

NPS-8

DOMENICA MARINO

BIRTH DATE: UNKNOWN

INTERVIEW DATE: AUGUST 28, 1973

RUNNING TIME: 21:44

INTERVIEWER: MARGO NASH

RECORDING ENGINEER: UNKNOWN

INTERVIEW LOCATION: NEW HYDE PARK, NY

TRANSCRIPT ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY: CHARLENE A. KEYLOR, 5/1979

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ITALY, 1907

BORN: REGGIO DI CALABRIA

AGE AT IMMIGRATION: 16

PASSAGE ON: *LA PERUGIA*, NAPLES

US RESIDENCE: NYC, 35 ST. AND 2ND AVE.

NASH: Today is August 28, 1973, and I am in New Hyde Park, Long Island, and I am visiting Mrs. Domencia Marino. Mrs. Marino came to the United States when she was sixteen years old. She came alone, and she is going to tell us her story about what it was like and what her life was like afterwards. Mrs. Marino, where did you come from?

MARINO: From Reggio di Calabria.

NASH: And what sort of place is it, what does it look like in Reggio di Calabria, at least when you left?

MARINO: It was a nice little city, clean.

NASH: And...

MRS. MARINO'S DAUGHTER: Marina, she had a marina.

MARINO: Oh, we had a big ocean, connected to a marina.

NASH: And what did your family do? What did your father do for
a living?

MARINO: In Italy?

NASH: Yes.

MARINO: He was cook.

NASH: He was a cook.

MARINO: Yes.

NASH: In a restaurant?

MARINO: In a restaurant. They had a lot of restaurants.

NASH: Oh, you had a lot of restaurants?

MARINO: Yes. We had a lot of a lot of restaurants.

NASH: Oh, in the town?

MARINO: In the town, yes.

NASH: What kind of food did they cook there?

MARINO: Oh, I don't know. I wasn't (?).

NASH: How many sisters and brothers did you have?

MARINO: I had one sister and one brother. We were three together.
(break in tape) I can't speak so loud. I get nervous.

NASH: Why did you decide to come to the United States?
(noises from the kitchen can be heard in the background)

MARINO: Because my sister was here and my father was here and I came to each of them.

NASH: To see them?

MARINO: To see them.

NASH: Did you have any hopes of, did you have any other reasons for coming?

MARINO: No. For no other reason. Like everybody wanted to see America. I was one of them.

NASH: Did you think you were going to stay?

MARINO: No. No, I would like to go back, but after my mother pass away, I didn't have no, you know, no understand.

NASH: Reason.

MARINO: No reason.

NASH: Could you tell me why did your mother pass away? What

happened?

MARINO: I told you with the earthquake, and then I don't know because I wasn't there. Only my aunt was there. She was taking care, but she passed away a time and then the sickness that she had from the earthquake.

NASH: That was the earthquake that occurred in 1908?

MARINO: Yes.

NASH: Yes, and you were telling me a little before about the earthquake. Could you tell me again how many people were killed and so forth?

MARINO: Well, I wasn't there, but they said there were a lot of people, too many people.

NASH: Yes, you mentioned before that, that someone you knew described to you how it was.

MARINO: Oh, yes. The place where I was living, the woman said she wanted to pass, she had a pass on the top of the dead people because

there were so many.

NASH: Well, where did you leave from when you actually started on the trip? Could you tell me a little about how you, how did you leave Reggio di Calabria to go sailing on the boat?

MARINO: Oh, we had a boat to go Naples, a big boat to go Naples, and Naples I had an America boat. I can't explain it.

MRS. MARINO'S DAUGHTER: (?)

MARINO: No.

MRS. MARINO'S: Explain.

MARINO: I don't know. I can't explain.

NASH: Was it an American boat?

MARINO: No. It was Italian boat and I came on La Perugia.

NASH: Oh, La Perugia.

MARINO: La Perugia. I don't remember everything.

NASH: And what did you take with you on the boat?

MARINO: I take clothes and something for eating. It's little
drink my mother gave me, anisette.

NASH: Anisette.

MARINO: And she gave me a lot of food, a lot of drink. The
anisette in Naples, the bottle break and everything was...

NASH: Full of anisette. How long was the trip?

MARINO: Was twenty days. I started from June 10th, and (?) was
the Fourth of July.

NASH: What do you remember about the trip?

MARINO: Not much. I was rather sick.

NASH: Seasick?

MARINO: Yes, and when we came here, we couldn't get off in the same day. We had to wait three days because there was so many immigrant to get off the boat (?). We had to wait on the boat.

NASH: You mean, there were so many immigrants coming in on other boats as well?

MARINO: Yes.

NASH: Was it crowded on the boat?

MARINO: Oh, yes, yes.

NASH: And where did you sleep on the boat? Were there a lot of people around you where you slept?

MARINO: (Italian)

MRS. MARINO'S DAUGHTER: Oh, like bunk beds.

MARINO: Bunk beds.

NASH: Bunk beds. So you got off the boat and who met you there?

MARINO: My father, my father. They were asking me a lot of questions of people that put him on the cage, you know, like...

NASH: What kind of questions did they ask you, do you remember?

MARINO: Where I come from. If I have anybody that would meet, you know, too. I says, "Yes, my father gonna take me," so...

NASH: You mentioned something about a woman?

MARINO: Oh, yes. The woman take care of me on the boat, after the boat to my father, took me.

NASH: Yes, she was your guardian?

MARINO: Yes, yes.

NASH: And did she watch you very carefully on the boat?

MARINO: Yes, there was no danger on the boat.

NASH: So, what was the first thing you noticed when you got off the boat about New York City? What did you see?

MARINO: The warm weather.

NASH: The warm weather.

MARINO: It was very warm and it was the Fourth of July (?). And at that time there was (?).

NASH: Do you remember anything about--were they celebrating the Fourth of July when you first came?

MARINO: Not right away, not right away.

NASH: Where was your father living then?

MARINO: Now?

NASH: Then, where was he living?

MARINO: Oh, with my sister.

NASH: Where, in what...

MARINO: Oh, we used to live on Second Avenue, on Second Avenue.

NASH: And what street?

MARINO: In between Third Street and First Street.

NASH: How did it look to you when you first arrived? How did you get there? How did you take...

MARINO: Walked.

NASH: You walked from...

MARINO: Well, from the Third Avenue El, we took the Third Avenue El. At that time they had a Third Avenue El. So, after we got off there, we get off the train, we walk to my house.

NASH: And what did the neighborhood look like? Do you remember your first impressions of what it looked like?

MARINO: No, it was a little building. I didn't have any impressions.

NASH: And what was the apartment like that you lived in ? Did you have a bathroom in the hall or...

MARINO: In the hall, in the hall.

NASH: And you shared it with others.

MARINO: My sister, she only had two rooms at that time. Not like today. It was a very bad apartment. We had to get along.

NASH: Was it hard to share a bathroom with other families?
Were there ever arguments?

MARINO: Well, no argument (?), you wait the one. (?), you run in.

NASH: What was your sister doing at that time? Was she working?

MARINO: No, she had two children. Her husband wasn't here.

NASH: And your father, what was he doing in this country?

MARINO: Over here?

NASH: Yes.

MARINO: Well, he was working the factory at chandelier.

NASH: What?

MARINO: Chandelier.

NASH: Oh, making chandeliers?

MARINO: Yes, in a factory...

MRS. MARINO'S DAUGHTER: I think he worked at Tiffany glass.

MARINO: Yes, something like that, but at that time they were gas.
It wasn't electric.

NASH: And so you went to work, and what was your work?

MARINO: Oh, men's work...

NASH: Men's wear, men's wear.

MARINO: I had three and a half dollars a week.

NASH: And how many hours did you work every day?

MARINO: Oh, long hours. I don't remember when in the morning what time we go, but we used to stop at five in the night (?). We had an hour for lunch, and we get off about half past five in the night, I remember that number.

NASH: Did you eat at your, where did you eat when you...

MARINO: We had a lunch. (?)

NASH: Where were the people from that you worked with? Do you remember? And you mentioned that eventually you joined a union in other places that you were employed.

MARINO: Yes, yes, I was working in (?). I joined the union.

NASH: Did your working conditions improve when you joined the union?

MARINO: Oh, yes, sure.

NASH: What was the difference, do you recall?

MARINO: Well, the price was better. The salary was better.

NASH: Do you remember what you made when you joined the union?
How much more you made?

MARINO: Oh, I don't know, about eighteen dollars a week, maybe
like that. We were piece work, you know, piece work all
depends if you have work you do, if not then you make
less.

NASH: Do you remember when World War One started?

MARINO: What started?

NASH: World War One, the First World War.

MARINO: Oh, sure.

NASH: What do you remember about that?

MARINO: (?) 1914.

NASH: 1914, yes.

MARINO: Sure, I can't forget.

NASH: Do you remember anything happening that...

MARINO: No, no. I had already two children. My husband, he didn't go to war because I had the children. They don't need him at that time so he didn't go to war.

NASH: How did you meet your husband?

MARINO: It's a friend, it was a friend who used to come in the house for my father, you know, friend that liked my father.

NASH: And where was your husband from?

MARINO: From Reggio too.

NASH: So you had a lot in common?

MARINO: Yes, in the beginning.

NASH: In the beginning. And now?

MARINO: Fine, I'm getting old though.

NASH: Still do?

MARINO: Why sure.

NASH: And what was your husband doing, what sort of work?

MARINO: Over here?

NASH: Yes.

MARINO: He longing to become a presser.

NASH: Oh, a presser.

MARINO: He was a presser, yes.

NASH: And what was your husband's experience, did he join the unions?

MARINO: Oh, yes, sure. He's still getting the pension from the union.

NASH: What union was that, did you know?

MARINO: Amalgamated.

NASH: Oh, amalgamated.

MARINO: Sure.

NASH: Your husband's retired now?

MARINO: Oh, sure.

NASH: How many years has he been retired?

MARINO: What?

NASH: How many years has he been retired?

MARINO: Oh, since we came here, about ten years.

NASH: Ten. Well, what did you do in the hot weather?

MARINO: Nothing, we used (she laughs) we used to dry outside and drink a little water.

NASH: And where did you go to keep cool?

MARINO: Oh, well, in the night you could go upstairs on the roof. Used to sing there.

NASH: Italian songs did you sing?

MARINO: Italian songs. And my husband had a guitar.

NASH: And the whole building would go on the top of the roof?

MARINO: No, all depended, the one who wanted to go. Not everyone. (break in tape)

NASH: How many children do you have?

MARINO: I had six. I lost one.

NASH: Could you tell me something about what it was like for them when they were children? Where did they go to school?

MARINO: Saint Catherine's School or Saint Anthony's.

NASH: Saint Anthony's.

MARINO: Saint Anthony's, yes.

NASH: Every one of them went there?

MARINO: Well, they began there and then we moved and they changed.

NASH: Do you remember anything about the school, what it was like?

MARINO: Well, there were a lot of nuns. They were going to a good school, nice school.

NASH: And did you go to the Saint Anthony's Festival, the feast of...

MARINO: Saint Anthony's Festival, yes.

NASH: What was the festival like in the old days, do you remember Saint Anthony's Festival?

MARINO: I don't remember everything, you know. There was a feast (?).

MRS. MARINO'S DAUGHTER: (?) music (?).

MARINO: Not much. Maybe the other, Saint Cologero, they had the music, you know, that I don't, another feast of Saint Cologero, they had music. They had, but not Saint Anthony's. Saint Anthony was a church, church run feast.

NASH: Tell me something about what did your children do, what did they study and what are they doing now? What kind of

work are they doing? What kind of work are they doing?

MARINO: Well, I had two boys, the (?). One is married and has three children, and another one I have at home, so he is an engineer. It's what you call a...

MRS. MARINO'S DAUGHTER: Aeronautical engineer.

MARINO: Aeronautical, aeronautical engineer. I had three girls, one she went to college and now she is a teacher. The two, they couldn't go to college because there was a Depression of Hoover, who was the president. So, they went to high school and then they stop and they went (?).

NASH: Tell me, do you remember anything about the depression?

MARINO: Oh, sure, a lot.

NASH: What's the worse thing that you remember? Was it very difficult for you?

MARINO: Well, you know, the Italian woman, we know how to manage it, otherwise it was the (?).

NASH: What were the things you did to survive?

MARINO: I was working myself at that time because of the children, they had to eat. So I had my trade, I was a dressmaker, I went to work.

NASH: And then when you came home, did you have to cook all the meals afterwards?

MARINO: Cook and the cleaning, yes.

NASH: So people must have eaten very late in your house.

MARINO: Yes, about seven or so.

NASH: (?). Could you tell me anything else about the depression that you remember? How it was in New York?

MARINO: Well, live very bad. Somebody, not everybody, the one who could help a little bit alright, otherwise they were very bad.

NASH: Did people help each other?

MARINO: I don't know.

NASH: Nobody.

MARINO: I don't know, I didn't have help.

NASH: Did your husband ever lose his job during the depression?

MARINO: Oh, yes, (?).

NASH: Did you work during the Depression and your husband didn't? Did you find that you were working more than he did?

MARINO: Yes, but I had a nice little job, you know.

NASH: So for a while you were bringing in the money for the family rather than your husband?

MARINO: Yes, yes, yes, yes. Well, my husband used to work and even now, you know. Maybe he find a job about a couple of days, a couple of week and then it would stop.

NASH: But yours was steady, your employment was steady.

MARINO: Yes, mine was steady. I used to belong to the union, little steadier, and then they had a strike. I lost my job. After that my son, he graduate from college so I stopped work.

NASH: Were you very happy when you stopped work?

MARINO: Oh, sure. I was happy to stay home. When you need it, all right, but when you don't need it, have to stay home.

NASH: How many years has it been since you have worked? How many years has it been since you worked?

MARINO: Oh, for a long time. (?). And then my children they were big, they found work. I don't need to go to work.

NASH: Do you still keep Italian traditions in your house?

MARINO: Yes, sure.

NASH: What to you is the most, what sort of thing would you say,
what are the traditions that you keep?

MARINO: I don't know. I go to church and things.

NASH: Does your husband go to church with you when you go?

MARINO: No, not now. My children, they go to church. So, I cook
Italian cook.

NASH: What is your best dish, what does your family like the
most?

MARINO: The lasagna.

NASH: Is that right, it's that good. Good, good.

MRS. MARINO'S DAUGHTER: How about Christmas? What do you do for
Christmas?

MARINO: Oh, Christmas, we have a lot of fish, fish, lot of work,
lot of work in Christmas. And (?).

NASH: What kind of fish do you cook at Christmas?

MARINO: Oh, we cook anguila.

MRS. MARINO'S DAUGHTER: That's eels.

NASH: Eels.

MARINO: Eels.

NASH: Do you ever catch any of these, does anybody in your family ever go fishing?

MARINO: No, not, we are not a fishing family.

NASH: And you have a big garden. Do you eat the food in your garden? Do you grow any food?

MARINO: Oh, yes. We grow the tomatoes, tomatoes.

NASH: Do you belong to any kinds of Italian societies or organizations?

MARINO: No. My children, they used to belong when they were young
in the Italian...

MRS. MARINO'S DAUGHTER: All the Sons of Italy.

MARINO: All of them. And then...

NASH: Do you think you will ever go back to Reggio di Calabria
to have a look?

MARINO: Oh, no. My dear, I can't walk no more. Before, when we
had the money, I had to raise my children. Now I am old,
where am I going to go. Thank God, I am a simple lady.

NASH: Well, thank you very much.

MARINO: You're welcome dear.