Italy was it that the older sister had to give her permission because usually . . .

ROSSIELLO: No, you know. Slightly, you know, look funny here, you know. There was always respect between, love and respect. You're bigger and older than me, I'm going to respect you, you know. It was, we learned it that way.

LEVINE: So then how did you get the idea, how did it happen that you . . .

ROSSIELLO: To come to America?

LEVINE: Yeah.

ROSSIELLO: Because of my husband. I told you, he had two brother over here, he have. And they told him, you know, when you come to America. And he ask me if you want to come. I say, "Okay." And then my mother say, "Okay. Take Tommy with you to, too." Over here we call him Tommy. In Italy we used to call it Gaetanocio. And he came over with us. I see them just the first day in the boat. All the trip that was in the cabin, throw up.

LEVINE: This is your brother?

ROSSIELLO: My brother and my husband, too. I was alone. I was pregnant, you know. And the first day, you know, I went on the top of the boat to sit to there, I throw up, too. Then the captain told, one guy take care of me all the trip. He told him to take care of me, and they told me, "Never look in the water if you want to stay here." And that's what I used to do, you know. And this guy used to bring the chair up the stairs for me. He used to bring it down. We have a wonderful trip, (she laughs) the food,

everything was wonderful.

LEVINE: Now, where was the food? Where did you eat? It was a dining room?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. They have the dining room there where they eat. Everybody in the cabin where to sleep. Everybody had their own cabin.

LEVINE: So you must have gone, you didn't go steerage, then? You went either first, second or third class? Do you remember?

ROSSIELLO: I don't remember what class I was.

LEVINE: But they served you in the dining room.

ROSSIELLO: They served me like I was in the first class.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I see.

ROSSIELLO: They serve me, because I was, maybe I was pregnant, you know. And I told you, I never see my husband and my brother till we came in the United States.

LEVINE: Now you came on the ship that you . . .

ROSSIELLO: Martha Washington.

LEVINE: The Martha Washington. And do you remember how long it took you, the trip?

ROSSIELLO: That I don't remember. It took almost a couple of weeks, I think so.

LEVINE: Now, was there a steerage on that boat? Were there people in what they call steerage who were not in cabins, were staying in bunks or on the decks?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. We have a, yeah. We have a bigger room where we used to come out from the cabin when we used to sleep. We used to, say like a room like this that we used to. And we used to go upstairs, and that's where we used to stay.

LEVINE: Well, now, how many people were in the room where you slept, do you remember?

ROSSIELLO: I was alone, me and my husband.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

ROSSIELLO: Me and my husband. They, I think there were a separate cabin. They no was two men together, you know.

LEVINE: Now, do you remember when you approached the New York Harbor?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Now, is this, now, is this your honeymoon when you were on this ship?

ROSSIELLO: It was after my honeymoon, you know. We just came over here, that's

all. And the first time I met his cousin, his aunt. And we live with them in Canarsie.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, now, let's go back to the New York Harbor. Do you remember the Statue of Liberty when you came in?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: What was that like, seeing that?

ROSSIELLO: Well, we just look, you know, and that's all. What else? That time we not have so much from imagination, you know?

LEVINE: And then do you remember Ellis Island, when you saw Ellis Island?

ROSSIELLO: I don't remember today now, no.

LEVINE: Do you remember going to Ellis Island and being examined by the doctors, and do you remember any of that part?

ROSSIELLO: I don't remember nothing, believe me. I don't remember if we went to the doctor. I don't know.

LEVINE: So you didn't stay at Ellis Island if you remember?

ROSSIELLO: No, no, no.

LEVINE: Okay. So then what? You came to New York and who met you?

ROSSIELLO: His brother, my husband's brother, and the . . .

LEVINE: And what was his name?

ROSSIELLO: Fillippo and Giacomo, Jackie and Philip.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And they met you at the boat. And did you know them from Italy?

ROSSIELLO: No, no. I don't know them.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what was that like when your husband met . . .

ROSSIELLO: It was wonderful, you know.

LEVINE: And then they, then you went by train. How did you go to Canarsie?

ROSSIELLO: (she whispers) I don't remember. It must be with the train.

LEVINE: And do you remember Canarsie, where you were staying, what it was like?

ROSSIELLO: I remember because it was like a bungalow, you know, because there was all lots. One little house up there, one little house up there. That's all I remember.

LEVINE: And then did you stay with your husband's brother?

ROSSIELLO: I stayed with them, yes. I stayed with them till I got my baby, you know. And we find an apartment, a house for ourself, you know. And my husband started working, and then I started working, too.

LEVINE: Well, now, what did your husband find for work when he first came?

ROSSIELLO: My husband was, in Italy we call it ebanista. How do you say in English? I don't know. They make furniture. They used to make the furniture.

LEVINE: Oh, the furnace? Oh, uh-huh.

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. Over here.

LEVINE: (another party in the room whispers to her) Oh, furniture.

ROSSIELLO: Yeah.

LEVINE: They made furniture. Okay, yeah, good.

ROSSIELLO: And the, over here he used to work in the shop, they used to make the piano. And he still used to play in the orchestra.

LEVINE: I see. So when he was in Italy he played music.

ROSSIELLO: Yes.

LEVINE: But he also made furniture there?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah. Over there too, he used to work, yes.

LEVINE: And then when he came here he specialized in making pianos.

ROSSIELLO: He did the same thing. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. I see. And then did he stay doing that?

ROSSIELLO: What?

LEVINE: Did he keep making pianos?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah, he stay. That's what he did all his life, work in the shop where they used to make them.

LEVINE: I see. And, now, what did you do for work?

ROSSIELLO: Me? I started work. My, his aunt, she used to work in the shop and make, not the dress, used to embroider, you know. And she used to bring to work for me from the shop, I used to embroider, she used to bring it back, you know. That's the way I work. I used to embroider over here, too.

LEVINE: I see. And then did you stay in Canarsie long?

ROSSIELLO: I stayed for just one year. After she started to work and then we change, you know, we took our own house.

LEVINE: In Canarsie, or did you move out of Canarsie?

ROSSIELLO: No, no. In Brooklyn.

LEVINE: In Brooklyn. Where in Brooklyn did you go?

ROSSIELLO: I don't remember. (she laughs) Believe me.

LEVINE: Now, when you were in Canarsie were there mostly people who had come from Italy right in the neighborhood.

ROSSIELLO: I don't met nobody there. I told you I was like a little bungalow with desert.

LEVINE: Oh, there weren't people. There weren't a lot of houses right around.

ROSSIELLO: Only so many people, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And then did you stay in Brooklyn a long time?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. And then we change to South Ozone Park, we stay. You know.

LEVINE: So then you had your first daughter, Anne.

ROSSIELLO: Anne.

LEVINE: When you were in Canarsie.

ROSSIELLO: Yes.

LEVINE: And then did you have more children?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah, I have more, but not over there, someplace else.

LEVINE: Okay. So where did you, who else do you have for children? What are your other childrens' names?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, I got five children. I got three girl and two boy.

LEVINE: And what are their names?

ROSSIELLO: Hannah, the first one, and Mary, and Gloria, Patrick and Roberto.

LEVINE: Great. Now, do you have grandchildren now?

ROSSIELLO: I got twelve grandchildren.

LEVINE: Great.

ROSSIELLO: And eight great-grandchildren. Plenty. (they laugh)

LEVINE: Okay, so, now, did you learn English, did you know any English when you came?

ROSSIELLO: No, no. Just Italian.

LEVINE: And did you learn it, how did you learn it? Was it difficult?

ROSSIELLO: I learned, just a kid that used to come to school, you know. I learned it to talk with the other people. Then I started working in the shop.

LEVINE: What kind of shop did you work in?

ROSSIELLO: Make the coat. I work with union people. I make the coat, I used to make. And I worked until I retired.

LEVINE: I'm sorry. Say that again.

ROSSIELLO: Till I retired at sixty-five I worked, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And where was that, where was the shop?

ROSSIELLO: In (?) was the shop, yeah.

LEVINE: I see. So you learned English just by . . .

ROSSIELLO: Just by talking with the other people. That's all.

LEVINE: And do you miss, did you ever go back to Italy?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah. I went three times.

LEVINE: And what was it like going back to your little town?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, beautiful, you know. It's nice to see your own country, the family, you know, after the years. First time I went because, and then when I was over here, somebody from my town, a guy, you know, the friend, now, the family used to come and visit with us. Then he went in Italy and marry my sister, and my sister came over here, too. And we was together. And then my mother, she then had, she banged her head on the balcony and she lost her memory, and my sister, they write to us, you better come and see Mama if you want. And we went together, me and my sister. We stayed four months. All alone. My husband and her husband say, "Go ahead. Go, and we take care of the kids." We stayed four months.

LEVINE: So, now, so in other words it was just your one sister from the rest of your family that came over here.

ROSSIELLO: Yeah, just one sister. One brother that came with me. The rest, they're all in Italy. They're still in Italy.

LEVINE: I see, I see. Do you feel like there are some ways that you have, things that you do, that are a carry-over from how things, how you were in Italy? In other words, have you kept some of the ways that you learned?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. The cook, you know, them thing, sure, you remember, you do that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Are you, do you like to cook?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah. I like it. I make a nice (she laughs), what do you call it, things for the holiday, you know, a meal for the holiday. Cookies and things, Italian way.

LEVINE: Can you describe some of the feast days and the festivals that you remember from your little town?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah. I told you the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary was beautiful. And Saint Cosmi Danian. That's the patron of our town. See, there was, this, there was a guy, okay. He was to die. He was sick, you know. And the wife, he have children. Of the son this guy, he called the wife, say, "Why I'm in the bed for? I want to get up." She say, "You're crazy." That's why she called the doctor. Now she was scared. When the doctor comes he say, "Wait a minute. They should have explain to me what happened." They say, "You know, you are a sick guy." He say, "I'm not. I'm all right." They say, "What do you mean?" He say, "Don't you see them two guy coming over here?" He say, "Which two guy?" "She have. There was two guy over here. I ask them names, the other told me was Cosmo, the other one say Damiano. They have the (?) in their hands. They used to touch me, and they say, 'get up,' and I want to get up." You know. They were, the doctor don't find nothing wrong. He was saved, you know. And from that day on, the Feast of St. Cosmi Damian, in Italy, you know, the people, they come from all over. They sleep in the street because they don't got enough room. They sleep in the street and they wait for the procession. See, all the procession they do in the night, but St. Cosmi Damian they do in the morning because the people, they

gone away in all the other town. You see the, beautiful. You want to see that? I got the pictures.

LEVINE: And what is it like? What is it like? What's the procession like?

ROSSIELLO: The procession, all the people, they're gone after the Saint, they got the Saint, they carry on their shoulders. The music play in the back and they're all, everybody going after, you know, with a candle or with a flower, and they give to them, when they put down, they give the flower in the thing.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: Now, were there other healings?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, plenty, plenty. You see, the church, if you go in that church they've got a room in the back, all the people, crippled and things. After they got, they're saved, they say, they go to them, they call his name Cosma, and this is my brother Damiano, you see. They make the miracle, and the next day they bring all these things to the church. (break in tape)

LEVINE: Let's continue. You were saying about people had, leave their crutches in the church.

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. They bring back the crutch. They tell the story, what happened to

them, you know. And then the priest tell everybody in the church. They showed the person that got the miracle.

LEVINE: So there were a lot of healing miracles that took place.

ROSSIELLO: Plenty, plenty.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Wow. Did you ever see a healing like that?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah. Here in the church, here in the church. I see the people come, maybe they didn't even know, you know. Because the town, you don't know everybody.

LEVINE: And people came from other towns, too.

ROSSIELLO: Oh, from other town, plenty, plenty.

LEVINE: What's your fondest memory of, what do you remember with the most feelings that, from your town in Italy, from when you lived there?

ROSSIELLO: Friends, friends of the family. And the way I say the feast, it was beautiful. I enjoy very much.

LEVINE: Now, are you happy that you came here?

ROSSIELLO: In the beginning, you know, you miss the family. But then you start

getting used all over. I love it.

LEVINE: Yeah. Is there anything else that you can remember about either your life in Italy, things that you think about, little things that happened that maybe you remember that when you think of Italy you think of that?

ROSSIELLO: Well, what I remember, I have a wonderful time over my Cosmo, when I told you I was in the convent. We used to fool around and play up and down, you know.

LEVINE: What would you play when you played up and down?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, we used to, we used to, the terrace. We used to go on top of the terrace, you know. We used to play with a ball, with a doll, you know. So, because we was kids.

LEVINE: Yeah, right. So you remember that time as a very happy time in the convent.

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yes. We have a wonderful time.

LEVINE: Now, did you stay close to the church after you came here? Were you a religious family?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yes. We all religion. We all go to the church.

LEVINE: Okay. Is there anything else you remember about the voyage?

ROSSIELLO: No. I told you everything, the way they used to serve us very good. We used to fool around and play. Sometimes we used to play cards, two or three friends, you know. That's all.

LEVINE: Now, did your husband continue playing music after he came here?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yes, till he passed away he used to play. He used to play on the beach over here, he used to play.

LEVINE: Here in Florida?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah, in Florida, you know, on the beach, every Thursday. He used to play, there was a couple of musicians, you know, and they used to play and we used to dance, a lot of people.

LEVINE: I see. Now, was this, what in a club or something?

ROSSIELLO: No, on the beach.

LEVINE: Just on the beach itself?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. On the beach over there, yeah. (whispering is heard off-mike)

LEVINE: Oh, an Italian-American club or something like that. I see. Now, when did you move here to Florida?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, I move, how many years? 19 . . .

LEVINE: After you retired, I guess, right?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. We used to come in the winter for one month, for vacation. After I bought the little house, we came over here. My husband don't want to go no more to New York and we remain in Florida. I think it's thirteen years, more, no? (whispering is heard off-mike)

LEVINE: Twenty-three years.

ROSSIELLO: Twenty-three years, yeah. That's true. Twenty-three years. Now I remember.

LEVINE: That's a long time.

ROSSIELLO: Oh, a long time, yes.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, is there anything else you can think of that you would say about your life? I mean, you started . . .

ROSSIELLO: I have a wonderful life. My husband was a wonderful guy. That's all I can say, you know. (she laughs)

LEVINE: Okay. Well, this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and we'll close this interview on that note, and I thank you very much.

ROSSIELLO: Oh, you're welcome. Any time, thank you. (break in tape)

LEVINE: Now, continue, a little anecdote that Carmela remembers about the embroidery, the embroidering that you did at the convent.

ROSSIELLO: Yes.

VOICE OFF-MIKE: Of the Blessed Mother.

LEVINE: Could you tell us?

ROSSIELLO: Before I left the convent I was embroidered the dress, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Rosary, from Bari, the biggest city in my town, Bari. That's the provence. Bitonto, Paleze, the other, they're all the little town, you know. The provence is Bari.

LEVINE: B-A-R-R . . .

ROSSIELLO: I.

LEVINE: I, uh-huh. B-A-R-I, okay.

ROSSIELLO: And we was embroidered the dress to the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary for Bari.

LEVINE: I see.

ROSSIELLO: And they remember when the other nun, because she took the place of my nun, she came to me, she look, you know, she say, I was just fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years old. She say, "You do all that work." I say, "Yeah." "You look," say, "that's wonderful." And she touch me, and I hate her. I don't like her, because we thought she was the blame for making the other one go away, you know. Her name was Suor Sophia. The regular nun was all the way with me, was Suor Paulina. We used to love each other. She used to love me like her own daughter, you know. That's why I left, that's all.

LEVINE: Now, you mentioned before you did embroidery of sheets and things. What was it, can you explain that more?

ROSSIELLO: Then we used to make like . . .

LEVINE: Lace?

ROSSIELLO: Like lace, you know, like crochet. Not with the crochet, with the finger we used to do the work, beautiful. We used to make sheets with the lace all around the sheets, the blanket.

LEVINE: And do you call that tatting, what you did?

ROSSIELLO: Yeah.

LEVINE: Tatting. And so it was the lace that went around the sheets and the

blankets.

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. We used to make that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And then that would be sold by the convent. Is that . . .

ROSSIELLO: Yeah. The convent, they have a big room. All the sheets and the things we used to make. And the people, they used to come, and they used to buy. Somebody was to make, for the wedding. They used to need the clothes and things, oh, yeah.

LEVINE: So then when you came to this country you were able to do embroidery and sewing?

ROSSIELLO: No. No much embroidery, over here, no much. I started, before I was embroidering. After, you know, when I went to work in the shop I started working on the machine. We used to make the coat.

LEVINE: I see.

ROSSIELLO: I worked with the union.

LEVINE: Did you make a particular dress for the Lady of the Rosary?

ROSSIELLO: I used to make the dress, everything. I used to make all the clothes for my kids, from all the remnant. My cousin, we used to bring all the remnant from the

shop, you know. I used to pay them, and they used to make all the clothes for my children, I used to make.

LEVINE: Oh, nice, nice. So when you were in Italy you were making embroidery by hand.

ROSSIELLO: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: And then, and you made the Lady of Rosary dress.

ROSSIELLO: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: And what was that like?

ROSSIELLO: Oh, all embroidered in silk, you know. All embroidered in silk.

LEVINE: And it had notes and names on it?

ROSSIELLO: You know what we used to do? We used to write our name, ask for the grace, and we used to put it embroidered on the top. They don't see, you know. And we figure when they put it on the Blessed Virgin, she's going to read it. (she laughs)

LEVINE: I see.

ROSSIELLO: We used to do that, yeah.

LEVINE: That's funny. (whispering off-mike) Okay. That's wonderful. All right.

Well, thank you again.

ROSSIELLO: You're welcome. I'm sorry.

LEVINE: You're wonderful.

ROSSIELLO: It's too late to remember this thing.