

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Fascism in Italy Project

Personal Experience

O. H. 413

VINCENZINA MONTEVIDEO

Interviewed

by

Elisa Calabrese

on

June 11, 1986

VINCENZINA CARABETTA-MONTEVIDEO

Vincenzina Carabetta was born to Giuseppe Carabetta and Rosina Popandrea-Carabetta in Giovanni di Geraci, province di Reggio Calabria in Italia, on 26 Marzo 1933.

Educated in Italy, Vincenzina married Filippo Montevideo on 13 September 1952. They have four children: Linda 32, Debra 26, Judy 23, and Antonio 17. Vincenzina has been employed by General Motor Company since 1973.

Organizations in which she is active include: Mount Carmel Catholic Church, Catholic Woman's Guild and the Mt. Carmel Club. Special interests and hobbies of Vincenzina are: sewing, needlepoint, baking and cooking.

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INTERVIEWEE: VINCENZINA MONTEVIDEO

INTERVIEWER: Elisa Calabrese

SUBJECT: Southern Italy during World War II, Hardships
during World War II, Family Life, Education,
Dating

DATE: June 11, 1986

C: This is an interview with Vincenzina Montevideo in Niles, Ohio, for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, Fascism in Italy Project. The date is June 11, 1986. It is approximately 2:30 p.m.

Thank you very much Mrs. Montevideo for having this interview with me. I would like to know if you could tell me a little bit about yourself. Tell me about your brothers and sisters, your mother and father. Give me their names and when you were born.

M: I have just one brother and his name is Domenico. My father's name is Guiseppe and my mother's name was Roseanna. I was the only girl in the family. When I was one month old my father left Italy and went to the United States. The war came then and I didn't see him for fifteen years. When he came for the first time, in 1947, after the war, when he saw me he started to cry. I asked him if he knew who I was. He said, "No." When I told him that I was his daughter, he started to talk to me. He cried he was so happy. When we wrote we sent pictures. He stayed two months over there and then went back to the United States. I stayed with my brother and mother at this time. My brother is seven years older than I.

Then I got married. We knew my husband's family. My mother was friends with my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law had three boys and one girl. One of the boys fell in love with me, her second child Phil. Then he came to this country when he was twenty-five. Before he left he

told his mother that he wanted to marry me. My mother-in-law told my mom that her son was in love with me. My mother told me that the United States wasn't like over here. They tell the parents first, and then they tell the kids if the parents agree. He came back to Italy and stayed for a few years. He came back and married me. I could not go to the United States right away; they had to get papers for me. I was a citizen because my father was always in this country.

C: You were naturalized?

M: Yes. We stayed together one month after we got married and then I got pregnant. My daughter Linda was born in Italy. We got married September 13th and my husband left October 13th. He wanted me to come and have the baby in the United States. My parents wanted me to stay a bit longer, so I stayed over there. He sent me a package with clothes for the baby from there. When the baby was born I sent a telegram to my father in the United States and he was so happy. My daughter was born June 30, 1953, and we came to this country on June 30, 1954. It was my daughter's first birthday when we got to this country. My mother cried when I left home. I left my brother over there too.

C: You never saw her again?

M: My mother came with my father to this country. They stayed about three years and then my father died. I tried to get my mother to stay with me, but she liked it in Connecticut. Her job was there, and she had a brother and relatives over there. She came to visit me all of the time. She stayed there a long time. She died four years ago.

C: What year were you born?

M: March 26, 1933.

C: So during the war you were seven, eight, or nine?

M: Yes. I was a little girl. I was so afraid. We didn't have much food while the war was on. We had money in the bank, but we couldn't get the money.

C: Did you go to grade school there?

M: I went to school five years. I was eleven years old when I finished in school over there.

- C: Did you learn about Mussolini when you were there?
- M: A little bit.
- C: What do you remember about going to school during the war?
- M: I remember there was a soldier from the United States in my town. I was young; I don't remember that much. I remember a lot of soldiers died in my town. We tried to help them as best we could.
- C: After you were done with school at 11:00, did you go to a trade school to learn how to sew?
- M: No. I learned myself. I learned to sew with my friends. My brother is a tailor.
- C: Is your husband a tailor too?
- M: Yes. He has been a tailor all of his life. He studied to make his first suit when he was twelve years old. I never went to school to learn how to sew or to crochet.
- C: How was it growing up in Italy?
- M: Friends used to get together. You would go to each other's home and keep each other company. We did things together over there; we helped each other.
- C: What was the name of your town?
- M: St. Giovanni di Geraci.
- C: Tell me a little bit about your town.
- M: It was a small town.
- C: Were the houses made of stone?
- M: The houses were like plaster and the floors were ceramic. My father built our house in Italy in 1933.
- C: Did you say your father was in the service?
- M: No. He came to this country when he was seventeen years old. He came with his father. Then he went back and forth from the United States to Italy. He got married in Italy. That's what they did before; they didn't make the family go like they do now. When he was twenty-seven he got married.
- C: Tell me a little bit about when you were a teenager in Italy?

M: The boys were different than over here.

C: How did you meet boys?

M: Sometimes when you walked, sometimes when you went to church. My friends would tell me when a boy liked me. We didn't do anything about it though, without our parents' permission. The way you met people was by walking.

C: What was a typical wedding like in Italy?

M: My wedding was nice. My gown was handmade.

C: Did you walk to the church?

M: Yes. My maid of honor wore white. People threw confetti and money too. Then all the kids go and pick it up.

C: What else do you remember about the war years?

M: My town was not destroyed. There was a bridge near my town that was blown down, but they built that again.

C: What happened about five or six years after the war?

M: Everything was okay then.

C: Did you have a farm in Italy?

M: We had a lot of property over there. We had olives planted. We never had to buy fruit over there.

C: Do you still have the property?

M: We sold everything, including the house.

C: Do you have a desire to go back to Italy some day?

M: Oh yes. I hardly have any friends there now; they are mostly in Australia.

C: What else would you like to add about Italy?

M: It's beautiful. I love it there. The people are really close there. The people really help each other over there.

C: Are there differences between the north and the south?

M: Yes. I don't remember too much though.

C: Thank you very much Mrs. Montevideo.