

KECK-76/MARSANOPOLI

KECK-76

JOSEPHINE FREDERICA MARSANOPOLI

BIRTH DATE: JANUARY 23, 1904

INTERVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 1985

RUNNING TIME: 1:00:00

INTERVIEWER: DEBBY DANE

RECORDING ENGINEER: O.J. CONNELL, III

INTERVIEW LOCATION: SILVER SPRING, MD

TRANSCRIPT ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 1986

TRANSCRIPT RECONCEIVED BY: NANCY VEGA, 1/1996

TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

SICILY, 1907 and 1921

AGES 3 and 17

PASSAGE ON "THE ITALIA" (SECOND TRIP)

DANE: This is Debby Dane and I'm speaking with Josephine Marsanopoli on Thursday, November 14, 1985. We're beginning the interview at 3:50. We're about to interview Josephine Marsanopoli about her immigration experience from Italy in 1921. She was seventeen years old. Mrs. Marsanopoli, if you could tell us what town you were born in and what year it was, if you remember.

MARSANOPOLI: I was born in Fiumidinisi, Province of Messina, January the 22nd, the 23rd, 1904.

DANE: Was that in Sicily?

MARSANOPOLI: Sicily.

DANE: And how many people were in your family? Did you come into a big family or a little family? (a telephone rings) (break in tape)

MARSANOPOLI: I, um, I have to tell you when I left the first time.

DANE: Well, why don't we just say, you were born into a big family or a little family?

MARSANOPOLI: No. We were, it's a, well, it was a little family then. We were two brothers and myself, one brother and myself, my mother and my father. I came in this country 1907.

DANE: How old were you then?

MARSANOPOLI: Three years old, four years old, four years old. And, um, I went back, I went to school in the kindergarten, and then I went back to Italy 1910.

DANE: And your father was over here.

MARSANOPOLI: My father was over here. See, myself and my brother, we were born in Italy, my oldest brother. And then, over here, um, my mother had my sister and another brother. So we were six, four, six in the family.

DANE: Were you living in Washington that first time?

MARSANOPOLI: I was living in Washington. Um, my brother and sister, they were born on H Street where the gymnasium of, George Washington is there now. Yeah. The house, they were torn down, and they built the gymnasium over there.

DANE: And so you started school here.

MARSANOPOLI: I started school here, and in 1910 we went back.

DANE: Who went back? Just you, or . . .

MARSANOPOLI: My mother, my two brothers, and my sister. My father stayed here.

DANE: And how come you went back?

MARSANOPOLI: My mother was very sick. See, those days, they didn't have a washing machine, they didn't have,

uh, all the commodity we have today and, uh, she got very sick. And, uh, they used, they have porters in the house, you know, wash and iron, cooking. She got very sick. So we went back. And at that time, 1910, uh, 1914, the First World War broke out. So I was caught in that war. After the First World War, 1921, my father want me back, want the whole family back.

DANE: Had you been able to get in touch with him before then?

MARSANOPOLI: Well, sometime we did, sometime we couldn't. During the war it was very, very bad, you know, to receive mail from other countries.

DANE: Did your mother get better when she . . .

MARSANOPOLI: My mother got better, but she was, she had something that kept on repeating, you know, and she couldn't, uh, she couldn't be, uh, she couldn't travel, in other words. So I come first, my sister came next, then my, my brother came and my youngest brother came. The two of them, they were American citizen. They were born here.

Myself and my brother, we were American citizen by the father citizen paper. 'Cos we were little children when he took his first, his citizen paper.

DANE: When it was time for you to come back again . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Yes?

DANE: . . . did you want to come back? Had you remembered it as a good place, or . . .

DANE: Did you want to come back? Had you remembered it as a good place, or . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Well, uh, I'll tell you. My father called for me, he wanted me back, and he wanted the family back, so we decided to come back. Those days, you know, in Italy, it was not very good, you know, especially after the war, you know. Everything was scarce, you know, and, uh . . .

DANE: Was there any fighting in Sicily that you remember? Did any battles . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. We could see the, um, the ferryboat go down under our eyes. I remember the,

all the people told us to go under the table when the plane came by. But the plane those days, they weren't like today. With the bomb today you destroy a city. But still was bad, because it was near the, the sea, you know. We could see the, uh, the, uh, submarine come right at shore, almost, and sink our boats.

DANE: Were there many men left in your town? Had they all gone off to fight, or . . .

MARSANOPOLI: They all went out to fight. Up to seventeen years old they took them. And, um, because it was short of manpower, you know. They went to pass a visit, and they would send right to the front, because if they, they didn't have many. Seventeen years old. Kids.

DANE: When you finally heard back from your father, were you looking forward to coming to America again?

MARSANOPOLI: Yes, I was looking forward to come because, you know, I hadn't seen my father for a few years, you know, I want to see him again. And for better living, too.

DANE: So then it was time to leave. Who did you leave with, though, because your mom couldn't go.

MARSANOPOLI: My mother didn't come that time. I left with two cousin mine, with their daughter and a, a cousin mine, their father. See, it was an old men. And, uh, like, for myself, my father had to come in New York and pick me up. And for this old man his son had to come and pick him up, see. They were responsible, in other words, you see. Like my father was responsible for me, and they wouldn't let me go any place unless my father came and pick me up.

DANE: So you took a boat from Sicily over to . . .

MARSANOPOLI: No, we took a train from Sicily to go to Naples, and from Naples we went through all the examination and everything. We had boarded the ship to come to America, which was "The Italian." "Italia."

DANE: And you had those papers.

MARSANOPOLI: And I had, this is all my paper that I had to have to come in this country. If I didn't have this,

you see, the way I say, you know, in New York they took the piece that belonged to them after they examined me and everything, and in Naples they did the same thing. See, we had to go through examination for hair, for lice, eyes, for disease that, and all our body, all our clothes was examined and everything. See, this is my passport, this all the thing I had to go through.

DANE: To get here.

MARSANOPOLI: To get here.

DANE: And this piece of paper, where's the one, that medical. If you could read this to us I don't know if you need your . . . In maybe Italian first, and then if you could translate it.

MARSANOPOLI: This is Service Sanitation, uh, Immigration. See, we went through this place, and then we, uh, they had, uh, the had to be sure that all this, my age, they didn't put all my age here, but says this is true that Miss Frederica went through all this, age seventeen, they didn't put my age there, um, come from, they don't have this either, come from

Sicily. Uh, I went through the examination sanitarius, sanitation, what else, sanitation, um, the, the House of Immigration, and they say, the cut of my hair, the color of my hair, brown, and, um, the lotion. I didn't have no lotion, 'cos we don't use no lotion there. But I had the insecticide, insecticide, what they call, see. In other words, over there, you know, what they use, kerosene to kill lice, you know. But I don't know what they did, what kind of insecticide they had. I had a personal bed, and that was, if it was anything, that they would burn it, see. The clothes that they didn't pass inspection, they would burn it. Um, this is clothes, and all my personal use. And I had the vaccination generiana. See, this is, uh, see.

DANE: Oh, my. Is that from then, on your arm?

MARSANOPOLI: This is, uh, the first time I had it.

DANE: Do you remember when . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Yeah. I remember. But this is the really big one, see. We had to have this vaccination to go

through. Up to 1953, I had to, uh, have vaccination to go to Italy, and I had it up here.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

MARSANOPOLI: Now they don't have any more. And this was, uh, done in Naples, 22nd May, 1921. This is the director, and this is the Immigration, Sanitation or Immigration House.

DANE: And it has a stamp on it.

MARSANOPOLI: They had to stamp on.

DANE: So you had to go through all that in Naples.

MARSANOPOLI: Yeah. In Naples. Then in New York I had to go through over here.

DANE: Uh-huh.

MARSANOPOLI: See, and they stamp it here. They, they was responsible. I don't know what piece they took from here. I don't remember. But, you know, that came from the page that, uh, I went through the inspection in New York.

DANE: And in Naples you got the exam . . .

MARSANOPOLI: This is in the Naples. They won't let me leave Naples if this wasn't right.

DANE: Were you nervous about these medical exams?

MARSANOPOLI: Well, you know, you nervous. You gotta go through examination and everything, you know. They examine your chest, they examine your back, your eyes. You got to go through all the examination, you know. Mostly you're scared, too. Because if something's wrong they won't let you leave. You got to go back home. And, uh, in New York the same thing. If something develop on the boat while you're traveling, and you go through all this examination in New York. If something's wrong with your eyes, you can get lice on the boat, too, you don't know, you know. Sometimes they have a little egg, you know, and they develop. And you get that, you don't go through.

DANE: Do you remember in Naples if anyone was not allowed to get on the boat because of the medical exam? did you ever see anyone turned back?

MARSANOPOLI: No, I didn't see anybody turned back, but I know that if, especially if they had lice, they won't let you go through, and the eyes, especially.

DANE: And the first time you tried to leave from Naples, you said there was a boat that was coming from Greece. Can you tell me that story?

MARSANOPOLI: From Greece. We didn't go, we didn't go in, in, on the boat at all. We had our baggage, and the boat was supposed to come ashore and pick up all the baggage. And, uh, the news came, says nobody's leaving because the boat, we could see the boat far, far away, see, because the boat comes from Greece and it has a smallpox, people with the smallpox. And, of course, they won't let anybody go on. They would have an epidemic. So the boat stayed there, the boat, the baggage they were in a small barge, they come back ashore again, and we went back home.

DANE: You had to go all the way back to Sicily?

MARSANOPOLI: Oh, yeah. We went back home. And, uh, the um, when we went back home it took another three

months to leave.

DANE: Did you have to write and get new tickets and new . . .

MARSANOPOLI: I don't remember if I had, uh, I know the passport would be, you know, wouldn't be good any more, but I don't think mine was. But a friend of mine lost his passport. They had, they had to look for, and he had to replace it. That's, and then we leave, we left in May and I got here in June.

DANE: In June. When you left the second time . . .

MARSANOPOLI: 22nd of June, 22nd of May we left there, 22nd of May, 1921.

DANE: When you left the second time did you get notice that there was another boat that would be going and that you had passage on it?

MARSANOPOLI: Yes. That we had the passage on, yeah. We had notice. The man that issued the passport gets all the information, and he get in touch with the passenger.

DANE: And when you left your home again, do you remember

what you brought with you? Did you bring a lot of clothes or food?

MARSANOPOLI: No. No, we didn't have no food. We didn't bring no food. I remember, I don't know if I brought it from my home town some fruit or we bought them in Naples. I don't remember. Very vague. I only had a suitcase with me. That's all I had.

DANE: And you got back on the train and went back to Naples.

MARSANOPOLI: Back to Naples. And that time, lucky enough, we passed the visa, everything was all right, and we went through.

DANE: And then you had those papers. You went on . . .

MARSANOPOLI: These papers, when I left, uh, the price that I pay for the, uh, passage, and the boat's name, the Anchor Line, which was, uh, under the flag of, uh, England, English flag.

DANE: And what was the name of the boat?

MARSANOPOLI: Italia.

DANE: Italia. And how much did you pay?

MARSANOPOLI: Italia. And this Anchor Line. I pay, uh, let's see, where's that, must be over here on another piece of paper. Oh, yes. The price of the ticket was one thousand three hundred dollars, plus eight dollars, you know, in case that, uh, for each, uh, seat we had to pay eight dollars more. And the ton of the boat was four thousand eight hundred ninety-six.

DANE: And does this say how fast it goes?

MARSANOPOLI: Yeah. The, uh, how fast it goes was fifteen-and-a-half. Complete was three hundred and five lourd. It means pounds, something like that, see. And, uh, how fast he went was fifteen-and-a-half. The hour that we left from Naples was the 22nd of May 1921, for New York. And, uh, which touches Palermo, Sicily and Gibraltar. And the time of the trip was six, was supposed to be sixteen days.

DANE: In fact, did it take you sixteen days?

MARSANOPOLI: Complete with the, uh, the two, the two stop in Palermo and Gibraltar.

DANE: Uh-huh.

MARSANOPOLI: Yes. But the, see, when we got to New York, they were at the ship ahead of us. They had, uh, let the passenger go, and they were too busy. They couldn't get to the shore, you know. Where we had to go to, to have all the examination again, see. So we had to wait on ship for the time, for the time, till our time came. I don't know if it was four, five days, or six, I don't r. I remember, though, that we had our last meal on the ship, and then we were so happy that we were supposed to come down from the ship. And we throw everything out in the sea.

DANE: All your dishes, and . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Dishes, you know. Then they had to give us the rest again. And this is, uh, see, the ship is named Italia, and the Anchor Line is the, uh . . .

DANE: Is the name of the line?

MARSANOPOLI: The line, yeah.

DANE: Is it too hard for you to read this in Italian to

us?

MARSANOPOLI: No, no.

DANE: That would be nice. (Mrs. Marsanopoli reads in Italian) When you got on the boat did you, when you went down into steerage, you were third class?

MARSANOPOLI: Third class, yeah.

DANE: Do you remember what it looked like down there, if there were windows, or if it was a big space, or . . .

MARSANOPOLI: I can't remember exactly if we had windows or not, because we were down below. I don't remember exactly.

DANE: Uh-huh.

MARSANOPOLI: We must have had windows because we would have suffocate down there, see.

DANE: Did people get sick?

MARSANOPOLI: Yes. I got sick myself.

DANE: And were there bathrooms, or did you have to go

outside?

MARSANOPOLI: No, we had bathrooms. We had, uh, we had, uh, where you take a bath, showers, oh, yeah. We had that. I remember having a big room for dining room. We all ate together.

DANE: Do you remember what they served you?

MARSANOPOLI: Well, I don't know what they served. I don't know. I can't remember. We had a regular meal, I guess. Meat or something like that. But I remember eating a lot of fruit because, you know, the, we were sick a lot.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And did the women and children sleep where the men slept, or did they . . .

MARSANOPOLI: No, no. They had separate place where they slept. They wouldn't put the, even though we travel as a family, they wouldn't put us with the men.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Did you meet people on the trip at all, other people that were coming from Italy?

MARSANOPOLI: No. I didn't meet people on the boat. Yes, I did. I did meet a young man on the boat that went

to Philadelphia. That's all. Then we stayed quite to our family. You know, sometime they blast in the subway.

DANE: Oh, yeah. When you came into New York Harbor, I remember you said, do you remember if other people or you saw the Statue of Liberty?

MARSANOPOLI: No, I don't remember other people, no. There was a confused, to me, and I was, they way I say I was sort of scared when I got to Ellis Island, because I was left alone.

DANE: Oh, yeah. You came, you were stuck in the Harbor for about six days.

MARSANOPOLI: Yeah. Because they wouldn't let us off because of other boat. They were supposed to get the passenger before us. See, they were stuck in New York

DANE: But at first when you came in you thought, "Oh, we're here.

DANE: Well, yeah. We were happy, see. We weren't let, we want throw away dishes and everything. We were

happy that we were in New York.

DANE: But then you had to wait.

MARSANOPOLI: Then we had to wait.

DANE: And then you were taken off, and taken to Ellis Island.

MARSANOPOLI: Yes.

DANE: And what happened then when you were . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Only I can remember that I saw people there, and all of a sudden I didn't see nobody that I came with, I was left alone. I was scared and mad because, uh, I figured why they left me there when they were in charge to bring me to my father, see. And I was there alone. And all of a sudden they give us this blanket, brown blanket, and we sent to this little room. It was about, I don't know, but just for one person. I don't know if the bench was wood, or if the bench was the same thing, wire. It, it looked like to me we were in jail. That's all. We didn't have no mattress, no pillow, no nothing. Just a blanket. Then the

next day my father came and he was sitting on the chair, a little far away from me, and they're asking me, "Do you know your father? You see your father here?" I say, "No, I don't know my father."

DANE: So how did you end up getting with him?

MARSANOPOLI: Well, somebody told me that that's your father over there, see.

DANE: And that night, what did you think about all night long when you weren't with your cousins and . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Well, my cousin, I didn't see any more. Once we went to, inside, in the office, where we had to go through the, uh, examination and everything, I was left alone.

DANE: Did they make you get in line?

MARSANOPOLI: Well, we were in line to go and wait our time to go in, and was in different rooms where they examined. But, I mean, I was alone, I was scared. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know the language, but they talk to us in Italian, you

know, each one spoke in our own language.

DANE: And you had to go through all the medical exams all alone.

MARSANOPOLI: Yes. Well, see, this is what the medical examination, here in New York, when finally they released me, they say this is what it is here, inspection.

DANE: And do you remember, you were telling me on the phone that they, um, they checked for lice again.

MARSANOPOLI: Everything. You go through all the examination you go through in Naples, see. Because, uh, you know, the way I say, you can, uh, develop an eye disease, you can catch lice, you can be sick, see.

DANE: And were you scared all over again about . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Well, sure. We were scared again. Because if you don't go through and you're not right, in good health, you go back in the same ship. You go back to Italy. That's what I was scared about, too. But, thank God, you know, I went through Naples, I went through New York. Everything was okay.

DANE: And did they take off your clothes again and give you showers?

MARSANOPOLI: That I don't remember. That I don't remember exactly what they did. But I imagine they examine our chest, examine our back, for TB, I guess, because they did that in Naples.

DANE: And you said you remembered seeing wire, lots of wire dividers, and . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Yeah. Like a little room, see. Just for one person, or if they were more than one person they, to me, looked like a jail, see. They were just wires, that's all.

DANE: And did you . . .

MARSANOPOLI: And the little, the little, I don't know if the bench was wood, or if the bench was wire, too, and our blanket. That's all we had, see. We didn't have, in other words, like hotel rooms with the mattress and everything.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Do you remember that big, did you ever have to go into a great, big, huge hall?

MARSANOPOLI: I don't remember that.

DANE: Yeah.

MARSANOPOLI: I don't remember. I don't remember.

DANE: I remember you saying that you saw on television recently . . .

MARSANOPOLI: I saw a movie on the television, I don't know what they call them. I don't remember. Immigrant, I think it was. "The Immigrant." And, uh, in my mind, I went through the same thing I went, seeing those people, really, with the suitcase, with the little children holding on, dressed like old style. I went through the same thing. I says, I know. In fact, my children were here, and I say, "You know, I went through that myself. I know what they go through, because I went through myself."

DANE: And it reminded you of what . . .

MARSANOPOLI: It reminded me when I came back, when I came back to the United States.

DANE: When you were there you said it reminded you of

jail. Did you feel like you'd been put in jail?

MARSANOPOLI: I don't know what reminded me, but I know that I was scared, the way I say, and I was, uh, mad, too. Because the people that I was with, you know, they left me there. See, they didn't have nothing to do with me anymore once I got to New York. See, they went, they went home. They didn't have nothing to hold them back. I had, my father had to come to pick me up. And unless my father was there they wouldn't let me go.

DANE: Were you afraid he might not come?

MARSANOPOLI: No, I don't think I was afraid for that. I know he was. Because he wrote to me that he would be there. And this other cousin came for his father, see. Otherwise he couldn't go no place either, like me. But I didn't see him any more. I go, I go my own way, he went his own way, and his son, his wife and his daughter, they came here in Washington.

DANE: Huh. Huh. And that one night, did they feed you on Ellis Island?

MARSANOPOLI: I don't remember that. They probably feed us on the boat. I don't remember that.

DANE: And were there a lot of people there, or . . .

MARSANOPOLI: A lot of people. A lot of people, you know, and just, you look to everybody and the way I say all of a sudden we get this blanket and we go to sleep till the next morning. And then the next morning we went to the office, you know, they asked the questions and everything.

DANE: They asked you questions?

MARSANOPOLI: They asked the questions, who I was coming to see, why I was coming to America. I had to tell that I came to see my father, and my father was sitting on the chair far away from me. They ask me, "Do you know your father? You see your father in this room?" I say, "No." And then my father, I left my father in 1910, and I come back in '21, I was only eleven years old. I mean, eleven years that I hadn't seen him, I was thirteen years old.

DANE: Uh-huh. I remember you saying that you had, how we doin'? Okay. This is the end of side one with

KECK-76/MARSANOPOLI

Josephine Marsanopoli.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

DANE: This is side two of Josephine Marsanopoli, number 076. It's 4:30. And, some other piece of paper that you have here is also from the boat. Can you describe what it is and what you had to do with it?

MARSANOPOLI: Which one was it?

DANE: This one right here.

MARSANOPOLI: This is to verify that i had, that I had to go, you know. This is the name of the ship, the number, and this is the, um, company.

DANE: Uh-huh.

MARSANOPOLI: This is the number, and this is the name of the ship. And it's manifest, just, uh, to prove, want to prove. This is the number, and my name, my name, passenger name, Frederica, Josephine. List number fourteen, so it is.

DANE: And it has a string on it.

DANE: Yeah. I had to have this, like when you go through the office of immigration you have to have your passport ready. This is what it was that we had, we had to show. This is the passenger, see. I had to have it here. And they would read the name. The number was fourteen.

DANE: And on the back, what does it say on the back?

MARSANOPOLI: The passenger, uh, have to have this ready so the, uh, after the, uh, when we came out from the ship we had to have this so they could see who was the passenger that was going out.

DANE: Can you read that in Italian?

MARSANOPOLI: (reads in Italian) In other words, the passenger must have this in a place where the inspector can see. You know, the one that lets you out from the boat, they can see it.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Wow. So everyone had one of these on?

MARSANOPOLI: Everyone had to have one of this, 'cos it carries

KECK-76/MARSANOPOLI

the name of the passenger, see. My name here. If you no have this, you know, you can't go through.

DANE: And your name, when you came over, was . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Frederica.

DANE: Josepa.

MARSANOPOLI: Miss Josephine. Josephine Frederica, my middle name. I got married, changed to Marsanopoli.

DANE: Is that Italian or Greek, Marsanopoli?

MARSANOPOLI: Marsanopoli is Italian.

DANE: That's what I thought.

MARSANOPOLI: In fact, my husband came from my home town.

DANE: Did you know him before, your husband?

MARSANOPOLI: I didn't know him over there. I met him when, before I went to Italy, when I was seven years old. He used to take me the store and buy me cone ice cream, and he used to work with my father. He was a barer, too.

DANE: Uh-huh. And so when you came back . . .

MARSANOPOLI: So I went back to Italy when I was seven years old, and he remained here, he stayed here. He never did go back, um, till 1953. All that time.

DANE: And then when you came back when you were seventeen you met him?

MARSANOPOLI: I met him again, and he was supposed to go back to Italy and get married. Instead the war, some other war broke out. I think was, um, the war.

DANE: The Spanish war?

MARSANOPOLI: No, the African. His brother was in Africa. He was a prisoner for four, five years and five months, for the duration of the war. The English people put him in a concentration camp. But he was civilian, see. He was working there in Africa, south of Rhodesia.

DANE: But your husband stayed here.

MARSANOPOLI: My husband stayed here. He didn't go back. And, um, when we went back we went back together for our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, 1953.

DANE: And when you went back, was it like . . .

MARSANOPOLI: I didn't know anybody, because I came in 1921, I didn't go back till 1953. You know, all my friends, some they were dead, some I didn't even recognize anybody.

DANE: When you got back and you saw where you could have grown up, were you glad that you had come to America, or did you wish you had stayed in Italy?

MARSANOPOLI: No, I don't think I was, um, wishing to stay in Italy, no. Because then my family were here. You know, I was happy to go back for a trip. We stayed there three months. And we went, uh, visited a lot of cities, we went to northern Italy. But I wouldn't stay there, no. I didn't have anybody more there. You see, my mother was here, my brothers, sister, my father. And we all were here. Then I got married in this country. I wouldn't leave my children to go back. But I did like to go back and visit everybody. And the place was different, you know. It had developed a lot. In fact, three years ago I went. It's all

changed.

DANE: Again.

MARSANOPOLI: All changed. You know, everybody. In a little town everybody had a bathroom, their house beautiful, all marble, you know. And, uh, anybody, you know, did much more, um, they go to school, they emigrate to other city where the factory is and they work, they have more buses in my home town, my little home town, they have six buses that go back and forth from a bigger city. They go to work there, they go to the university. It's different, see. You know, now, they don't miss anything like we don't miss anything over here. It's, you know, people can go back and forth with the buses. It's not like when I left the first time.

DANE: I remember you saying that when you left and you had started seeing houses. When your dad picked you up on Ellis Island.

MARSANOPOLI: In, uh, when I came, when we came to Washington from, uh, we went to this cousin of mine and we

ate dinner over there, then we took the, uh, streetcar. those days they didn't have buses. Streetcar they had a carriage and a horse and we went through Pennsylvania Avenue. You know, the big market that used to be on Seventh Street, Pennsylvania Avenue. And that impressed me, all the lights and everything. And, uh, we crossed to Virginia, and went to Arlington, Virginia. And where my father was living, you know, was a small house, a four-room house, a little bed, and the street was narrow, and I remember in front of him was, uh, woods. They used to let their horses go to eat the grass. Then later on, you know, was beginning, they widened the streets, which is a Wilson Boulevard today, see.

DANE: Huh. And were you impressed with it?

MARSANOPOLI: I was very impressed with it. Yeah. But I saw, I saw on the train from New York come to Washington. You know, you see little houses with a lot of grass and one caught my eyes, and I told my cousin, I says, "I like to have a little house like that." He says, "Your father has one like

that." See, because, we traveled together. And then I was very impressed with Washington, Virginia, and I, um, after a few months, I want to go to work and I went to work.

DANE: What did you do?

MARSANOPOLI: Seamstry. And from Virginia we used to take, I used to take, uh, the streetcar. I used to go around Arlington, you know, around, near the cemetery. And that streetcar leave, leave me down Twelfth, Twelfth Street near where the, uh, what is that big building, near Pennsylvania Avenue. And from there I used to walk Fourteenth and H Street. That's where I used to work. And at night I used to go back. That's all, that's all I remember. And I got married. I lived, I lived in Washington for sixty years. Then from Washington I moved here to this house.

DANE: Did you speak English, though? You didn't speak English.

MARSANOPOLI: No, I didn't speak English.

DANE: How did you learn how to speak English? Do you

remember?

MARSANOPOLI: Well, by reading, by listening to the other people. That's why I say my English is not good. I shouldn't talk. (she laughs)

DANE: Oh, it's wonderful. I can understand you perfectly.

MARSANOPOLI: It's not great.

DANE: Did you listen to the radio?

MARSANOPOLI: Well, I used to, you know, when you go with the friends, you know, you pick one word here, one word there. My father used to speak to me in English. Then, uh, then I began to read the books a little bit and, um, I can read pretty good. I can understand what I read but, uh, it's harder for me to have a big conversation with, uh, correct English.

DANE: Uh-huh. You do fine. And, since you didn't speak English right away, and you were a pretty grown-up girl at seventeen, did you ever feel outside of things?

MARSANOPOLI: No, because when I went to work I went to work with a friend of my father which was Italian and, um, mostly I worked with Italian people, see. So I learned some with them, some, the way I say, I read a little bit, you know.

DANE: And then, you already had your citizenship, because of your dad?

MARSANOPOLI: My father had the citizenship. But, you see, the way I understand, you're not a citizen until you touch New York soil, see. Outside of New York I wasn't a citizen. That's why I have Italian passport. But when I came, when I was in New York then, I was an American citizen. See, now, when I went back to Italy, I went with an American passport.

DANE: So once you moved here . . .

MARSANOPOLI: When I, um, when I came in to New York, while I was on the ship I had to travel with Italian passport, 'cos over there I was an Italian citizen, see.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. When you came over and you

stayed with, worked with Italians, and people that your father had met earlier, did you share any customs or special things?

MARSANOPOLI: Yes, we did.

DANE: Oh, what?

MARSANOPOLI: We shared a big custom, we never forget out language. We had an Italian club up to 19, 19 . . . Hasn't been, not quite thirty years now. About twenty-five years old. We had a club, uh, on Wilson Boulevard, I mean, on University Boulevard, right where the Norwood School is, a little bit above. And we kept our language. We did our, you know, we used to have, uh, picnics, like three days' picnics for, for, uh, Labor Day. We keep our own customs. We used to have dances, we used to have, um, all kinds of food . . .

DANE: What kinds of foods?

MARSANOPOLI: Sausage, meatballs, spaghetti. All kinds of food. And that was kept in Italian style, see. We used to have our own wine, you know. And they used to play like, um, they have a ball, and they used to

put the stick on the ground and then with the ball they had to go. I don't know what they call it, that game, I never knew. I don't know. You put a stick on the ground, a space, and then with the ball, you've got a distance, with the ball you have to knock all those sticks out, you know. And they used to play horseshoe. See, there was, they keep the style, you know, the old customs, from the old town, see.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And any songs? Did you have . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Well, we used to sing like, when you're young, you know, you used to go on the ground, they used to sing different songs. But not like in a loud voice like we did in Italy, you know. But, I mean, we kept, really, our customs, which was nice because our children, they learned our own, if it wasn't strict Italian, they used to learn our own dialect. But today they don't do any more. In fact, a lot of young people, they got married with the circle, see. Now we don't have it. We don't have our big club any more but we started another

one under the same, uh, um, you know, we keep in touch, in other words, with the same people, you know. We have a picnic in the summertime, we have a picnic not too far away from Dennis Avenue. Uh, oh, we keep, um, the fiesta of the Blessed Mother, and over there that's a big fiesta.

DANE: When is that?

MARSANOPOLI: The 25th of March. We have a high mass, we have a high mass for the Blessed Mother, and we have Christmas, which we celebrate. Over there they don't celebrate Christmas. They celebrate the sixth of January, which they call Befana.

DANE: Befana?

MARSANOPOLI: Befana. With the children, if they good they get a present, if they're bad they get a piece of charcoal. See, we keep that. And we have that kind of fiesta. And a carnival . . .

DANE: What's carnival?

MARSANOPOLI: Like Mardi Gras?

DANE: In February.

KECK-76/MARSANOPOLI

MARSANOPOLI: In February, see.

DANE: And you do that.

MARSANOPOLI: Yeah. We make Italian macaroni, made by hand.
See, we keep that custom from there.

DANE: And what was the name of the club? Did it have
a . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Fiumidinisi Club. Fiumidinisi Club. The club
carried the name of our home, our home town. It
was a pleasure club, Fiumidinisi which was our
home town.

DANE: Would you play cards and . . .

MARSANOPOLI: We played cards, we played bingo, they had a
dance, see. They had all those things.

DANE: And then when . . . You were able to keep your
customs and things from the old country.

MARSANOPOLI: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

DANE: Did you, when did you start feeling that you were
an American? Did that come at the same time, or

did you always feel like you were an Italian living here, or . . .

MARSANOPOLI: No, no. I felt that, I, um, I, uh, change, quite quick with the American style, you see. And, but still, being with, uh, all the people that they came from our home town, you know, you felt like you kept those, uh, uh, customs, see. And when I came from our country, Washington was filled with, uh, with Italian people. Now if you want to go and visit a friend you need a suitcase and stay there because we live so far away from each other. See, that's why we're trying to incorporate this club again so we can have a meeting once a month and we can see each other. Otherwise really we are lost. You know, we don't have communication, unless we go back to Italy and visit our friends. For me I don't have anybody any more over there, my immediate family. I have in-laws, which I went, I went two years ago and visit them.

DANE: So you felt pretty much that you had combined your Italian-ness with being an American.

MARSANOPOLI: An American, yes. I'm well settled, you know.

I'm content, I'm happy, because this is my home. My family, my children, my grandchildren are here. I won't go back to stay there, but I could go back and stay there about five, six months. You know, I like that kind of vacation, if you can afford it. But, I mean, to live over there, no. I wouldn't go back. Because I don't have anybody any more there.

DANE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And, one last question. Does it mean anything to you to be an American? Does it, does that . . .

MARSANOPOLI: Well, it means, to me, you know, I have everything I want over here which I didn't have over there. When I left there I didn't have anything, nobody had anything. Over there, those days, the rich was rich. They had three classes, the rich, the medium class and the, the poor, see. The rich, they had all kinds of property. They would employ the middle class or the poor to take care of the farms, you know, the country, you know, the property they had. The middle class is like barbers, shoemaker, and, uh, what is, barber,

shoemaker, and tailors, see. Those, they were considered a little better class than the poor. The poor would go in the country, take care of the ground, you know, take care of the lemons, pick, uh, fruit and everything and take them home. But, uh, today it's not like that any more. Today they have a chance to go to school and, the way I say, they're educated and, uh, you know, they're better off than when I left in 1921.

DANE: And when you came over here things were a lot better than there.

MARSANOPOLI: Oh, yes. Yes. I'm content here. I don't wish that I want to go back and stay there for any reason at all. I'm content with what I have, what I can afford.

DANE: And are you glad that your grandchildren are Americans?

MARSANOPOLI: Yes.

DANE: I think that's it.

MARSANOPOLI: What I want to say, when I came in this country

when I was only four years old, I don't remember the name of the boat then, but I remember my father coming on the boat to tell us goodbye. We were four little children. My sister was only thirteen months old, and my brother was eleven months old, because they're very close apart. And I can see my father coming on the boat and kissing all of us, and I was very sad, see. And then when, when we went back, the name of the ship was America, see. I remember that. But I was very sad leaving my father. But I remember clearly, he came on the boat and kiss all of us goodbye.

DANE: That's great. Thank you. (break in tape) Next Fourth of July they're going to dedicate the Statue of Liberty. Does that interest you?

MARSANOPOLI: Yes, because my fond wish is to go back and see if it's really true, what I went through, that room where I went for the examination and the room where I slept that night. That's what I want to see. And I'd like to go back there and see, because I have never been since I came in this country. I've been in New York, but I've never

been, I've never been in Ellis Island.

DANE: That's great. Okay. No more.

MARSANOPOLI: It must be really nice, you know, to go back and see. (break in tape)

DANE: Mrs. Marsanopoli, we're going to go over, you have quite a few important papers, your passport and your quarantine papers, and you also have, uh, a menu on the backside of one of your, the Anchor Line, showing when you docked, what day it was, and it has the menus. Could you read it for us?

MARSANOPOLI: I'll try to translate it the best I can. See, it takes me a long time because I don't have a clear memory now, you know. Um, you want to know what is for Monday?

DANE: Uh-huh.

MARSANOPOLI: Monday is, um, like spaghetti with sauce, tomato sauce, potatoes in soup, and (Italian) means like when you make beef stew, with the potatoes. And for the salad we had, uh, like a pickles, things they make in, um, in a vinegar. For Monday.

Tuesday we had, um, the same thing, pasta, could have been macaroni, with the sauce and, uh, Ragu, which is the meat that you make beef stew. You know, they make different, with potato. This time was with onions and, uh, rice. This was for two meals, see, two meals. Uh, rice, with the peas, and magro, with the meat. Magro means meat, you know, one kind, piece of meat, you know. Could be different. Could be a roast or other piece of meat. And, um, potatoes and a salad.

DANE: Would you read it in Italian, too?

MARSANOPOLI: You want it in Italian? The first meal was (Italian). Tuesday was (Italian). Bacalao, is the codfish, (Italian), plain, (Italian). Does he read Italian?

DANE: No, it's just, that way people will know.

MARSANOPOLI: Oh, you mean that registered right now. Oh, okay. It's better for me to read it in Italian.

DANE: Okay. You say it in Italian and then translate. That would be good.

MARSANOPOLI: (Italian)

DANE: What does that mean?

MARSANOPOLI: (Italian), like no sauce, make like, no sauce at all, like you make a, you mix the, if you want, the peas, onions, you know, just plain, in other words. And, um, (Italian), rice . . .

DANE: Now, what is that? If you could translate that part.

MARSANOPOLI: Pasta, you know, can be spaghetti, macaroni, or little shells, that's pasta. Or could be different, a different, make in different shape, in other words. And this was, uh, with olive oil and, um, garlic, see. And those little fish they call, like sardines. Oh, either they had tunafish and, uh, with onions together. Tunafish, you know what tunafish is. Uh, Thursday, (Italian). It was pasta (Italian), was always the first dish they gave us with either tomato sauce or (Italian), something like that. And then they had rice in broth, in the soup, with, uh, vegetables, and, uh, the meat was, uh, not like a roast. Was

a loose, cut in pieces, you know, make a different way. And (Italian) means something in vinegar, like pickles, all mixed together, you know. That was, and they had a salad, green salad, mixed. This was for Thursday. (Italian) Was, um, uh, dry macaroni, swordfish, not swordfish, uh, let me see what they call that . . .

DANE: Flounder? Bluefish?

MARSANOPOLI: Flounder. Uh, made in, in, uh, white sauce. And, uh, potatoes. Pasta lentici, those are little tiny pastina that you put in broth. Letici is lentils. Then they had a, like a piece of meat. This is when they had venidi, means, like sardines, and they had, uh, green salad with, uh, (Italian) means string beans and, uh, onions. This was Friday, because Friday they don't eat meat. Saturday they had (Italian).

DANE: Hold on just a second. We've just been reading the menu, by day, that was on the backside of the piece of paper with Josephine's name on the Anchor Line, stating what date it left, what time it was, what ship it was, under what flag it flew. On the

backside was this menu describing the prices and the day-by-day plates that were being served. Also on the card that she had is an inspection card telling when, where she left, what the name of the ship was, stamped with the American, "specially examined by U.S. Public Health Services." On the back, in four different language, it says, translated in English, "Keep this card to avoid detention at quarantine and on railroads in the United States." This is the real end of side two with Josephine Marsanopoli, number 076.