



### Italians of Northwest Philadelphia: Remembering a Community's Past

Joan L. Saverino, "Italians of Northwest Philadelphia: Remembering a Community's Past" in *Germantown Crier*, Vol. 50:2 (Fall 2000):44-70.

*Moving to Northwest Philadelphia from Virginia in 1988, I was captivated by the differences in the built environment of the two places. White-frame or red-brick houses hold the people's stories in Piedmont, Virginia. Here it is Wissahickon schist that echoes the history of the place, silently monitoring the succession of families who lived out their lives in the neighborhoods we now call home. Struck by the stolid grandeur of much of the architecture, I loved the schist when it sparkled on a sunny day and hated it when it deepened the gloominess on a rainy one. Since I have learned that countless Italian stonemasons laid much of the schist, it has taken on new significance for me. Perhaps because I have known immigrants like them, in my mind's eye I can easily picture these men. Mostly they work silently and steadily, now and again breaking into song or robust laughter as they call to one another. Depending on the speaker, they switch from the dialect of their hometowns to broken English with their fellow workers, some Italian, some Irish or German. They sweat under their caps, carefully measuring and placing stone after stone according to plan. Tired and dirty at the end of the day, these transplanted say little now, but head home with a firm gait, returning to the familiar comfort of families and friends, with whom they have begun to build new homes in a strange land.* [44]

Sometime between the mid-1880s and the mid-1890s, Italian immigrants were calling Northwest Philadelphia, in particular Germantown and Chestnut Hill, home.<sup>1</sup> In the popular imagination it is South Philadelphia that is thought of as the city's Italian neighborhood and, indeed, it was the community in the city with the largest concentration of Italians.<sup>2</sup> The earlier arrivals to Philadelphia were primarily from the northern regions of Italy, whereas the majority who arrived beginning in the 1880s were from the South. Although Italian settlement in the Delaware Valley was always the largest in South Philadelphia, during mass immigration Italians were forming communities in other neighborhoods of the city and the surrounding suburbs.<sup>3</sup> This development is less documented and not well known.

This article is a preliminary exploration of Italian settlement and community building in Northwest Philadelphia. It is based mainly on oral history interviews conducted with mostly second- and third-generation Italian Americans, the children and grandchildren of the original immigrants who settled in the area. Further research

is needed before we can more comprehensively paint the pictures of these pre-World War II communities. Many questions need to be asked; some may never be answered. For instance, what were the origins and migration patterns of the Italians who arrived in northwest Philadelphia? Did they choose the location because of recruitment by industries? How connected to one another were the Italian communities in nearby neighborhoods and South Philadelphia? How did Italians establish social and economic networks among themselves and also integrate into the larger community? What role did social institutions play in the lives of the Italian community?

### **Emigration, Immigration, and Settlement in the Northwest**

John Fusaro was nine years old when he arrived in Germantown in 1907 with his mother, Gaetana, and sister, Rafaella, from a small village in the province of Cosenza in the southernmost region of Calabria, Italy. Now a remarkably sharp centenarian, John reminisced about why his family immigrated and how his family came to settle in Germantown:

John Fusaro: My name is John Fusaro. I was born in San Sosti, Italy. I came here to the United States in 1907. I was then only nine years old. I went to start working when I was fourteen years old. Four dollars and twenty cents a week. That was in the spinning mill. I then started working in the police department in 1919 and retired in 1952. [45]

Joan Saverino: Can you tell me a little bit about your town in Italy? Why did your family decide to [immigrate] ?

JF: We were so poor that we had to make some kind of a move. My mother and sister came with me. We were lucky to get here, to tell you the truth... My father died in Brazil when I was a baby, and I don't even know who he was. He went there to make a little money to send home, but then he died and that was it. Mother had to take over, and it was really rough. She used to go up in the mountains for lumber, for firewood. She'd come down with a big load on her head—six cents when she got down. It was a tough way to live. So we were really tickled to death to get here.

JS: How did your mother manage to come, and how did she arrange to come?

JF: Well, she had a sister and a brother living here, in Germantown, and they sent her the fare for the three of us.<sup>4</sup>

Gaetana's sister and brother-in-law, whose surname was Gallili, took them in and made them feel at home in their two-story, three-bedroom house on East Rittenhouse Street, a street on which other Italians were living.<sup>5</sup> [46]

Oral history accounts mark the 500 block of East Rittenhouse as the first location where Italians settled in Germantown. Perhaps as early as the mid-1870s, it was here that the first seven men (who, according to oral tradition, were the first immigrants to Germantown) lived, probably renting rooms when they arrived.<sup>6</sup>

The 500 block of East Rittenhouse, along with Ely Street—a short street perpendicular to Rittenhouse—an area which has been referred to at various times as Haines Street Hollow, "the Pit," "the Yards," and Knob Hill, were the entry points for the new immigrants.<sup>7</sup> Mary D'Agostino Nocella, who grew up in Italian Germantown, noted in her family history that East Rittenhouse, "a dead-end street bordered by a coal yard at one end and cut off by railroad tracks at the other," could never be considered a prime residential area but it was the area demarcated for the Italians.<sup>8</sup> These working-class homes had been built along Haines and Rittenhouse streets to accommodate the new workers who were attracted there by the spinning mills and other factories that had sprung up from Cheltenham Avenue to Chew Avenue after the Civil War.<sup>9</sup>

As the Fusaros settled in they would have met others who had preceded them to the "Yards" in Germantown. Francesco Iannuzzi, a skilled stonemason, and his family were also living on East Rittenhouse Street when the Fusaros arrived. Francesco was renting a house with his wife, Anna Maria Biancamano, and their four children. Their saga had begun in 1893 when Francesco and Anna Maria's brother, Giuseppe Biancamano, left their village, Altomonte, in the province of Cosenza, for the port of Naples to board the ship the *Patria*, which was bound for New York City. It is unclear if the men's first destination was Germantown, but once in Germantown they found work with a building contractor.<sup>10</sup>

Seven years later, on 17 March 1900, Vincenzo, Francesco's oldest son, also a stonemason, left Altomonte bound for the U.S. to find his father. Vincenzo was accompanied by his cousin, Giuseppe Caparelli. They boarded the *Patria*, like Francesco had before them, with another family from Altomonte, the DeLucas, and arrived in New York on 4 April 1900.

Francesco wrote constantly to Anna Maria, pleading with her to sell the family possessions and bring the rest of the family to America. According to a letter from Pasqualina (Bessie), Francesco and Ann Maria's daughter, Anna Maria did not want to leave "our lovely comfortable home, where for years she had operated a weaving loom and made a good living." Pasqualina continues, "Finally she gave in and did as she was told. Our passports were soon issued. So Mom, my sister [Antoinetta], and myself joined my father and brother in America in 1901." When Francesco's brother, Ferdinando, heard that his sister-in-law was leaving, he quickly decided to pack up his wife and their five children and depart with them. They arrived in New York on April 28 and were met by Francesco, Vincenzo, and their *compare* (godfather) Vincenzo Stabilito.

Pasqualina continues the story: "My younger brother [Gennaro] who was also supposed to leave with us was suddenly called for army draft registration, so we had to leave him in Italy to wait for draft results. But he was later rejected for duty and joined us in 1902. We lived in a four-room frame house at 523 E. Rittenhouse, which my father and brother with the help of their 'Landlady' had

[47]

the whole house nicely set up for our arrival. When we got settled we all felt happy that, after years of separation, our little family was together again.”<sup>11</sup>

Norman Giorno-Calapristi, grandson of Maestro Luigi Giorno, the founder of the Germantown Band, recounted how his great-grandfather, Francesco Giorno, and his family also immigrated to Germantown in that same year, 1900, and were already living at One Ely Street when the Fusaros arrived in 1907:

Well, I'll tell you, through family oral history and what I know to be a fact, my grandfather [Maestro Luigi Giorno] came to this country in 1900 together with his mother and his father, his brothers and sisters. They were born in the town of Luzzi, *Communa di Luzzi*, in the *Provincia di Cosenza* in Calabria. His father was a stonemason, and work was getting pretty scarce. Economic conditions were a bit rough in the south of Italy in the 1880s and 1890s, and, like so many other immigrants, they decided to come to America. My grandfather, who was born 5 January 1891 was ten years old, nine years old when he came here in 1900. His father, Francesco Giorno, was a stonemason and came to work on the stone wall that was being built at that time around Beaver College, which is in Cheltenham Township. He had previously traveled [alone] to America, primarily to Brazil and to Argentina back in the 1880s and early 1890s. But his last trip here to the New World brought him to Philadelphia, specifically to Germantown. My grandfather's father, Francesco Giorno came with his wife, Teresa Giorno. This family unit settled here in Germantown permanently in 1900. And their first residence would be Number 1 Ely Street—a very small street. This is where they lived for the first years of the century.<sup>12</sup>

The Fusaro, Iannuzzi, and Giorno families' immigration stories are not unique experiences within the historical pattern of Italian migration. Rather, these three stories illustrate common components of Italian immigration—men emigrating initially without families to look for work, the mother left as sole support of the family, the poverty in southern Italy, the family joining menfolk years later, and the chain migration pattern of relatives and *paesani* (fellow townspeople) following one another to the same destination.

Complex social, political, and economic conditions within Italy and around the world encouraged more than four million Italians, 80 percent of them southerners, to immigrate to the U.S. between 1880 and World War I. Initially, the typical immigrant was a young skilled or semi-skilled man unable to find steady employment in his trade. In most cases, he intended to earn enough money abroad to return home and purchase land. As men left, the towns became occupied by women, children, and the elderly.<sup>13</sup> By the early twentieth century the face of immigration changed from that of the seasonal migrant to family units whose intention was to stay and put down roots.<sup>14</sup> The effects of this migration were felt in many ways, from new ideas to language, both in Italy and the United States

[48]

and changed both countries forever.

### **Creativity and Reimagining: New Lives in a New Land**

Similar to Italians who settled throughout the United States, the Italians who came to Northwest Philadelphia tried to re-create some semblance of the village life that they had left behind. It was an impossible task. They were a changed people, a change that had begun with the immigration process itself and continued in a land that had taken root in their imaginations before they had embarked from the ports of Italy. The America of their imagination and the reality they encountered probably little resembled each other. Nevertheless, the process of building new communities began as relatives and friends from hometowns settled near one another, helping one another to find housing, jobs, and establish new relationships.

Nevertheless, one way that Italians responded to the strange and unfamiliar they encountered was by surrounding themselves with familiar people who behaved in ways that made sense to them. Many Italians, such as those from the northern Friuli region who settled in Chestnut Hill, did this by living on the same streets with relatives and *paesani*. This pattern of settlement can be found over and over again, to a greater or lesser degree depending on factors of chain migration, employment, and locality of settlement.

The Italians in Chestnut Hill lived primarily on the east side of lower Germantown Avenue, in large part because this was housing they were permitted to occupy and rent by the Woodward Corporation. It may seem odd at first to learn that the northern and southern Italians in Chestnut Hill tended to live on different streets, did not socialize together, and really knew very little about one another.<sup>15</sup> If we analyze why this occurred, however, it becomes quite understandable.

Italians who immigrated to America were coming from a country that was newly united (in 1861) and was still deeply divided by regional differences. Italian national identity was a concept not yet embraced. Immigrants did not think of themselves as Italians; instead they identified with the region or—even more narrowly—with the town from which they emigrated. A stranger, even someone from a neighboring town, was met with suspicion. Naomi Colussi Houseal, whose ancestors emigrated from Friuli, described the Friulani as "brown gravy" Italians. She said her grandmother, Maria Roman Marcolina, had never seen spaghetti until she settled in Chestnut Hill and met southern Italians who cooked it. Two staples of the Friulani diet were butter and polenta.<sup>16</sup> In the immigrant generation, however, differences in diet could be more easily breached than other cultural differences between northerners and southerners.

[49]

One of the most difficult regional divides to cross was the diversity of dialects that were spoken—dialects so different that, literally, a southerner could not communicate

with a northerner.<sup>17</sup> In Chestnut Hill, because of their inability to communicate with one another, as well as other cultural differences between the northern Friulani and the southern Italians, the two groups clustered and socialized with their respective *paesani*.

### Work Life

Availability of work was one big factor that played into Italians' decision to choose the Northwest sector of Philadelphia as their home. Philadelphia's economic growth at the end of the nineteenth century provided great opportunities for employment. By the 1870s and 1880s large numbers of Italians were immigrating to locations in the Philadelphia area to fill the needs of rapidly expanding industries. The majority found their first jobs as track laborers for the railroads, so many in fact, that by the 1890s Italians had replaced the Irish as the primary railroad gang. Germantown was one of the destinations that drew them because the Reading and the Pennsylvania companies had large yards there.<sup>18</sup>

Italians were also arriving in the Delaware Valley to work in the quarries, including those in Germantown and Chestnut Hill. The quarries provided the stone for the rapidly developing neighborhoods of Northwest Philadelphia. Contractors and speculators were buying land and building homes for the middle class and the wealthy who wanted to take advantage of the newly popularized suburban way of life while still being able to commute to jobs in Center City. Many Italians who immigrated were skilled stonemasons and tile setters who easily found work in the building trades.

As mentioned above, Francesco Giorno, arriving from Calabria, found work building the wall around the Grey Towers estate (now Beaver College), putting his stonemasonry training to good use. Like the Giornos, the Iannuzzis were also stonemasons coming from Cosenza. Pasqualina's letter discusses how the men found work:

My father [Francesco] and brother Vincenzo were master stonemasons, and they worked together with a building contractor. My father later had to retire because he had asthma and couldn't work anymore. My brother Gennarino [Gennaro] was a pottery maker by trade. But since pottery jobs were not available at that time, through my brother Vincenzo, Gennarino was hired by the same contractor as a stonemason apprentice. He soon learned the trade, and they both worked steady together.<sup>19</sup> [50]

Francesco must have introduced his son Gennarino to his boss, explaining that the boy needed a job and was eager to learn. Apparently satisfied with the skills of the other two family members already working for him, the contractor was willing to employ the other son. This illustrates the *paesani* pattern of employment, in which immigrants introduced new arrivals—fellow townspeople or family members—to their employers, thus conveniently providing workers for the growing

needs of particular industries.<sup>20</sup> Most who settled in the Northwest neighborhoods came from the southern regions of Calabria, Campania, and the Abruzzi (now two separate regions, Abruzzo and Molise).<sup>21</sup>

One distinct exception to this southern pattern of migration is found in Chestnut Hill. A large number of Italians, many of them stone and ceramic-tile workers, came from the present-day province of Udine in the northern region of Friuli to settle in Chestnut Hill. The example also demonstrates how the patterns of chain migration and the *paesani* relationship affected the demography of the towns on both continents. Joan Y Dickinson states that "in 1871 Augustina Marcolina and his brother-in law, Emilio Roman, emigrated from Poffabria [sic], north of Venice, in search of stone work and discovered a stone quarry at Cheltenham and Waverely streets in Chestnut Hill." The official history of The Venetian Club, a club which was founded by those first immigrants, traces the beginning of the community to one immigrant, Maximilian Roman, a stonemason who emigrated from Poffabro to Chestnut Hill in 1890 and found work in the construction industry.<sup>22</sup> We are not sure which version is accurate, but the important point is that first immigrants started the *paesani* system of chain migration to Chestnut Hill. The club's history notes that "between 1891 and 1906 nearly 200 families totaling about 1,000 persons emigrated from Poffabro and surrounding towns to live and work in Chestnut Hill."<sup>24</sup>

Although we cannot say with certainty, Maximilian Roman may have been a *padrone*. *Padroni* were labor agents who enlisted prospective workers. In the earliest years of Italian immigration, before people had family networks to help them, the *padroni* helped new immigrants get a foothold and guided them through the initial settlement process. The *padrone* usually charged a fee for the services he performed, which included providing the fare for the voyage and locating housing. We know that *padroni* were very active among construction and railroad workers.<sup>25</sup>

Additional oral documentation indicates that others who arrived in Chestnut Hill also seem to have been recruited from their home villages for the building trades. According to an interview with Jane DiNola in the *Chestnut Hill Local* (September 3, 1998), her grandfather, Anthony D'Lauro, and great-uncle, John D'Lauro, both skilled stonemasons, were recruited from Italy in the early 1900s by George Woodward to work for his development company.

Sister Francis Joseph (formerly Rachel Scarpello), recalls that one of the earliest immigrants to Germantown was Joseph (Giuseppe) Sena. He may have been a *padrone*, because, Sister Francis says, that he sponsored immigrants from his hometown of Luzzi, in Calabria, and had jobs waiting for them when they arrived.<sup>26</sup> This story is a window into the chain migration pattern of Luzzitani to Germantown:

Sister Francis Joseph : ... Mr. Sena, one of the early, early, early immigrants to Germantown. He was Joseph, but they used to call him *Zu russu*, [51]

[Calabrian dialect meaning, literally, Uncle Redhead], so everyone was trying to tell me his right name was *Zu russu*, but, no, that was a nickname, because he was temperamental. But his granddaughter told me all that...

Joan Saverino: You said he found people jobs when they came from Luzzi?

SFJ: Right. He would be the sponsor, and he would get them over here, and he'd have jobs lined up here in Germantown. So, my grandfather [Pasquale Altomare], who was a master stonecutter, married Rachele [Bruno] in Luzzi, and they came here on their honeymoon. He knew he was coming here for a job.. .right after their wedding, they came here...<sup>27</sup>

The situation differed somewhat from city to city, but in general, the *padrone* system, local political bosses, chain migration and kin systems, pre-migration skills, and personal preferences influenced where Italians moved and worked. As with Francesco Giorno, Italians sometimes moved to several different locations and back again in search of work.

Although many Italians in Germantown worked for the larger industries such as the railroad, construction companies, and spinning and yarn mills (such as Dearnley, Dobson, and Scatchard), many others worked for smaller companies. According to Norman Giorno-Calapristi, some in Germantown worked as laborers at the Budd Company, a local firm that employed architects and draftsmen. A number of them also worked for David McMahon, a developer, who had a contract with the city for street cleaning and trash removal. He also owned stables that rented out horses and carriages as late as the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>28</sup>

Oftentimes, those who were both skilled and literate could more easily move to supervisory positions. That was the case for Luigi Mercaldo, a stonemason who had come from the city of Naples in about 1898. He was employed by Sedgwick Tourison, the developer of Sedgwick Farms in East Mt. Airy, and soon rose to The level of foreman supervising other Italian laborers. Mercaldo also completed the stonework for the Cresheim Valley Fountain at the intersection of Cresheim Valley Drive and Germantown Avenue.<sup>29</sup>

Most Italians thought of railroad and construction work as temporary until something better could be found. By Italian social standards these and other manual labor jobs were considered undesirable and most intended to move into artisan trades (baker, plasterer, barber and tailor) or to become a merchant or businessman, occupations they saw as more prestigious.<sup>30</sup>

The switch from unskilled laborer to a more prestigious position was not difficult in Philadelphia, because jobs were plentiful in large as well as smaller, specialized industries. After World War I and the increase in the Italian population in the city, Italians worked in a variety of work-places including cigar factories, theater bands, restaurants, milk companies, food importing businesses, barber shops, bakeries, banks, insurance firms, street-car manufacturing companies, grocery stores, and



in the government.<sup>31</sup>

Not all those who became small businessmen or skilled workers had been trained in Italy, and not every Italian immigrant artisan (as we saw with the younger Iannuzzi son, Gennaro, who had been a potter in Italy) succeeded in practicing his trade in the United States.<sup>32</sup> Even for those who eventually did have their own business, the road to achieving it was long, and success depended on the economic climate.

Initial research indicates that the Friulani who immigrated to Chestnut Hill appear to have been particularly successful in establishing their own tile businesses and quarries. For example, Marcolina Tile and Philadelphia Tile became well-known businesses and worked throughout the area. On June 16, 1995, Pierre "Pete" Marcolina was quoted in an article on stone houses in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. He spoke about his family business, Marcolina Brothers on Mermaid Lane. It is now the last functioning quarry in Chestnut Hill but has been in business since the late 1800s. He estimated that more than half of the stone houses in Chestnut Hill were built by his family's business. These range from twin houses on Winston Court and quadruples on Benezet Street to mansions in the area including the Albert M. Greenfield estate, which is now the Sugarloaf Conference Center, owned by Temple University. Marcolina Brothers was also hired by George Woodward to build some of the smaller houses in his development plan. According to Pat Staffieri—whose parents, Pasquale Staffieri and Domenica Tomeo, emigrated from Montaquilla, in the province of Campobasso, in Molise, and settled in Chestnut Hill [52]—it was also Italians who laid the streets in Chestnut Hill with Belgian block. Those blocks can still be seen at the intersection of Cresheim Valley Drive and Germantown Avenue and along other parts of the Avenue.<sup>33</sup>

As the Italian population grew, the ethnic community could support an expanding infrastructure of merchants and other small businessmen to meet its needs. The Italian community in Germantown, much larger than the one in Chestnut Hill, had its own social and economic infrastructure well in place by the 1930s. Italians owned numerous grocery stores, bakeries, barber shops, other specialty shops, and a funeral home. Most were located between the 200 and 500 blocks of Haines Street, and a few were scattered on nearby streets in the Italian neighborhood.<sup>34</sup> The Italian community was located in East Germantown primarily between the 200 and 600 blocks. It was bounded on the north by Walnut Lane, on the west by Baynton Street, on the south by Cheltenham Avenue, and on the east by Chew Avenue.

### **Making Ends Meet: A Family Endeavor**

Making ends meet involved the whole family. Immigrants were enormously creative in finding ways to bring in extra cash, stretch resources, and use found materials or products. For instance, Edith DiFrancesco DiMaria, 86, remembered that during the teens and perhaps as late as the 1920s the eastern side of Chew Avenue between Walnut Lane and Cheltenham Avenue was wooded. Italian men went there

to hunt game, and women picked mushrooms for welcome additions to the diet.<sup>35</sup>

Everyone used available space to keep a garden and even raise animals if there was room. Mary D'Agostino Nocella interviewed Marian Milione Grieco, now eighty-eight years old, who has lived in Germantown all her life. She grew up at 461 E. Haines Street, the house her immigrant parents, Angelo Milione, a cement worker, and Santina Salvia, purchased after they married in 1906. In those years prior to World War I, Haines Street was an unpaved dirt road. Her family raised two female goats and a pig in their yard space. The pig was slaughtered in the fall, much of it preserved to provide meat for the year. The goats were kept for their milk, from which Santina also made ricotta cheese. The Grieco family's goats were not an anomaly: other families on Haines Street, including the Toscano, Ventresca, and DeLuca families also kept goats in their backyards.<sup>36</sup> Maintaining agricultural rituals that had been part of most immigrants' lives in Italy contributed to survival in the United States but it went beyond economic necessity. These activities pointed to Italian values and attitudes concerning the priority of having specific and fresh ingredients on hand, the pride in self-production, and the feeling of security and connectedness with remembered cultural landscapes that the transformation of gardening space into the familiar grids and terraces used in Italy gave the immigrants.<sup>37</sup> [53]

Although the cultural ideal for Italian women was not to work outside the home, some had to do so out of economic necessity. Women and children's work often actually improved the family's economic status.<sup>38</sup> According to John Fusaro, Italians, including women and children, worked in the spinning mills in Germantown:

Joan Saverino: Do you remember what the name of the spinning factory was that you worked in?

John Fusaro: Yeah. Dobson.

JS: Dobson. Was it in Germantown?

JF: It was. Wister Street.

JS: Did many other Italians work there?

JF: Oh, yes. At that time, that's all there was in those spinning mills.<sup>39</sup>

Fusaro's mother secured a job for him at age fourteen at Dobson's. Like many Italian children, he quit school to begin working because his family needed the income.<sup>40</sup> He said his first job was to check the rollers or spinning bobbins to make sure they were in good condition.<sup>41</sup> His salary was only four dollars and forty cents a week to start, eventually going up to six dollars a week, the average pay for unskilled laborers at that time.<sup>42</sup> Later he worked at Scatchard's, a yarn-producing mill on Chelton Avenue, and earned up to fifteen dollars a week.<sup>43</sup>

Women who worked in the spinning mills also took piecework home. The piecework system has been described as exploitative and it was in certain respects.

It did, however, allow people to work from their homes, to organize their own time to get training, and to bring in much-needed income. According to Norma Giorno-Calapristi many of the Neopolitan women in Germantown were seamstresses in the Dobson and Dearnley mills during the 1930s. She remembers seeing them take sleeves, jackets, and other articles of clothing to finish at home.<sup>44</sup>

Women also supplemented the monthly income by taking in boarders, for whom they usually provided meals and laundry services in addition to a sleeping space. Pasqualina Iannuzzi's letter describes this economic strategy:

To help out with expenses we also took in two boarders, Pasquale Altomare and his uncle, zio [meaning uncle] Totonno Amoroso, who both later moved out. Mom took over all responsibilities. With the allowance my brothers gave her every week, plus the boarders' small monthly rent, she took care of all expenses and also managed to save a few dollars for a rainy day.

Later, after Altomare and Amoroso moved on, Anna Maria took in three boarders, two brothers, Sabatino and Francesco Scarpello, and Agostino Ciardullo.<sup>45</sup> Taking in boarders was a unique adaptation to the migrant situation. In Italy, non-kin were seldom invited into the private home space.<sup>46</sup>

As was touched on earlier in Pasqualina Iannuzzi's letter the family became dependent on the income of the two sons when their father fell ill with asthma and could not work. It was Anna Maria's frugality in saving the money she earned from boarders that allowed the Iannuzzi family to survive the precarious economic circumstances that Pasqualina describes in the letter:

But in 1904 my brother Vincenzo who was the main bread winner got married. ...After my brother Vincenzo got married [we] were left with no income. Besides, it was wintertime, and we couldn't depend on my younger brother because he only worked a few days a week, and what he earned was used up for his own pleasures, and we even had to feed him. Luckily, during the good years my mother had managed to save \$500. We soon got the idea to invest it in a small home, and probably in time we could open a little business and earn our living. So in 1907 we bought at 530 E. Rittenhouse Street. [54]

Pasqualina says in her letter that the family did open a business seven years later: "[We] rented a dwelling at 465 E. Rittenhouse Street and built a lucrative business when a year or two later the owner gave them notice to vacate." According to the Philadelphia city directories, in fact, Frank Iannuzzi had a grocery store at 465 E. Rittenhouse Street from 1914 to 1915.<sup>47</sup> Italians reduced overhead by using one property for both their business and family living space. This strategy allowed the father to be at home, helping to supervise the children if necessary. Sometimes the husband held a job and the wife ran a small grocery or other business out of the house. In this way she could generate a small income year-

round, even while tending children.<sup>48</sup> In Germantown, for instance, Gennaro Iannuzzi (Francesco's son) and his wife, Assunta Amoroso, had a grocery store during the 1930s in their residence at 473 Mechanic Street and then later during the 1940s and 1950s in their house at 415 Haines Street.<sup>49</sup>

During the Depression, when men were worked sporadically or not at all, women's contributions could be crucial. In the mid-1930s, Nicoletta Strollo, for instance, had a yarn shop in her family's residence at 307 E. Haines Street. In addition to selling goods, Nicoletta took orders for hand-made knitted clothing from wealthy women who lived in Germantown's Alden Park apartments and on Philadelphia's Main Line. Because she could not meet the demand alone, she hired other Italian women in Germantown to help with production.<sup>50</sup>

Sister Francis Joseph (Rachel Scarpello) remembers that her mother also had a similar business out of her home during the Depression:

Sister Francis Joseph: My mother, during the Depression, started her own business in our home—knitting business. She would create a style for a knitted dress or skirt, top, coats were in fashion, knitted coats. At one point she had fifty-five workers, who worked in their homes, like [a] home Industry. . .and we would deliver the wool, and the instructions, the needles. And then they would either come deliver the finished product, or she'd pick it up. And I remember delivering paychecks.

Joan Saverino: How old were you when you were doing that?

SFJ: Oh, I was little. I was.. .ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, and I got to know all these ladies. It was fun. They give me a drink, they'd give me a piece of candy, sometimes a nickel. Because I had brought them a check, they'd give me a nickel.

JS: Where did your mother sell these sweaters?

SFJ: To Minerva Yarns. Minerva... had a book of presentation of these styles. My mother would make these styles up. That was my mother's book, Minerva Yarns. And Columbia Yarns. And there was this place in Norristown that she'd used to have to deliver these finished products—Bridgeport. Isn't there a Bridgeport, Pennsylvania? Yeah, near Norristown. Columbia was New York, but there was a representative here, a Mrs. Hood who lived at East Falls, and she was like the contractor. My mother was the subcontractor. My mother would make styles for their book.

JS: Do you remember how the women would get paid? Did they get paid per article of clothing?

SFJ: Per article. They made out pretty well. They were thrilled. This was all pocket money for those women. They'd get dressed up with that money, they used to say to me. I bought a new set of dishes. I could hear the stories, you know? It was like fun money, you know? And they never left the house.

JS: So this was not work they were doing because their husbands were out of work in the Depression?

SFJ: In some cases, yes, yes. It was . . . they were tough times.  
JS: So how could they afford to have fun money, if people were out of work?  
SFJ: When I say fun money, it was like extra money that the husband wasn't responsible for. Now, I was in a class of nineteen kids in eighth grade. My father was the only one who had a job. So, no fuss for graduation. Simple.<sup>51</sup>

[55]

### **Settlement Patterns and Housing Accommodations**

In Germantown, as noted earlier, Italians settled in the "Yards," renting first and purchasing homes as soon as they had saved enough money. Italian social values placed a high priority on property ownership, and the immigrants carried that value with them to America.

Philadelphia had some structures in place that facilitated the transition from renter to property ownership. Small, well-built, single-family homes were part of the city's early design. Also, William Penn's establishment of a land-rent contractual system that was unique to Pennsylvania enabled a working-class family to invest in a home. Between 1890 and 1930, homeownership in Philadelphia increased from 22.8 percent (a low rate compared to other cities) to 51.8 percent in 1930, the highest among the fourteen largest cities in the United States. Although some national factors accounted for this rise, a dramatic increase in the number of building and loan associations and their borrowing policies were crucial in Philadelphia.<sup>52</sup> By 1920, Germantown Italians had their own Building and Loan Association, with 800 shareholders, becoming one of thirty-three such associations in Germantown. According to a newspaper article, "Further evidence of the thrift and progressive spirit of the Italian residents of Germantown is shown in their recent organization of a building and loan association. It has been named the Italian Building and Loan Association of Germantown, and it meets on the fourth Thursday night of the month at the Chelton Trust Company." The meetings were held in Italian as a way to reassure immigrants who might want to join.<sup>53</sup>

The area defined as working-class homes in Germantown ran from Germantown Avenue to Chew along Haines, Rittenhouse, and Price Street. Homes tended to be small (fifteen to twenty feet wide) row houses. Italians set about improving their properties themselves, and although their first homes were modest, they were undoubtedly the best housing in which they had ever lived.<sup>54</sup>

As Italians established themselves in Germantown, many moved on to larger houses with yards. Italian settlement spread from the "Yards" to Price, Haines, Mechanic, and Morton streets. Eventually Italians moved north to High Street and Walnut Lane, streets with larger homes that had originally been built to accommodate the growing number of middle-class professionals. The progress-

ion from renter to home owner is reflected in Pasqualina Iannuzzi's letter, when she documents the Iannuzzi family's move from the rental property at 523 E. Rittenhouse to the first home they purchased, in 1907, at 530 E. Rittenhouse from Gennaro LaGreca.

After selling the house to the Iannuzzi family, Gennaro LaGreca moved to 5908 Morton Street, a three-story twin with a side yard. According to Mary D'Agostino Nocella, Gennaro's granddaughter, the family apparently viewed this as a move to better housing. It seems that both LaGreca and the Irish sellers, Annie McGarvey and her brother Edward Manley, were illiterate, because the deed on Morton Street was sealed with X marks by all parties on September 13, 1907. By the mid-1930s that block of Morton Street was entirely Italian except for a Jewish shoemaker who lived across the street from 5908 and another non-Italian family who lived on the corner.<sup>55</sup> This is a good example of how the neighborhood ethnic mix had changed [56] from predominantly Irish to Italian in less than twenty-five years.

### **Nativism and the Neighborhood**

Prejudice against Italians in northwest Philadelphia existed into the early decades of the century. The movement of Italians from the "Yards" in Germantown, therefore, was not generally welcomed. This anti-Italian sentiment was not unique to Germantown or Philadelphia, but was part of an emergent ideology of immigration, a widespread xenophobia in the United States that could be felt as the tide of new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe grew larger.<sup>56</sup> The sheer number of Italians who arrived—people who in appearance, religion, political attitudes, educational standards, behavior, and language were unlike the immigrant groups who had preceded them—fueled fears and bigotry. The nativism against Italians in Germantown manifested itself both covertly and overtly. Tactics ranging from intimidation to deeds forbidding the sale of property to Italians were used in an attempt to keep them within the boundaries of "their" neighborhood.

Sister Francis Joseph recalled one story of discrimination told to her by her grandfather, Francesco Gallo, who came to Germantown just before the turn of the century: "He said one time he was walking down Haines Street and a White Protestant man crossed [the street], he wouldn't walk on the same side."<sup>57</sup> Norman Giorno-Calapristi reported that his Uncle Luigi Giorno (son of Maestro Luigi Giorno), who was born in 1916, told him that the owners of the Walton Theater on the 700 block of Cheltenham Avenue in Germantown practiced segregation. Children whom they thought were Italian because they had dark hair and skin were required to sit in the balcony.<sup>58</sup> Italians with light hair "passed" and sat downstairs, resulting in the strange situation of siblings sometimes being split up. During the late 1930s, when the boys were older, they complained to the Italian Consulate in Philadelphia. Through legal channels, the Consulate warned the owners of the theater that this practice must cease.<sup>59</sup>

As late as the 1930s, street brawls occurred if Italians crossed Cheltenham Avenue. Norman Giorno-Calapristi [NGC] and his mother Norma [NG] describe the atmosphere that prevailed, according to stories told to them by Luigi Giorno (referred to below as Uncle Gigi):

Norman Giorno-Calapristi: The immigrants that lived on High, Magnolia, Mechanic Street, Haines Street, would trek up to East Cheltenham Avenue... Norma Giorno: Then they would beat the [Italians] up. The Irish would beat them up. And he [Gigi] was a teenager in the thirties. So this was still going on, it was a little dangerous for Italian people, sometimes to boys...

NG: They didn't want those immigrants // NGC: to walk on East Cheltenham Avenue— which was a very ritzy neighborhood in its day. You could still see the remnants of the beautiful Victorian homes along East Cheltenham Avenue, primarily there. They didn't want the Italian people there [in] the five-, six-, seven hundred block, especially of East Cheltenham Avenue, where we later lived, where we later ended up. And when boys would trek up there from Haines Street, they might encounter two or three Irish bullies. And brawls would start. And they would be told again— Uncle Gigi told me this—and then they would use the horrible terms, "you guinea," "you wop," "you dagos." "Stay off of Cheltenham Avenue. Get back where you belong." ... "Get back to High Street, get back to Haines Street. Don't come up here again." What's interesting is, shortly thereafter, things—I don't know if it was the war years, early forties or late thirties—things started to change.

NGC: Changed overnight. And that's another issue, that like in 1945, shortly after the war, '46, my grandfather, Maestro Luigi Giorno, bought a property at 704 East Cheltenham Avenue. And sort of was considered, oh boy! It was like, "He broke the block!" An Italian person. And he bought two properties there.. .and all through the fifties, I would say that all those blocks there, you would have one Italian family, one Irish family, one Italian, one Irish. It was very integrated...and all along McMahan Avenue. And we got along wonderfully. There was never any problem [when] we lived there. Let me tell you, it was a beautiful, beautiful neighborhood. It was one big happy family.. .And we miss those days, I can tell you that. I long for the days of that neighborhood. Wonderful Irish neighbors next door ...across the street. Many of these people were original owners of those properties. They were born in Ireland and migrated here at the turn of the century. Beautiful people. I'm telling what stories my uncle used to relate. Why it was like that in the thirties and twenties, I don't know why it had to be that way.

NGC: And they also had a clause in the deed [that] no Italian people were allowed.

NG: None other than the Caucasian race. And that included specifically [57] no Negro or Italians. The properties cannot be occupied or sold to any

other than the Caucasian race. And this was a clause in the deeds for the homes along East Cheltenham Avenue and McMahon Avenue.

Joan Saverino: That they couldn't be sold?

NG: Sold to or occupied by Negro or Italians...

NGC: Well, what can you do? And in McMahon Avenue, here's an interesting thing. This Aunt Helen that I have alluded to or mentioned several times—she broke the block [laughs] at 5845 McMahon Avenue in the *forties*. Well early into the game. Aunt Helen, by being the first Italian lady, and Uncle Jimmy, to buy a property on McMahon Avenue. And she used to tell a funny story, that when that house was up for sale, she was looking at it, her and her husband. And my aunt had blue eyes and blond hair—looked like the farthest thing from a Mediterranean-style lady. And neighbors came outside, and approached her. And she spoke perfect English, had no accent. And they said, "Oh, boy, we're glad you and your husband and your daughter came and looked at this house here today because we heard tell that there's an Italian couple that wants to buy this. Can you believe it? An Italian lady wants to move in here next door. Oh, thank you for come and looking." And she said, "Oh, really?" She said, "Oh yeah, really" And she said, "Well guess what? I'm that lady!" She said, with perfect English [laughter]. And, they were horrified. Aunt Helen told me that herself. And what, we're talking, what, about 1942, '43? // NGC: Mm hmm. // NG: During the War years. Maybe the war had something to do with it, I don't know. There was more animosity against Italy, you know, being in the war...<sup>60</sup>

### Family and Community Life

Most of the people I interviewed were second- and third-generation children of the immigrants. They remember the Italian communities in Germantown and Chestnut Hill in the 1930s and 1940s as thriving neighborhoods in which one felt secure and comforted by the daily rhythms of family and community life. At the same time, second-generation children were growing up trying to make sense of and accommodate two worlds: one filled with Old World values and beliefs that operated in the confines of the household and neighborhood, the other found outside the doors of home, among *U Mericun*, the Americans.

Marianna LaGreca, an immigrant, often repeated a dialect phrase, *siamo sanguian*, to her grandchild, Mary D'Agostino Nocella. It indicates that people are in a god-parent relationship, an extremely important and respectful relationship among immigrant families. As a child, Mary did not understand the complexity of the term's meaning. For those transplanted from their native villages to America, comfort was found in establishing social networks that made sense of life. For many Italians in Germantown in the early decades of the twentieth century, those social networks were in family, extended family, and those that somehow could be designated surrogate family, such as godparents. It was in the confines of this kin and fictive kin network that matters of the family were kept and not



shared with those not in that circle.<sup>61</sup> Mary D'Agostino Nocella described what godparents meant in the community:

It's a special kind of relationship.. .you don't talk about family matters outside of the family, these *sanguann*, as Grandma would say—related people—were kind of taken into that family circle. If you develop that kind of relationship, if somebody became a godparent, everyone in the family was called *comare* [godmother] or *compare* [godfather]. It seemed so strange to the younger members of the family, because that wasn't true for the community outside of Germantown, but it certainly was for ours. For instance, with the Ferraro family next door [6017 Magnolia], Rose Ferraro, their oldest daughter, was the godmother of my sister Dorothy at confirmation. And suddenly, Rose of my mother became *Comar' Rosa*. And it was so strange, because Rose was my girlfriend. We were the same age, living next door to each other, and there was this formality, suddenly, and I had to call her mother *Comare Lizzie* instead of just Lizzie, we didn't say, we were so close that we didn't say Mrs. Ferraro, but it was on a first name basis. But that was true for everybody in the family, it was *comare* and *compare*. So that is was a very important relationship.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to the comfort of the family and kin network, social life for Italians in Northwest Philadelphia centered around the more formal organizational and institutional network of sacred and secular institutions. By the turn of the century the expanding Italian populations had developed new economic, social, and religious requirements. Because the institutions of the dominant society did not always fit the immigrants' needs, nor were they always welcoming, Italians formed their own. The mutual aid societies were established by Italians to help one another; others, [58] like small businesses, not only served Italians but also reached out to a wider clientele.<sup>63</sup>

In general in Italian communities, including Northwest Philadelphia, the social and economic sub-culture was not an impermeable one in which Italians only interacted with Italians. In fact, some Italians purposely nurtured ties with non-Italians. Those who came from the middle class in Italy, or who were better educated or more Americanized than the majority of working-class Italians, often acted as middlemen or "ethnic brokers" between Italians and the dominant society.<sup>64</sup> Those who emerged as leaders in the ethnic community became spokespersons for the rest who had no public voice. The social and economic map of the Italian "communities" changed in response to the local, regional, and national context during the first fifty years of Italian settlement.<sup>65</sup>

For Italians in Germantown, these networks included Holy Rosary parish, the social clubs and fraternal societies, and, for the second generation, the Germantown Settlement House. For Italians in Chestnut Hill, their social life primarily

centered around the fraternal societies and social clubs. The Church never played as large a role in their lives as Holy Rosary did for the Germantown Italians.

In order to understand the Italians' relationship to the Church in the early part of the century, one must understand their religious belief system as well as the historical relationship of the Italians to the institutional Church. The Church was the most powerful and crucial institution in terms of their everyday lives with which the immigrant came into contact. Most Italian immigrants were Roman Catholic, but American Church officials criticized their demonstrative religiosity as virtual paganism. Their spirituality fused official doctrine with other supernatural beliefs and magical ritual. The magical beliefs, behaviors, and sacred objects used by Italians provided a way of negotiating life crises. Folk religion explained and gave meaning to an unpredictable world. Their devotion was firmly rooted in their villages and region of origin, in the saints and holy places connected to these sites.<sup>66</sup>

When the eastern and southern European Catholic immigrants arrived in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, they encountered an Irish Catholic hierarchy that did not understand them or their needs. The Church instituted nationality parishes, hoping to avert a resurgence of anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States and as a gesture of accommodation to the new immigrants, who neither felt comfortable with the rigid authoritarianism of Irish Catholicism nor welcome in parishes where English speakers predominated.<sup>67</sup>

In general, Italians were suspicious of the institutional Church (as they were of all institutions). Although some Italians (the better educated) were anti-clerical on political grounds, most were so from experience. In Italy the Church allied itself with the landed aristocracy and remained unresponsive to the miserable plight of the peasants. The greed and immorality of clerics was a major component in Italian folk humor. Many peasants, particularly the men, did not attend church regularly, although everyone attended the village saints' festivals.<sup>68</sup> The immigrants' experience in the United States did not change their attitudes. Underlying the dissatisfaction with particular priests in America was anger with an American Church insensitive to their culture and religious worldview. But in spite of their resentment toward the American clergy, most Italians did not abandon the Catholic Church entirely, because their religious beliefs were integral to their family-centered lives.<sup>69</sup> [59]

Although Italian Protestant congregations existed in both Italy and the United States, Protestant missionary work was relatively unsuccessful in converting large numbers of Italians. Their relationship to folk religion and their distrust of the institutional church explains why more Italians were not attracted to Protestantism.<sup>70</sup> Even so, sizable Italian communities often had one Italian Protestant church. Joseph F. Panetta, who had immigrated in 1902 and converted to Presbyterianism in Philadelphia, was chosen by the Presbytery to begin an Italian mission. The first services were held in a storefront on East Rittenhouse Street. By 1912 the congregation had grown large enough to require a bigger

space and a church was built on East Price Street. In 1960 the remaining members of the Italian mission joined the Market Square Presbyterian Church.<sup>71</sup>

John Fusaro, who was a member of the Italian Presbyterian church, recalled that he joined the church primarily because they sponsored a school:

John Fusaro: And I was the only one of the family that belonged to it. The others were Catholics.

Joan Saverino: How did that happen?

JF: It happened that I started out...! went to St. Vincent's School, [laughs] And me being a small boy— I wasn't a big boy—I got a licking a couple of times. So, I said, "The hell with this." I told my mother, "I can't go there." So then this minister came along and said, "Do you want to come to our church—our school?" I said, "Sure.".. .They had a school at the church. It wasn't a church at that time. At that time they only had one great big room, where they had the services. And they lived upstairs. So, it was great. I stayed there until they closed the church. I had four years' schooling; that was it. Then I went to work.

JS: Was it a sizable congregation?

JF: Yeah, it was pretty good. It filled the room, anyhow.

JS: How did your mom feel about you going to the Presbyterian Church?

JF: She didn't mind at all. As long as I was happy, that was it.<sup>72</sup>

### **Holy Rosary Italian Church<sup>73</sup>**

When Italians first came to Germantown, they had no church of their own. Perhaps at first they attended St. Vincent's, an Irish parish on Price Street. Norman Giorno-Calapristi said that even as late as the 1920s, his relatives, the Famularo family, belonged to St. Vincent's parish.<sup>74</sup> As early as 1894, however, the Italian community was apparently large enough that it required the establishment of its own ministry. In 1894, the basement of the public chapel in St. Vincent's Seminary at 500 E. Cheltenham Avenue was renovated and converted into a chapel for the Italians. According to interviews with the second generation, many immigrants did not feel welcomed by the Irish Catholics and wanted a church of their own, ministered by those who could speak their language.

A Vincentian priest, Secundus Lavizeri, himself a native Italian from the town of Asti in the Piedmont region, ministered to the Italians from Holy Rosary's origins to his death in 1915. In 1911 Peter Montiani arrived from Brooklyn, New York, to assist with the Italian community. In 1914 a combination school and convent was built at 334 E. Haines Street and Holy Rosary was established as a nationality parish.<sup>75</sup> [60]

There is no doubt that the Italian community was in a celebratory mood at the dedication of the school annex as recounted in an article in a local paper about

the dedication:

The Italian Catholic population has increased so rapidly during the past few years that Rev. Petro [sic] Montiani, pastor of the Holy Rosary Chapel on East Haines Street has been obliged to erect a two-story brick annex to his parochial school to accommodate the nearly 400 boys and girls who will seek admission to the new school in September.. .it will be dedicated by Bishop McCort on Sunday, September 20, at which time there will be a procession of members of the Knights of Columbus Men's Temperance Society, Hibernians, Italian organizations and bands of music... promises to be a gala day for the Italians of Germantown.<sup>76</sup>

In 1919 Father Dominic Nepote arrived from the town of Nola, in Campania, and in that same year he moved the parish center of worship from the basement of the Seminary on Chelton Avenue to the chapel of the school/convent building on East Haines Street.<sup>77</sup> According to interviews with the second generation, the Italians, with the support of Father Nepote, were instrumental in organizing and planning the development of their parish. Vincenza Cerrato said that the Italian men met in the home of Nunziato and Giovannina Scarpello at 519 E. Rittenhouse Street to make plans for the church.<sup>78</sup>

Sister Francis Joseph recalled how Holy Rosary Parish purchased St. James Methodist Episcopal Church on the eastern corner of Musgrave and Haines streets for the purpose of converting it for their own use:

Joan Saverino: You told me that your grandfather was one of the founding members of Holy Rosary. Do you know anything about that?

Sister Francis Joseph : Well, they wanted their own church. They felt humiliated, having to go down into the basement of the Shrine. So, they pledged money and the pastor said, We won't buy until we have all the money. And they bought a church used by Black Baptists on East Haines Street and Musgrave. It became Holy Rosary; they redid the whole thing. JS: It was on the corner? And they didn't actually then construct a new church. They renovated what was there.

SFJS: Yeah, they redid it. It was a lovely little stone [church], and all the people helped, all these guys who were in construction. It didn't cost them too much. But Grandpop—his name was on this big pledge board in the school playground. And Grandpop's name, because Altomare, A, was the first one. And he paid his pledge. It wasn't much. In those days, \$200, was a *big* gift. It might have been that, I'm not sure.<sup>79</sup>

The remodeled church was dedicated in 1928. The celebratory dedication began with a morning procession of the local Italian societies and the congregation arching from the Immaculate Conception Chapel at 500 East Chelton Avenue. [61]

A local newspaper article described the occasion: "With an elaborate program, including an outdoor procession of hundreds of persons, a Solemn High Mass and a special musical program, the Holy Rosary Catholic Church, a new place of worship for Italian Catholic residents of Germantown, will be dedicated on Sunday."<sup>80</sup>

The significance of having a parish of their own was profound for the Italian community. The church was the most important physical marker, symbolic of the Italian community's presence and permanence in Germantown. For the children of the immigrants, Holy Rosary is remembered as central to their lives, as Vincenza Cerrato indicated this when she said, "our church was not only our religious center. It was our social [center]."<sup>81</sup> Sr. Francis Joseph Scarpello captured the same intensity of feeling:

I was very closely associated with Holy Rosary Parish. That was the center of my life, my family's life. [The] parishes had social activities, even as a child. I was in all the processions—the crowning of the Blessed Mother, all that business. Father Nepote had a big impact on my life. I admired him, I was proud of him. He was an intellectual, and he was sent to Holy Rosary Parish, which was really just a shrine in the big Miraculous Medal Seminary ... But the mass was in Italian. The people loved it, because they could understand.<sup>82</sup>

In the United States the immigrants continued their devotion to the saints they had revered in Italy by recreating the religious *feste* of their villages. The Irish-American clerics who controlled the American Catholic Church by the time the Italians arrived in the United States found the demonstrative public behavior exhibited during the *feste*, the biggest celebration of the year for the immigrants, particularly problematic. The American Church decided to tolerate *feste* if they succeeded in drawing the Italians into church and if they could be controlled by bringing them under the jurisdiction of the clergy.<sup>83</sup> In many Italian parishes in the United States this mandate caused conflict between the Italian social associations that had always planned the *fiesta* in the home villages and the parish priests who rigidly interpreted Church direction. From initial research, it appears that there was no such animosity between the clergy in Germantown and the congregation of Holy Rosary, whose own "*fiesta*," the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, was held on July 16. The *fiesta*, celebrated in a manner typical of Italian village feasts, was a week-long affair combining sacred and secular components. The central religious focus was a mass followed by the religious procession of the saints' statues, the religious sodalities, and other devotees into the streets of Germantown.<sup>83</sup>

A carnival-like atmosphere was part of the *fiesta* tradition, a chance for people to celebrate the feast with food, music, and games of chance. Non-Italians, too, attended this part of the *fiesta* which served as a moneymaking event for the

parish. Fireworks and music were a finale to the secular part of the feast. [62]  
Vincenza Cerrato recalled that when she was a young girl in the mid-1930s, the men collected money from the parishioners to purchase the fireworks. According to Cerrato, the fireworks were held behind the Church itself at first, but later they were moved to Waterview Playground.<sup>85</sup> Norman Giorno-Calapristi described the firework display:

After the *fiesta* of Our Lady of Mount Carmel they would have fireworks, very elaborate firework displays, imported from Italy, that would show the Italian flag in the air and comical things. They would have *carrozze* [carriages] with a little donkey and different things.. .This would go on in the skies of Germantown. And Grandpop [Luigi Giorno] would start the band with the Royal Italian March and the Italian flag would appear in the sky [laughs]... And then the American national anthem, certainly. They would always play the Star-Spangled Banner after that. And the people would just relax in this park. This was the highlight of the Italian people's existence... We lived for music and feasts.<sup>86</sup>

Historian Robert Orsi has suggested that for the Italians of Harlem, N.Y, their annual religious *fiesta* with its food, music, and familiar ritual was an antidote to the sense of "dislocation, a moral and sensory anomie" that resulted from being cut off from familiar patterns of life, its sights, sounds, tastes, and smells.<sup>87</sup> The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel served that purpose for Germantown immigrants. For the second generation, who had never known Italian village life, the *fiesta* was still the single most important occasion that united them, reinforcing their group identity and central to their spiritual and social life. Even as people began moving out of the neighborhood into the surrounding suburbs after World War II, they returned for the annual *fiesta*. Thus it continued to act as a unifying force for a community in flux until the final celebration in 1962.

### **The Fraternal Societies and Social Clubs<sup>88</sup>** [63]

Similar to the pattern of Italian communities in other regions of the country, mutual aid and fraternal societies were the first and best-organized Italian institutions in Northwest Philadelphia. Mutual aid societies, founded on the concept of communal assistance, were of paramount importance in ethnic communities during an era when neither unions nor employers offered any safety net of benefits.<sup>89</sup> Perhaps even more important than providing economic assistance, the societies helped new immigrants adjust to America and also served as centers of social life. Founders of these societies often included *prominenti*—middle-class merchants, artisans, and professionals.<sup>90</sup> Men from the same village tended to form their own societies, creating a proliferation of small organizations whose life was frequently short-lived because of an inadequate number of members and poor management of funds. To achieve greater stability small local mutual aid societies often merged with the larger and expanding national fraternal orders.<sup>91</sup> The national fraternal orders, at their height of membership and power in the 1930s and 1940s, focus-

ed more on issues of national Italian-American politics and ethnicity than the independent mutual aid societies did. And though womens' auxiliaries existed in the mutual aid societies, they occupied a more visible and active role in the national fraternal orders.

As local and national fraternal organizations tried to build membership, destructive competition among leaders was not uncommon. Strife within the leadership ranks of the Order Sons of Italy in Pennsylvania resulted in a break by some members to found the Order Italian Sons and Daughters of America in Pittsburgh in 1930. This fraternal association quickly gained popularity, expanding its membership to eastern Pennsylvania, including at least one chapter in Germantown.<sup>92</sup>

Because Italians were often not welcome as members in social organizations of the majority population, their own ethnic organizations filled the gap. From their earliest years, the clubs sponsored at least one annual event for families. The local lodge meetings and the annual conventions of the national fraternal orders became social events in themselves. Most of all, the local club was a central meeting place for men. In the sanctioned atmosphere of the club, men drank together and played card games such as *briscola* and *tresette* and other Italian games including *bocce* and *morra*. Many of the fraternal societies also sponsored sports teams, and this aspect of the clubs was a key to drawing in the second generation as members.

[64]

The fraternal societies reached their height of membership and power during the 1930s and 1940s, in part because the sources of income were expanded far beyond membership dues. They added social activities such as dinner-dances, incorporated bars and dance bands, and, as did the Venetian Club in Chestnut Hill, offered social memberships to anyone who paid the nominal fee.

A comprehensive search for the societies that existed in Northwest Philadelphia has not been done, but what we know about their emergence and development parallels in significant ways the history of mutual aid and fraternal societies outlined above. By the 1930s there were several societies in Germantown, including at least two chapters of the Order Sons of Italy. These were the Luzzi Lodge formed by those men who had emigrated from Luzzi, Calabria, and the Giuseppe Giusti Lodge (named after the Italian poet). There was also at least one chapter of the Order Italian Sons and Daughters of America. In Chestnut Hill the Venetian Club, still in existence, was never part of a national fraternal order but was a Social club started by the Italians who emigrated from Friuli. The Bocce Club, still active, was begun by the southern Italians who lived in Chestnut Hill.

The Giuseppe Giusti Lodge, now the Ernest M. Strollo Lodge (as of 1995), Order Sons of Italy in America, provides a good example of a developmental trajectory that fits with national trends of Italian American fraternal organizations over time, changing as the needs of the community changed. The Lodge was founded on March 11, 1917,

in Germantown. John Fusaro, who was nineteen years old in 1917, was its first recording secretary. He remembers being enlisted by Dr. Phillip Cardamone to recruit members to form the original lodge, which installed the Protestant minister Joseph Panetta as its first president:

Joan Saverino: Can you tell me how the Sons of Italy chapter got started?

John Fusaro: We started out in a little church on Price Street. [There were] very few of us then when we started it. But it grew.

JS: How did you get the idea—what made you want to have a chapter? Was it Sons of Italy to begin with?

JF: Yes. There was a Dr. Cardamone living right next door to the church. He wanted to put the bug in the Reverend's [Panetta's] ears. He started it. Then we went around trying to get members. We got quite a few. Me, nineteen years old, going around, trying to get members. The doctor and I got quite a few there.

JS: Do you remember what purpose the organization had in the beginning and what kind of activities you had?

JF: What purpose? Well, the purpose was—it was like insurance. Today, [65] it's not the same.

JS: So it was to provide benefits to the members?

JF: That's right.<sup>93</sup>

In 1928 a house was purchased at 439 E. Haines Street and became "Casa Giusti," the Lodge headquarters. In 1931 a women's auxiliary was formed, and a junior lodge was formed in 1934. In 1938 the members themselves built the Casa Giusti Hall, thus expanding their space on Haines Street.<sup>94</sup>

The Venetian Club, now located at 8030 Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill, is an excellent example of a social club founded by those who gathered together for reasons of regional affiliation. The Venetian Club history states that the men who formed the Club were "closely associated with one another through their trades [as noted previously many of them were in the building trades], nationality and bonds of good fellowship."<sup>95</sup> For a few years the Club met in a *baracca* [literally, shed or hut] located at the Marcolina Quarry on Ivy Hill Road.<sup>96</sup> They formed the Club in 1924 and purchased the Gilbert School Annex. Consistent with trends in Italian societies nationally, the membership had increased so much that by 1929 that the Club decided they needed larger facilities. They raised funds to construct a three-story addition that included bowling alleys, a game room, a lounge and bathroom. During the next twenty years, the Venetian Club sponsored dances, dinners, picnics, and carnivals that served to raise money for specific causes. The Club also increased its activities to include sponsorship of bowling and golf tournaments and other sports activities.<sup>97</sup>

### **The Germantown Settlement House**

The Germantown Settlement House<sup>98</sup> was one of the growing number of private



and public agencies that came on the scene at the beginning of the twentieth century and proliferated in the post-World War I period to aid and Americanize new immigrants. Some of these groups' agendas attempted to force assimilation on newcomers; others adopted a gentler program of acculturation based on tolerance.<sup>99</sup> Immigrants, including the Italians, resented many of the organized efforts at Americanization, and their responses ranged from indifference to hostility.<sup>100</sup> In general, Italians avoided programs that promised handouts. They were unfamiliar with and distrustful of institutionalized help because it was uncommon in Italy. Relatives and the mutual aid societies were expected to help the needy.<sup>101</sup> The Germantown Settlement House, however, seems to have been successful in attracting Italian children to its programs. Perhaps because many of the activities appeared to be mere play rather than coercive attempts at Americanization, the immigrants felt comfortable having their children under the tutelage of the teachers [66] there. Also, at least during the 1920s when the McMurtrie sisters were directing the Germantown Community Center [see below], they conducted home visits to gain the trust of Italian parents<sup>102</sup> whose values resisted leaving children, particularly girls, outside the care of kin.

The origins of the Settlement House can be traced to 1884, when eighteen women from wealthy Germantown families met to found an organization called the Morton Street Day Nursery and Free Kindergarten to provide aid to the poor and working classes of Germantown. Thomas P. Cope purchased the Mission of Saint Michael's Church on the 5900 block of Morton Street. In 1887 the name was changed to Morton Street Day Nursery and it came under the jurisdiction of the new city-wide Board of Education.<sup>103</sup>

We do not know the nature of the Italian community's participation in those early years. Some must have been using the Day Nursery's facilities, however, because the original building was enlarged in 1916 to accommodate the influx of new immigrants, most of whom were Italian.

The Morton Street Day Nursery philosophy, as stated in the history of the Settlement House, was consistent with the national trend in Americanization before World War I that focused on indoctrinating immigrants to become law-abiding citizens and shared the more progressive approach of social reform through tolerance.<sup>104</sup> "All the best qualities of a child expand naturally under a treatment which expects him to do his best and to admire the best of others, to share his good things with those who have less, and to be obedient and orderly because he 'belongs to the Kindergarten.' It is to be wished that this spirit of cooperation for the general interest of upholding rather than submitting to law —could be carried on into some of the higher institutions of learning which are becoming the nurseries of faction and party spirit, class arrayed against class, and all against the powers that be."<sup>105</sup>

After World War I the national trend in Americanization changed from training

good future citizens to the idea of promoting "loyalty," which was really a demand for cultural conformity.<sup>106</sup> In Germantown, the Woman's Club, in cooperation [67] with the Germantown Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Germantown Visiting Nurse Society, and the Germantown Board of the Civic Club, formed an Americanization Room at the southwest corner of Haines and Morton streets.

We see the new philosophical trend reflected in the stated goals for the Americanization Room: to show "the foreign born located here how American standards of living might be achieved and how American opportunities might be realized." Another statement by the chair of the Americanization Committee, further explicitly stated its intentions: "Nothing is of more importance to the interests of Germantown than the quality of its citizenship. The work that the Club and its allies are doing on behalf of the foreign born cannot be placed too highly. It is hoped that all true Americans will see and feel the need of keeping up this work and making the foreign born realize the [sic] more fully the duties as well as the privileges involved in their residence in America."<sup>107</sup>

The Americanization Room sponsored cooking and sewing classes, dancing, and gymnastics, and intended to begin a Girl Scout Troop and sponsor English classes for men. It supposedly helped eighty-five families the first year. As the immigrant population expanded, the Room's work increased, and the Germantown Community Center was formed.

In 1927, because of an awareness that the Morton Day Nursery and the Community Center were providing community services for the same population, a proposal was made to merge the two organizations and purchase a building at the southwest corner of High and Morton streets.<sup>108</sup> The Day Nursery rejected the proposal, but the Germantown Community Center proceeded and purchased a house at 324 High Street on March 5, 1928.

On January 11, 1928, a fire all but destroyed the building at Haines and Morton in which the Community Center had been housed.<sup>109</sup> At least six Italian children were killed and several more injured. This event was a huge shock to the Italian community. The *Evening Bulletin* reported on the funeral service: "Father Nepote's words were hardly distinguished because of the sobbing of men, women, and children, who filled the church to capacity."<sup>110</sup> The tragedy suspended operations of the Center for a few weeks until they could move to new quarters at High and Morton streets (324 High Street).<sup>111</sup>

In October, 1929 Florence E. Collington was hired as the first full-time executive secretary. As the demand for services increased with the onset of the Depression, it became increasingly difficult to fund two separate agencies in the same community. In a meeting held on October 8, 1934, the Morton Day Nursery and the Germantown Community Center decided to merge their efforts into one agency, the

Germantown Settlement although they maintained the programs at the separate locations (the Day Nursery at 5900 Morton Street and the Germantown Community Center at High and Morton streets). As late as the 1930s the Settlement served a population composed of Italians, Irish, and a few African Americans and native-born Americans. The program was recreational, athletic, and educational. The history of the Settlement states that by World War II, "a very close working relationship had developed between the Center and the Italian American community." This seems due in part to the fact that whether by choice or by informal sanctioning, African Americans primarily used the Phillis Wheatley Center operated by the Philadelphia Department of Recreation. The Settlement had few links with Saint Vincent's, the Irish parish, perhaps indicating that the Irish were not using the Settlement's resources.<sup>112</sup>

In 1943 and 1944 the Settlement conducted its first self-study. Records were not kept of the ethnicity of the families who used the Settlement, but for the summer of 1943 the staff identified those children who participated in the playground activities as "243 Italians, forty-two of native stock and 105 negroes."<sup>113</sup>

We do not have a clear picture of how the immigrant generation used the services of these social service organizations over the decades. We have a clearer sense, from the stories of the children of the immigrants, that during the 1920s through the 1940s, at least, many of them were quite actively involved in the programs at the Community Center, which became the Settlement House. They remember with great fondness the two McMurtrie sisters—Myrtle, the director, and May, her assistant—as well as Florence Collington, who followed them. In the same breath they also speak of Edith Palermo, their "Miss Edith," who began working as a volunteer at the Center when she was still enrolled at Germantown High School and later worked there as a social worker.<sup>114</sup> The picture they paint leads us to believe that the Settlement House had a profound effect on their lives. Mary D'Agostino Nocella, a child during the 1930s, discussed her memories, giving us an idea of how the Italians used the organization: [68]

Joan Saverino: I know that your generation took part in the Settlement House. I'm curious how much your mother's generation went.

Mary D'Agostino Nocella: My mother's generation, not at all. But my cousin Edith DiFrancesco's generation— Edith is going to be 87 this coming year— she and her sisters and young women of their age were very active. There was a woman named Myrtle McMurtrie who was the Mrs. Collington of that era.. .this Myrtle McMurtrie, who was a wonderful, wonderful person, because she not only conducted activities at the Settlement House, but she would also visit the homes of the children...And she got to know parents and got them involved; it was very well done...They started a day nursery for the children of working women. So many of the Irish women did work so that they did use the facility... the Italian women, mostly, stayed home. There were some who worked in factories. But, by and large, they were full-time

housewives, so that they didn't use [the] Settlement, the Day Nursery end of it, as much. But then they got involved with after- school programs. When I was six, first grade, I would come home from school, drop off my books, and go up two doors away, the building where the Day Nursery was, and they had after- school programs set up for the kids. We would play house. They had this marvelous arrangement where you were given money and you went out and you bought food—all play food, of course, and play money—and then you went into your own little kitchen and you prepared your food, and you had your friends come and visit you. And we loved doing this. I guess it was a way of introducing the children of immigrants to what was being done, you know, locally. There was also a library that was open to the kids in the community. and you were allowed one book per week, which for me wasn't enough.

JS: And did your family, did your parents like the idea of you all going to the Settlement House?

MN: They had no objections to it at all, no.

JS: And did the boys go as well?

MN: For different activities, yes. They did not go with the girls—they did different things then with the boys on the alternate days. When I was in junior high school, there was a Friday afternoon dance for boys and girls, and it was absolutely marvelous, because we got to socialize with boys from the community and we learned to dance. In the summertime they had dancing outdoors in the building on High Street and Morton Street. There were also movies shown in that yard for the kids on weekends. And there were all kinds of summer activities. Later on there were music lessons and drama lessons, and handcrafts for the women. And for the young people too. All during the summer, about 9:00 to 12:00 there would be activities, crafts in the schoolyard. And then in addition to that there was, [the] College Settlement Farm.

JS: What is that?

MN: Now, I don't know if it was used only by the Settlement House in Germantown or [by] settlement houses from other areas as well. But we would be taken by bus. You paid a nickel or a dime and carried a lunch, and spent the day at College Settlement Farm. There was a natural lake. It's out here some place in this area. But everybody went. It was absolutely wonderful for city kids to get outdoors and play on the grass and swim. It was really great. And then they had week-long stays for the boys and the girls. Again, different weeks [chuckles]; it was not the same time that they would go...they had sleeping accommodations...

[69]

JS: What years were you active in the Settlement House?

MN: Thirties. And early forties. I graduated in Germantown High in 1946, so after that I wouldn't be doing too much. I can remember several times going to dinners at the Settlement during the war. When service men were home, they were invited to come to socialize with these local girls. And I was allowed to do that, again, because of the supervision there. They

introduced us, the Settlement, to many cultural things. I can remember going to the Academy of Music for a Philadelphia Orchestra concert for the first time with a group from the Settlement House. And the DiPasquale boys had their first music lessons, at the Germantown Settlement House. They went on to play for the Philadelphia Orchestra and to form the DiPasquale Quartet.<sup>115</sup>

## Conclusions

This article has explored the initial period of immigration of Italians to Northwest Philadelphia, the early years of settlement, and their development into thriving ethnic communities during the decades between the two World Wars. World War II and its aftermath were catalysts for changes nationally that affected all Americans. After the war, the beginnings of a scaling down of heavy industry, the exodus from city and town to suburb, the desire of adult second-generation children to blend in with mainstream America, and the aging of the immigrant generation contributed to a general decline of old ethnic neighborhoods.<sup>116</sup> Consistent with the national trend of moving to suburbia, the Italians in Northwest Philadelphia began moving to the surrounding suburbs. Until the last *fiesta* was held in 1962, many Germantown Italians returned to their old neighborhood at least for this annual event. After that, many no longer had a reason to return.

As second-generation Italian Americans aged, they often became nostalgic for the sense of belonging that they had once known in family systems and close-knit neighborhoods. In part in an effort to re-create what they had lost, they became interested in their own ethnic heritage, giving new life to old fraternal societies or forming new groups.<sup>117</sup> For instance, many Germantown Italians and those from Chestnut Hill who did not have contact growing up, now know one another through their mutual participation in the Ernest M. Strollo Sons of Italy Lodge, which originated in Germantown. Also, the second-generation men and women who moved out of Germantown hold reunions. The Germantown Girls' Reunion is a carefully orchestrated event complete with a dinner, speakers, entertainment, and door prizes. The reunion affords the women an opportunity to maintain contact and relationships and to recount memories of a life they once shared. For these elderly, and for their children who are interested, it is the memories that keep alive a way of life that is no longer. Indeed, it is not only the way of life that is gone, but the physical space and places that marked it as the Germantown Italian neighborhood have all but disappeared. In the same way that Italians changed and contributed to the character of Germantown when they began arriving over one hundred years ago, it is the African Americans who moved into Germantown in large numbers who now lend Germantown its distinctive ethnic feel. [70]

Why is it important for an understanding of Germantown and all of Northwest Philadelphia to document the history of these Italian neighborhoods and the ordinary people who gave them life? Until the 1960s most traditional historians

had little interest in recording the experiences of ordinary people, viewing them as irrelevant to the historical record. Since then, researchers gained interest in societies and cultures that lacked the kinds of documentary evidence usually relied on. Scholars also became interested in the history of oppressed and ordinary people, including women ("history from below" as opposed to the "Great Men" approach). Researchers wanted to fill in the gaps of history by recording the voices of those who had not been heard before. Recording the oral history and traditions of these earlier immigrants and their descendants, as well as immigrants still arriving, has become one of the important ways to document a more complete and diverse picture of Northwest Philadelphia.

*Joan Saverino has a doctorate in folklore and folklife from The University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in anthropology from George Washington University. She has worked in museums and education for more than twenty years.*

**Acknowledgments:** I wish to thank all the Italian Americans who so enthusiastically participated in the project, especially those who serve on the Historical Society's Italian American Community History Committee. Thanks also go to Randall Miller, the overseeing scholar for the project, for his reading of the manuscript. I also thank David T. Moore for his reference assistance and Richard N. Juliani for his thoughtfulness in directing the project my way initially. Small editorial changes have been made in some of the direct quotations, such as the elimination of repeated phrases or extraneous words, in order to make them read more easily. In all cases, even if statements have been shortened, the sense of what was said has not been altered. Any errors are my own.

This article is one of the outcomes of a research project to investigate Italian immigration and settlement to Northwest Philadelphia. It was part of the Raising Our Sites: Community Histories of Pennsylvania (1997-2000) initiative funded by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council (PHC). Raising our Sites is PHC's state-wide programming effort to broaden historical interpretation, focusing on telling the stories of women, laborers, African Americans, Native Americans, and European immigrant groups.

This research project relied primarily on oral history as a first step toward documenting Italian immigration, settlement, and development of community in Northwest Philadelphia. Archival research needs to be conducted to provide a fuller and more detailed account and to corroborate some initial findings. The Germantown Historical Society hopes to obtain grant funding in the future to continue the work this project has begun. All research materials collected are at the Germantown Historical Society and are available for use by scholars and the general public.

## ENDNOTES

1 Some Italians were also living in Mt. Airy. Nicetown had a large number of Italians who were interconnected with the Germantown Italians, but it is not included in this study because it is technically not part of Northwest Philadelphia.

2 Richard N. Juliani, *Building Little Italy: Philadelphia's Italians before Mass Migration* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 230-31.

3 Richard N. Juliani, "The Origin and Development of the Italian Community in Philadelphia," in *The Ethnic Experience in Pennsylvania*, ed. John E. Bodnar (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1973), 237.

4 John Fusaro, interview by author, tape 2, 1–2, Italian-American Oral History Collection (1AOHC) GHS Library.

5 John Fusaro, tape 2, 3-4, 1AOHC, GHS library. Fusaro thought he remembered the house number as 439 R. Rittenhouse, but a search of the Philadelphia city directories does not show anyone with the name Gallili for the year 1907. Not until 1914 does a Peter Gallilio appear, living at 426 E. Rittenhouse, but we cannot know if this is the same person. Discrepancies between people's memories and the information in the city directories are quite common. Because Italians were often not counted and misinformation frequently printed owing to language barriers, the directory should not be relied on as the official source.

6 The arrival date needs to be corroborated with archival research. On Haines and High, streets that are north and parallel to Rittenhouse, the block equivalent is the 400 block. It is unclear why the numbering is different for Rittenhouse. According to Mary D'Agostino Nocella, (personal communication, 20 July 2000), among the first arrivals were Francesco Iannuzzi, Gennaro LaGreca, Beniamino DiTommaso, Pasquale Altomare, and Totunno Amoroso. This information was relayed to her by her aunt, Margaret Cupo LaGreca, whose husband was Frank LaGreca, the son of Gennaro LaGreca. Margaret Cupo LaGreca died in 1997, when she was in her nineties.

7 Sam Cerrato, who grew up on E. Rittenhouse Street, said that from the 1930s to the 1950s he remembers that area being called "Knob Hill."

8 Mary D'Agostino Nocella, "The D'Agostinos and the LaGrecas: A Family History," (unpublished manuscript), 15, in D'Agostino/LaGreca file, GHS Library.

9 "The Germantown Settlement: A Short History" (unpublished manuscript), 1, GHS library.

10 Iannuzzi family history and "Contratto D'Imbarco," (embarcation contract) in Vincenza Iannuzzi Cerrato file, GHS Library.

11 Pasqualina (Bessie) Iannuzzi Scarpello's letter and Iannuzzi family history in Vincenza Iannuzzi Cerrato file, GHS Library.

12 Norman Giorno-Calapristi, interview by author, tape 11, 2, 1AOHC, GHS Library.

13 Martin Clark. *Modern Italy, 1871-1982*. (London: Longman, 1984), 166.

14 Juliani, "Origin and Development," 238.

15 Naomi Colussi Houseal, interview by author, tape 16, 1AOHC, GHS Library.

16 Naomi Colussi Houseal, tape 16 and field notes, 30 June 2000, 1AOHC, GHS Library.

17 Clark. *Modern Italy*, 35.

18 Ibid, 243-44.

19 Pasqualina's letter in Vincenza Iannuzzi Cerrato file, GHS Library.

20 Juliani, "Origin and Development," 247.

21 Because the Germantown Italian community' was larger, a decision was made to conduct the majority of oral history interviews there. Further interviewing needs to be done in

Chestnut Hill among the Friulani and among those whose families came from the Southern Italy

22 Joan Y. Dickinson, "Aspects of Italian Immigration to Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* XC no. 4 (October, 1966):453. Taken from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 24 February, 1952; Augustina Marcolina was founding owner of Marcolina Quarry (Naomi Colussi Houseal, personal communication 10/23/00)

23 See Juliani, "Origin and Development," 239, 247, for more on Philadelphia's chain migration pattern; Venetian Social Club, 50th Anniversary Celebration, 1974, pamphlet in Venetian Social Club file, GHS library.

24 See also Joan Y. Dickinson, "Aspects of Italian Immigration to Philadelphia. Note that Poffabro has been misspelled in Dickinson as Poffabria.

25 Joseph Lopreato, *Italian Americans* (New York: Random House, 1970), 93-95; Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street*, 61-65; Donna R. Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 114-115.

26 Sister Francis Joseph, interview by author, tape 5, 1, 1AOHC,GHS Library.

27 Ibid.

28 Giorno-Calapristi, tape 11, 33-34, 1AOHC, GHS Library

29 Mary Anne Mannino, personal communication, 27 April 1999.

30 Donna R. Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street: Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880—1930* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 62.

31 Juliani, "Origin and Development," 244—45.

32 Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street*, 62, 64.

33 Pat Staffieri, personal communication, 16 July 1998.

34 See map drawn by Mary Nocella of Italian neighborhood, 27 March 2000, GHS Library.

35 Mary D'Agostina Nocella, personal communication, 24 July 2000.

36 Notes from interview of Marian Milione Grieco by Mary Nocella, July 2000, GHS Library

37 Richard Raspa, "Exotic Foods among Italian-Americans in Mormon Utah: Food as Nostalgic Enactment of Identity," in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*, ed. Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 185-94- Philip F. Notarianni "Places of Origin: Calabresi Carbon County, Utah," in *Old Ties, New Attachments: Italian-American Folklife in the West*, ed David A. Taylor and John Alexander Williams (Washington, DC library of Congress, 1992), 71-74; Notarianni and Raspa, "The Italian Community of Helper, Utah: Its Historica and Folkloric Past and Present" in *The Family and Community Life of Italian-Americans: Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Italian American Historical Association, held in Chicago, Illinois, October 24 and 25, 1980* ed. Richard N. Juliani (Staten Island, N.Y: American Italian Historical Association, 1983), 23-34.

38 For more on women's and children's contributions to the family economy, see Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Commune Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 164-67 and Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street*, 91-95.

39 Fusaro, tape 2, 6.

40 Joan L. Saverino, "Private Lives, Public Identities: The Italians of Reading and Berks County, Pennsylvania, 1890-1940," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 87.

41 John Fusaro, interview by author, tape 2, 5, GHS library

42 Ibid, tape 3, 26; Juliani, "Origin and Development," 242.

43 Fusaro, tape 3, 26-27.



- 44 Norma Giorno-Calapristi, interview by author, tape 11, 26, 29, GHS library; for more information on the textile industry in Germantown, see Martha Cray Halpern, *Germantown Goods: A History of the Textile Industry in Germantown* (unpublished exhibition narrative 1989)
- 45 Letter of Pasqualina Iannuzzi.
- 46 Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street*, 81.
- 47 Iannuzzi Cerrato family history and Pasqualina's letter, Iannuzzi Cerrato file, GHS.
- 48 Saverino, "Private Lives, Public Identifies," 79.
- 49 Vincenza Iannuzzi Cerrato, personal communication, 11 October 2000.
- 50 Joanne Strollo, personal communication, 5 July 2000.
- 51 Sister Francis Joseph, tape 5, 9-10, GHS Library
- 52 Juliani, "Origin and Development," 248-49.
- 53 from Campbcll Scrapbook, XL:65 in Italian-American Newspaper Articles file, GHS Library.
- 54 Juliani, "Origin and Development," 250.
- 55 Mary Nocella, personal communication, 20 July 2000.
- 56 Juliani, *Building Little Italy*, 315-16; for more on nativism and xenophobia, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988).
- 57 Sister Francis Joseph, tape 6,2, GHS Library.
- 58 It should be noted that the segregation of African Americans during this era was routine. In terms of the Walton Theater, the Italians were relegated to the balcony with the African Americans. (The Walton has since been torn down.)
- 59 Norman Giorno-Calapristi, personal communication, 10 October 2000.
- 60 Norman and Norma Giorno-Calapristi, tape 11, 10-14, GHS Library.
- 61 The phrase in standard Italian is siamo sangiovanni. San Giovanni is St. John; in Italian folk belief the godparent relationship stems from Christ's relationship with St. John the Baptist, the disciple who baptized Christ, and thus indicates the sacredness of the relationship.
- 62 Mary D'Agostino Nocella, interview by author, tape 12, 3, GHS Library.
- 63 Joan Saverino, "Domani Ci Zappa": Italian Immigration and Ethnicity in Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Folklife* 45 (Autumn, 1995):15.
- 64 Micaela di Leonardo, *The Varieties of Ethnic Experience: Kinship, Class, and Gender Among California Italian-Americans* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1984), 156.
- 65 Saverino, "Domani Ci Zappa" 15.
- 66 Caria Bianco, *The Two Rosetos* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 84-90; Introduction in Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*; Orsi, "The Center Out There, In Here, and Everywhere Else: The Nature of Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Saint Jude, 1929-1965," *Journal of Social History* 25 (1991):216; Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church," *Journal of Social History* 2 (1969):228; Vecoli, "Cult and Occult in Italian-American Culture: The Persistence of a Religious Heritage." In *Immigrants and Religion in Urban America*, ed. Randall M. Miller and Thomas D. Marzik (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977); reprint St. Paul: Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, 25-30 (page references are to reprint edition).
- 67 James S. Olson, *Catholic Immigrants in America* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1987), 102.
- 68 Vecoli, "Prelates and Peasants," 229, 235-36; see also Bianco, *The Two Rosetos*, 87, for a description of the southern Italian devotion to village saints.
- 69 Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, 220.
- 70 Vecoli, "Prelates and Peasants," 267-68.

- 71 "The Germantown Italian Presbyterian Church of the Savior," PAM box, GHS Library.
- 72 John Fusaro, tape 2, 9–11.
- 73 The official parish name was Our Lady of the Rosary but the Italians affectionately called it Holy Rosary Italian Church.
- 74 Norman Giorno-Calapristi, tape 11, 14.
- 75 "The Story of St. Vincent's Seminary" (unpublished, 1988), 17, 30; Norman Giorno-Calapristi, "A Brief History of Holy Rosary Church" (unpublished manuscript, 2000); I have used the spelling as it appears on Lavizeri's crypt in the basement of the seminary In the seminary history, it is spelled Lavezeri.
- 76 Jane Campbell Scrapbooks, 1914, XXVI, 109, in Italian-American Newspaper articles file, GHS Library
- 77 "The Story of St. Vincent's Seminary," 17, 30. There is some discrepancy about this date, however, since the article paper in 1914 indicates that worship was being held in the chapel earlier than 1919.
- 78 These were the maternal grandparents of Sam Cerrato, Vincenza Cerrato's husband, personal communication October 10, 2000; Vincenza Iannuzzi Cerrato, tape 9, 12, GHS Library
- 79 Sister Francis Joseph, tape 5, 8, GHS Library.
- 80 "To Dedicate New Church on Sunday," GHS Library Italian-American Newspaper articles file GHS library
- 81 Vincenza Iannuzzi Cerrato, tape 9, 20, GHS Library -
- 82 Sister Francis Joseph, tape 1, 3, GHS Library
- 83 Orsi, *Madonna*, 55.
- 84 Vincenza Iannuzzi Cerrato, tape 9, 1, GHS Library
- 85 Ibid, 1-2.
- 86 Norman Giorno-Calapristi, tape 11, 21-23, GHS Library.
- 87 Orsi, *Madonna*, 169.
- 88 Space does not permit a full discussion of the origins and development of Italian mutual aid societies and fraternal orders. For more information, see Humbert S. Nelli, *Italians in Chicago, 1880-1930: A Study in Ethnic Mobility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 170-181; John Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, 120-30; John Bodnar, "Ethnic Fraternal Benefit Associations: Their Historical Development, Character and Significance," in *Records of Ethnic Fraternal Benefit Associations in the United States: Essays and Inventories*, ed. Susan H. Shreve and Rudolph J. Vecoli (St. Paul: Immigration History Research Center, University- of Minnesota, 1981), 5-14; Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants*, discusses the transitions from mutual aid in Sicily to the United States.
- 89 Bodnar, "Ethnic Fraternal Benefit Associations," 7.
- 90 Bodnar, "Ethnic Fraternal Benefit Associations," 7, and Bodnar, *Transplanted*, 124-25 discusses the role of the prominent! in the societies.
- 91 Nelli, 173-175.
- 92 Bodnar, *Transplanted*, 125; "The Birth of the Order," Order Italian Sons and Daughters of America, 1964.
- 93 John Fusaro, tape 2, 8, GHS library.
- 94 See histories of Germantown Lodge, GHS Library.
- 95 Venetian Club History, Venetian Club file, GHS Library.
- 96 Jerome A. O'Neill's address on October 12, 1974, Venetian Club file, GHS Library
- 97 Venetian Club history, Venetian Club file, GHS Library.

- 98 For a history of the origin and development of the Germantown Settlement House, see "The Germantown Settlement: A Short History" (unpublished manuscript), Germantown Settlement House file, GHS Library.
- 99 John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1560-1925*. 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University- Press, 1988), 212-13, 235-37.
- 100 John F. McClymer, "Gender and the American Way of Life': Women in the Americanization Movement," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10 (Spring1991):3-7, 11-12.
- 101 Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 133-36.
- 102 Mary D'Agostino Nocella, "Remembering the Germantown Settlement" (unpublished manuscript), 2, GHS Library
- 103 "The Germantown Settlement: A Short History," 2-3, 6; Nocella, "Remembering the Germantown Settlement," 1.
- 104 McClymer, "Gender and the 'American Way of Life,' " 3-7, 11-12.
- 105 "The Germantown Settlement: A Short History," 2-3.
- 106 McClymer, "Gender and the 'American Way of Life,' " 3-7, 11-12.
- 107 "The Germantown Settlement: A Short History," 12.
- 108 Ibid, 15.
- 109 Ibid, 15-16; "Boy Confesses He Started Fire which Killed Five," Evening Bulletin, 12 January 1928. The Settlement House history says that the fire occurred in 1929; the 1928 date was confirmed by Mary Maida who survived the fire. She was then ten years old.
- 110 "Boy Confesses He Started Fire which Killed Five"; "Services for Fire Victims,"; Evening Bulletin
- 111 Mary Nocella, personal communication 10/23/2000.
- 112 "The Germantown Settlement: A Short History," 25-26.
- 113 Ibid, 18.
- 114 Mary Nocella, "Remembering the Germantown Settlement" (unpublished manuscript), 2, GHS Library.
- 115 Mary D'Agostino Nocella, tape 12, 17-21.
- 116 Saverino, "Domani Ci Zappa'," 20.
- 117 Ibid, 20.