**Janet:** Levine for the National Park Service. I’m here in Valley Stream Long Island, New York with Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Doria. Mr. Doria came from Italy in 1923 when he was 21 years old.

That makes you 92 years old at the time of this interview. I’m very happy to be here and I look forward to hearing what you remember. Let’s start at the beginning by you saying your birth date.

**Vincent:** I was born January the 8, 1902.

**Janet:** Where …?

**Vincent:** I was born in Corato, Provincial Di Bari, Italy.

**Janet:** Can you spell that?

**Vincent:** Bari? Corato? C-O-R-A -Bari, Italy. Then my father and my mother they used to relocate in Lacedonia, Province Avellino near Naples. Then from there I went to school, I frequented the second normal school.

Which for one more year I would have become a teacher but due the consequence I have a brother die in the First World War which my family suffered very much. My father sacrificed himself to maintain two of my sister to become teachers. Then I was coming myself.

In the second year we had a little discussion family affair, not my family, the girlfriend that I was going out was not comfortable for me or I was not comfortable for her family. I decide to come in America.

**Janet:** Let’s first talk about your life in Italy before you decided to come, just in the beginning.

**Vincent:** Arrive here from Italy?

**Janet:** When you were still living in Italy, up until the time you decided to come here. When you were growing up what town were living in?

**Vincent:** In Lacedonia. I moved from Corato when I was eight months old and I live in Lacedonia the rest of the 21 years that I moved here.

**Janet:** We’ll talk about life in Lacedonia first. Do you remember the house you lived in?

**Vincent:** Yes, I was living in a beautiful house with a beautiful balcony. My father had another room. I had to divide with my two sisters. Because I was a kid and they were older than I am so they put me there.

**Janet:** What was your father’s name?

**Vincent:** Nunzio, N-U-N-Z-I-O.

**Janet:** Your mother’s name?

**Vincent:** Lucia, L-U-C-I-A.

**Janet:** Do you remember your mother’s maiden name?

**Vincent:** Mininni, M-I-N-N-, no, M-I-N-I-N-N-I.

**Janet:** Your sisters’ names?

**Vincent:** I had three sisters and one brother. The brother, as I say, died in the First World War was one of the first to die in that war. In fact, the government gave to my brother the silver medal of heroism that he had.

**Mrs. Doria:** His name.

**Vincent:** The name was Luigi Doria. Die at the age of 21. Then I had two sisters, Angela Doria and Rosa Doria. They have the one Rosa Doria, Angela second, then Maria Doria, I had them in this country in 1969. I let her come to this country to visit us.

**Janet:** Did you have grandparents that you remember?

**Vincent:** Yes, I had grandparents. I only remember my father’s grandmother and grandfather.

**Janet:** Your father’s mother and father or?

**Vincent:** No, my father’s mother and father. My mother’s mother, I was young when I went to see her in Corato but I was too young to remember. On my father’s side, I was 12 years old when I stay one year with them.

**Janet:** Now tell me about them, what were they like? What did they do?

**Vincent:** My father believed to give us an education. In Corato they had the [inaudible 00:05:25] school to go from the elementary school to the high school which is in Lacedonia didn’t have that school. In Corato I stay with my grandfather and my grandmother.

**Janet:** Why was it that you stayed with them?

**Vincent:** Because I had a cousin there but they wanted me to stay with the boys. They wanted me to study so that I could graduate with a technical school that which they prefer.

**Janet:** Do you remember anything that you did with your grandmother or grandfather? Any experiences or any activities you had with them?

**Vincent:** The experience I can remember that I loved them and they loved me. That’s the only thing because I was 11 years old, 12 years old when I was with them and that’s all.

Then I went back to Lacedonia. Lacedonia my father didn’t believe to stay in Lacedonia for high school. They send me to Sant’Angelo dei Lombardi in Province Avellino near Naples. There I got my high school graduation through that school

**Janet:** Did you stay at the school?

**Vincent:** I stay yes. I was boarding in somebody’s house. There I stay there for the whole period of the school scholastic year.

**Janet:** What was school like there in …?

**Vincent:** Very good schools in [inaudible 00:07:00] Angelo. I’ve made a first and second year and a third year there.

**Janet:** Did your sisters go to high school too?

**Vincent:** My second sister she graduated with a teacher’s diploma from Lacedonia Normal School, that’s where I had to go myself. The other one, the husband wanted her not to graduate from teacher school. She marry a rich man, says, “I have property, I have money, don’t need you to be a teacher.” She stopped at the second year or the third year before she graduation will be done.

**Mrs. Doria:** That is Maria.

**Vincent:** That’s Maria.

**Janet:** Did you finish that [inaudible 00:07:58]?

**Vincent:** No, I didn’t finish the second year that I applied for the passport to come to America.

**Janet:** Before we leave, was your family a religious family when you were growing up?

**Vincent:** Very much.

**Janet:** Do you remember any observances, any religious occasions and how they were observed when you were there?

**Vincent:** The only religion I can remember when I was confirmed.

**Janet:** What was that like the ceremony of it?

**Vincent:** The ceremony of the Catholic ceremony, when the priest confirm you to be a complete Christian.

**Janet:** Was there a celebration at that time?

**Vincent:** There was celebration just a family, a group of six people we were. My father, my mother, my sister, my brother before he die and the man that was my godfather on that confirmation.

**Janet:** Do you remember your godfather?

**Vincent:** Yes, I even wrote from here. I had his picture up to couple of years ago that I wrote he never answered me back so I tore it.

**Janet:** What was his name?

**Vincent:** John, I remember John the first name, a very short name but I couldn’t remember.

**Janet:** How was he chosen? Was he a family member?

**Vincent:** Because he was a salesman. No. Being from the same province, what I mean, my hometown was Corato and he came from another little town nearby so he became friendly with my family. My father and my mother choose this man to be my sponsor on the- what do you call it?

**Mrs. Doria:** Confirmation.

**Vincent:** Confirmation.

**Janet:** What did he have to do as a sponsor?

**Vincent:** Accept what the Catholic religion ask him to do. When I finish the ceremony he presented me with a beautiful watch, say this was my present. Somehow my brother got a hold of the watch and he was a teacher already. My brother was teaching in Sulmona in Abruzzo.

He had taught one year and then joined the army for six months and war came. He was first one to die on the First World War.

**Janet:** How about food, do you remember any food that your grandmother or mother made that you [inaudible 00:10:44]?

**Vincent:** My grandmother, the main was regular spaghetti and meatball. The vegetable, every vegetable but she liked to have some legume, they’re called fava, I don’t know if you know that the legume. It’s a legume about this size here.

**Mrs. Doria:** Bean.

**Vincent:** A bean, that’s it.

**Janet:** Can you spell it?

**Vincent:** Fava?

**Janet:** Yeah.

**Vincent:** F-A-V-A.

**Janet:** She liked to cook that? How did she do it?

**Vincent:** She cooked with the [inaudible 00:11:24], she cooked with spaghetti. With spaghetti you let it overcook and becomes like a mushy, very soft that you’ll enjoy to eat them.

**Mrs. Doria:** Purée.

**Vincent:** A purée, yeah.

**Janet:** What was your father doing for work?

**Vincent:** First of all he was a commercial wine seller. He sold wine to a little town nearby and to the station nearby, the railroad station nearby and then whoever wanted to buy wine at a wholesale.

**Janet:** Did he buy the wine from the brewer?

**Vincent:** We used to go buy the wine from other town because our section where we living were not producing the kind my father like. We used to go for overnight and come back the third day, the second day or the third day home with cask of maybe 1,200 gallon of wine, two casks of a 1,200 gallon of wine in each one.

**Janet:** You went with your father?

**Vincent:** Twice I went. One time my father trust me says, “You go by yourself.”

**Janet:** What were carrying these casks of wine in?

**Vincent:** There was a big barrel that they have wooden cask, not the metal.

**Janet:** Were you using a horse and wagon?

**Vincent:** Yes, horse and wagon. We used to leave at two, three o’clock in the morning and get there by eight o’clock. Nine o’clock then we start to load up and before when I used to go with my father before, while he was getting if he like he would load up if he didn’t like, he wouldn’t take it.

Then after we load, we start to go home. [Inaudible 00:13:37] go home it’s about four, five at night, in the afternoon. We had overnight in another little town half away from the one where we bought the wine to where we’re going to home in Lacedonia.

**Janet:** Where would you stay that night?

**Vincent:** Tavern. That would take care of the horse. In fact they were mules that we used to have. We used to have a little room, me and my father, nearby. When two, three o’clock in the morning would be the guy that used to be the owner of the mule used to knock on the door, we’re ready to leave. We’d get up and start the road again and we’d get home in Lacedonia around 12, 12:30, 1 o’clock, was noon.

**Janet:** Was there anything else about staying at a tavern. In other words, is there anything else you remember as a little boy from those trips with your father?

**Vincent:** That’s only twice I went with him. The one time he trust me he says, “Go ahead.” Because he knew the guy that was dealing with, the middle man. The middle man says, “Send him over and don’t worry about it. I know what kind of wine you want and that’s what I’m going to send to you.”

I went there. I was carrying with me a 5, 6,000 lira. That time was a lot of money. Believe me it was just like walking from one room to another, nobody would bother us and nobody would approach us. In fact even when I was going with my father, my father would put the money in himself.

Will climb, we would go with road that would take about 15, 20 minutes to get there. He would get a shortcut and climb. It was that time, I would say about in the 60, he will climb it to go to this little town by the name of Calabritto and wait for us when we got there.

**Janet:** Was there any other kind of chores or any other ways that you helped your father when you were …?

**Vincent:** My father obviously was, not an alphabet. He knew to read and write and he know the numbers, he know the thing but sometime he requires somebody to do the writing, to whom I will sell the wine, how much did he buy, if he pay or he didn’t pay. He used to depend on one of us that we went to school.

**Janet:** Do you remember any attitudes or values that your father had that he tried to pass on to you?

**Vincent:** The value that he believe in education. He would send my first brother to school from Corato. He graduated from Corato with a high school diploma.

He came to Lacedonia he graduated with honors. In fact he won a scholarship of a 500 lira. At that time was a lot of money. By having a contest with another two guys and he was the first one to won the contest. My father, as I was saying, he’d believe in education, says, “Whatever I didn’t do, I want them to do it. I want them to get there and be in [inaudible 00:17:26] with an education.

**Janet:** Did your grandfather also deal with wine or your father’s wine?

**Vincent:** He was a middleman of buying [armons 00:17:41], buy and sell.

**Janet:** Your grandfather?

**Vincent:** My grandfather, yeah. He had this ability to buy and sell.

**Janet:** How about your mother, what kind of a person was she?

**Vincent:** A lovely person. She was the mother of two or three guys in Lacedonia that were a little retarded, she would get them and feed them.

**Janet:** Do you think there were any values that she had that she tried to pass on to her children?

**Vincent:** Especially to my sisters. The value that my mother had I saw it in my sister. My sister Rosa died, she was about 70 or 75, something like that, Angelina one year after she got the teacher diploma. That’s Angelina, Maria died in …

**Mrs. Doria:** Got married.

**Vincent:** Was marry and died in the -How many years was it that this? 12?

**Mrs. Doria:** You said she got married and she lived happily.

**Vincent:** She lived happily with her husband. She was unfortunate with the family. She would have eight children, my sister, one girl but seven boys. Three boys die and so remaining with one daughter and four boys.

**Janet:** Is there anything else about Italy that when you think back to your childhood you have in your mind, a picture in your mind. Is there anything when you …?

**Vincent:** The only thing when I was young I was like one of them here, boys are running and go play with ball, any child game that is in vulgar.

**Janet:** Do you remember any of the games that you played when you were there?

**Vincent:** I don’t know how you call, I forgot the.

**Mrs. Doria:** Soccer?

**Vincent:** Soccer, yes when I was in high school. That I played in high school. When you stay like this and people jump, what they call, they jumping on top of you. Maybe [inaudible 00:20:28] you know the name of that -When you bend down and somebody jumping on top of you?

**Mrs. Doria:** High jumping or something?

**Janet:** I know what you mean too I can’t think of a name.

**Vincent:** Anyway, we were in that game, in fact one of the stupid instead to jump, he push and he pushed me against the rail of the normal school. I broke my tooth. I took it out when I came into this county because she didn’t like it, half a tooth.

**Janet:** Tell me about medical care, do you remember anybody being sick when you were a little boy and what kind of treatment they got?

**Vincent:** I remember only that some time I’m very sick, no. One time I had a young woman that, for some reason, I don’t know I could understand, she used to press me so I could move my bowels. Excuse my expression. I did

**Janet:** Like a massage?

**Vincent:** Like a massage. She was a pressing. Pressing and I move my bowels. Then she gave me some kind of –She says, “The drug store has got.” I went to the drug store I bought whatever she told me to buy because I don’t know the name. Then I felt good, that’s my little sickness.

**Janet:** Tell me about what you experienced of the First World War when you were still in Italy?

**Vincent:** You want to know the truth? After that if they promote the submarine and ask for volunteer. I was 15 years old, I volunteer, but my mother stopped me. Even the government stopped me, said, “No, we don’t take where there’s only one boy in the family.” I did volunteer to go for the submarine, that’s the only thing I could remember of the war.

Then this usual story, you wins, lose, sorry, that Italy had to retreat and the Austrian people had [inaudible 00:23:04] in the Venetian territory. Then they were pushed back with the help of the American people.

That’s the only thing I could remember enough, same thing. Young boys they’re not interested like a 21 or 22 years or business men that expect to make business out of that war.

**Janet:** Tell me then why you decided that you wanted to come to America?

**Vincent:** As I told you before, was a little difference in the family stature. That she maybe thought that was not good enough for her, the mother- the family. My family thought that she was not good enough for …

**Janet:** For you?

**Vincent:** For me. That’s why I applied in June for the passport before I finish the second year of college, that, I will college, as we would call here. I applied for the passport and I was called in July.

**Janet:** Fast.

**Vincent:** Yes. That’s why I came in the month of August. [Inaudible 00:24:18] prepared all my paper. I think it was at the end of July that I embark, no. I just lost the passport would you be …

**Janet:** July?

**Vincent:** I had the passport up to two years ago. I have some Italian book remains, histories, so I went down the cellar started discarding, I must put a passport in one of those book I was throwing away.

**Janet:** In other words would it be fair to say that you were leaving because you couldn’t marry the girlfriend that you had and …

**Vincent:** We could not get together with the young girl.

**Janet:** You were leaving thinking you just wanted to get away?

**Vincent:** I just got away because I knew that sometime that happens like it happen here, the girls are –Those who want to get married gets shot, she gets shot. I was an attempt to so nervous that my big brother had a gun, a little gun just for security.

I took the gun, we hid in the library over the house, he had everything, all the books he had. I took the gun and I went to look for her one day because busy body people meddle with us, they came to tell me that so and so went with your girlfriend.

I went home, got the gun and God wanted that I don’t see them. My father, my mother before something happens says, “Get out of there.” I came into the United States.

**Janet:** Do you remember leaving town?

**Vincent:** Yes, was a beautiful day. I remember Rosa, my sister, [inaudible 00:26:46].

**Mrs. Doria:** Who took you to the port of [inaudible 00:26:50]?

**Vincent:** Mike, he took my two brothers-in-law. When I left Lacedonia, the bus that take all the passenger to the station. My mother says, “I lost one, now I’m going to lose the other one.” I never saw her.

**Janet:** When you left the town how were you travelling?

**Vincent:** By train to Naples. We went by bus from Lacedonia to the station. We took the train, me and my brother-in-law, my brother-in-law went along with me- two. They will not leave me until they put me on a boat.

We got to Naples. We got one of those tourist home motel, whatever it was. He says, “Well we’ll see we’ll stay here until you leave.” When I went aboard, they saw me on the top of the Conte Verde. He says, “We’ll see you when you come back.” My brother-in-law.

**Janet:** Were you thinking you would come to America for a short time and then come back to Italy?

**Vincent:** My people in Italy wanted that. I had the same idea but when I came here and I saw the life here I decided then went to apply for the citizen paper. Because I happened to be working the National Biscuit and they only want people with citizen paper. They got me the first half paper to apply for the half paper.

**Janet:** First let’s talk about the voyage. What was it like on the Conte Verde, was it …?

**Vincent:** It was a beautiful voyage, in trip on the way that was the second trip that was making to United States. At that time there was a dispute, who will make in less time from Gibraltar to New York, between England, Italy and France. Italy won the, what they called the -There’s a name for it, I can’t remember maybe [inaudible 00:29:29] …

**Janet:** You said the Conte Verde broke the record?

**Vincent:** Yeah broke the record. England lost because England was broadcasted that she had the primary of the ocean because she made from Gibraltar to New York in four days. The Conte Verde beat the England for about 45 minutes or an hour or maybe a little more. She beat England …

**Janet:** Was your voyage that was the voyage that broke the record?

**Vincent:** Yeah, the voyage that broke the record of the speed from Gibraltar to New York. We had a wonderful voyage from Naples up to two days before we reach to United States. The ocean was nice and calm but before we reach here two days before, we got a little storm. It didn’t upset too much, I did a little upset stomach, I had thrown up a little bit, but after that we reached Ellis Island.

**Janet:** Tell me, were you in the steerage?

**Vincent:** I was in the steerage. I came in third class.

**Janet:** Could you describe what that was like?

**Vincent:** It was like where people would …

**Janet:** A dormitory.

**Vincent:** A big dormitory yeah. We were 12 people in each room, 12 people, 14 people, I don’t remember exactly but I know we were a lot in one little room. That’s a little army cot, that’s all what I could say. The voyage was beautiful.

**Janet:** Did you know anyone else travelling on that ship?

**Vincent:** No. I don’t know anybody there.

**Janet:** Do you remember your feelings about coming …?

**Vincent:** The feeling of the travel or the feeling of leaving Italy?

**Janet:** Leaving Italy, coming?

**Vincent:** The feeling to leave Italy, yes I had that feeling that I will come back because as I said to you my mother, I still remember her words, so I come back. Then as I see the life in the United State and the job I got with the National Biscuit. Before I got the National Biscuit I had a rough job.

**Janet:** First tell me about when the ship came into the New York harbor, what do you remember about that?

**Vincent:** As I was saying to you before, as we was reaching the harbor, people start to see the Statue of Liberty. They start to howl, the Statue of Liberty.

I was someplace else. I don’t remember what I was doing. Because I used to play the mandolin, I used to play with somebody there with a guitar. We had a little musical among ourselves.

**Janet:** You mean on the ship?

**Vincent:** On the ship. I used to play the mandolin in Italy. We heard the Statue of Liberty, so we ran and we saw the Statue of Liberty, I thought, oh that’s the Statue of Liberty. That gave me a little feeling that I arrive, maybe I’ll settle down for a while and see what happen here in this country. That’s the feeling I got.

**Janet:** Did you then go right to Ellis Island when you the ship pulled in?

**Vincent:** The ship dock on 59th Street, I think was at that time I don’t know if it’s still the same thing, on 59 Street. They used to take us with the little boat from our boat to Ellis Island.

When we got there they put us in a big room, the whole Italian people, all in a big room. We were about 400, 500 people maybe more. Then all of sudden we hear they say we’re going to stay on the boat.

“Why?” “Somebody die.” “Somebody die? Well what do we have to do?” We don’t know. Then they told us that the President of United States, Warren die and the place will be closed for two days. Two days we had to remain on a boat, today and tomorrow. Then the next day then they start to take us and register as passenger of the boat.

**Janet:** How did you feel about that when you were [inaudible 00:34:39]?

**Vincent:** I had to stay there two days I didn’t like because as good the food was good, but still I say what the devil that we have to stay here just because the president died. I didn’t realize that the whole United States goes …

**Janet:** Was mourning.

**Vincent:** Mourning, we didn’t know, green on coming on a different land.

**Janet:** Tell me your impression, what did Ellis Island look like and what was …?

**Vincent:** We didn’t see much at the beginning. Before they bring us on Ellis Island, they made us walk around. Say, “Take a walk because you can’t go no place, you can’t swim here, the distance is too much.” They made us freedom, liberty to do whatever we want to do.

**Janet:** You mean on the boat or on the island?

**Vincent:** No, on the island they made us walk [inaudible 00:35:45]. Then on the third day we start to register as a passenger.

**Janet:** Do you remember what Ellis Island looked like?

**Vincent:** I think I shot a [inaudible 00:35:56] a big hole that we were in the barricade, we were lined up and the inspection they were having.

**Janet:** What was your inspection like?

**Vincent:** They want to know first if we were sick because even with a red [high 00:36:17] they will send you back. For some of them maybe if you TB they will send you back, if you had a disease that you could be Trans passing, they will send you back.

They found that all those they passed were free to all those things here. That’s the only inspection they did because they couldn’t search my package. I had a little package with a pair of pants and a couple of my underwears. What else?

**Janet:** Do you remember what your little satchel looked like?

**Vincent:** Yeah. I remember that because it was small, was so much small.

**Janet:** You had a blanket?

**Vincent:** I had a …