THE ASSIMILATION OF ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN THROUGH A VARIETY OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN A RURAL AREA

DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Little is known about the educational experiences and assimilation of Italian immigrants and their children in rural areas. This is partially due to the lack of school records, and the exclusion, by historians, of the experiences of ethnic groups in those areas. Although studies have been published about Italian immigrants and their children's educational experiences and assimilation in large cities (Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Omaha, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco), the experiences of immigrants in rural areas have been neglected.

This gap needs to be filled before the passage of time makes it impossible; therefore, this project was initiated. The research consisted of collecting oral interviews of first and second generation Italian immigrants who settled in the Washington, Pennsylvania, area between 1890 and 1940, the peak immigration periods for Italians in that geographical region of the United States.

Purposes

1. To describe how the educational experiences (speaking, reading, writing, counting, and arithmetic) of Italian immigrants and their children took place in a rural area between 1890 and 1940.
2. To determine the factors either in or outside school which affected the assimilation of Italian immigrants and their

children into American culture.

3. To compare and contrast through a review of the literature the urban and rural experiences.

Significance of the Study

Historians, students of ethnic studies (with an emphasis on assimilation), and educators concerned with how the immigrants learned English will find this study valuable, as it will contribute to existing information and will be relevant to particular disciplines -- history, sociology, psychology, and education. Among the great number of urban studies found in the literature, one especially noteworthy is the unpublished dissertation by Sister Mary Fabian Matthews, "The Role of the Public School in the Assimilation of the Italian Immigrant Child in New York City, 1900-1914." Sister Matthews used documents (i.e., census and school reports) and oral interviews utilizing two sets of questions -- one for students and one for the faculties of the schools included in the study.

Sister Matthews described the inadequate educational facilities and overcrowded conditions during the peak migration period. Her questions and findings were helpful in understanding studies of other immigrant groups in the city with similar problems, deficiencies, and in evaluating the responses of the school. One of her findings was that the school facilitated cultural assimilation, but the peer group had greater influence on social assimilation.

The second important urban study, "The Immigrant and the Pittsburgh Public School, 1870-1940," by Richard Kristufek, used

information from the Pittsburgh Board of Education including reports and surveys from the Pittsburgh Public Schools. This study is cited because it covers the peak immigration period when the Americanization of the immigrants became the responsibility of the public schools. Kristufek identified and examined the way Pittsburgh schools responded to the immigrations' educational needs by providing evening classes, special classes, kindergarten, vocational classes, English language classes, and preparation for obtaining naturalization papers.

The present study explains how the Italian immigrants learned the English language and became assimilated in a specific rural area -- Washington, Pennsylvania -- in the early twentieth century, and should complement existing urban studies.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to the educational experiences and assimilation of those Italian immigrants and their children who resided in the Washington, Pennsylvania, area between 1890 and 1940.
2. Materials such as annual reports and minutes of public school meetings do not exist. In addition, publications of the early 1900's (special reports, newsletters, and directories) were difficult to locate, and the collection of yearbooks in the high school library was incomplete.
3. The method for selecting the population studied had limitations. Because the interview population was chosen by

selecting a systematic sample of first and second generation Italian-sounding surnames that appeared in the 1980 City Directory, those whose surnames had changed were missed. The sample is, thus, incomplete.

4. Great care was taken when compiling the questionnaire to construct open-ended questions. The possibility that the interviewee would say what the interviewer wanted to hear was always present.
5. The analysis was limited to the data offered by the respondents to the interviewer. The remembrances of events which were of historical significance were occasionally blurred and distorted. Since some interviewees were unable to recall accurate dates and events, some of the data is incomplete or inaccurate.
6. Not all the oral history interviews could be substantiated by historical documents. Responses were verified by cross-referencing with other interviews.

Definition of Terms

Acculturation - The adoption of the culture of others, which occurs as a result of continued contact with them. The process may involve almost complete acceptance of the culture of receiving group by an incoming group, or it may involve different degrees of merging of the cultural traits and patterns in both groups.

Assimilation - The process through which one group, either voluntarily or under compulsion, adopts the style of life, attitudes,

and behaviors of a politically or culturally dominant group, leading eventually to its disappearance as an independent, identifiable unit.

Cultural Assimilation - The adoption by the immigrant group of those basic values and patterns of behavior of the host culture which enable the newcomers to function effectively in the host society.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 includes the review of the literature. Studies related to the research, assimilation, and educational experiences of immigrants described in dissertations, books, and periodicals are included, and oral histories published about the Italians and other immigrants in the United States were investigated and reported. The studies are presented in chronological order and are grouped according to geographical areas (New York, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and other cities).

Chapter 3 presents the locations of the study as well as a brief description of the background of the Italians who migrated to North America, the reasons for migrating, and the settlement pattern. Also included is a description of the community under investigation. The methodology illustrates how the systematic sample population for the study (3% of Italian immigrants recorded in the 1980 Census) was derived. It also describes the oral history interview procedure and interview guide.

Chapter 4 reports the findings and discussions from the personal interviews of the sample population, and examines the data in accordance with the purposes. It describes the educational

experiences and the assimilation of Italian immigrants and their children in a rural area. Comparisons and contrasts with urban experiences are also contained in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 contains the conclusions and recommendations for future studies and suggestions for implementing this method as a model for other ethnic investigations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Standard sources relevant to the study were used--published and unpublished dissertations, master's theses, governmental publications, research reports, books, and journals on the Italians in the United States from 1890 to 1940. Literature on the educational experiences of immigrants in the cities appeared in the journals published early in 1900. However, educational experiences and assimilation in the rural area were few, creating a large gap beween the urban and rural literature.

A valuable reference book, Italians in the United States: An Annotated Bibliography of Doctoral Dissertations Completed at American Universities, was the work of Francesco and Michael Cordasco (1981). They reported Italian American studies conducted from the early twentieth century to the present. In addition, a monograph by Paul McBride (1976), "The Italians in America: An Interdisciplinary Bibliography," included unpublished dissertations, master's theses, scholarly articles, and popular articles.

Studies presented in this chapter are in chronological order, from earliest studies to the present. In some cases, they are grouped according to their geographical areas: New York City, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and other metropolitan areas. Data collected in rural areas involving other immigrant groups were investigated for the purpose of comparison with the Italians if they arrived in the

United States at approximately the same time. Existing oral histories on the immigrants' education and assimilation are included in this section.

Early Studies Related to Other Immigrants in the 1800's and 1900's

The Norwegian Immigrants

The Norwegians did not begin their mass migration until the 1830's; however, there were a few in New Amsterdam in the early 1600's. The struggle to survive on an overpopulated barren land caused many to migrate to the frontiers of Illinois and Wisconsin. Letters from America and stories from visiting missionaries told them of a better way of making a living in America.

In 1850, many of the Norwegians settled in Iowa and Minnesota. With the passage of the Homestead Act in 1863, many more migrated to these areas. It made land available for any person who was twenty-one years old, a citizen, or had applied for citizenship. By filing claim for 160 acres of land, applicants could claim ownership after five years' occupation of it.

Eugene Boe's "Pioneers to Eternity" is an account of the Norwegians' experiences on the prairies. Two brothers, twenty-five and twenty-one years old, respectively, sailed (eight weeks) from the port of Dranmen to Quebec. Then by canalboat, train, and steam boat, they reached a village where earlier Norwegian immigrants had settled, Decorah, Iowa. Here the newcomers learned the American way and a few English words to help them deal with Yankees, tradesmen, or civil servants. The brothers shared the labor of the

family or worked as hired hands. Years later, they traveled by foot 150 miles to another Norwegian village of Northfield, Minnesota, where one brother, Henrik, remained and became a prosperous hardware merchant. The other brother, Osten (the author's grandfather), walked 9 days, 400 miles to stake out his homestead claim. There he lived in a sod hut as he cleared and farmed the land.

The first Norwegians were starved for companionship because their long working hours and distance between farms kept them from visiting. However, the little colony came together to help during the time of harvesting, and to worship in one another's dug out (earth house) before the church was built.

They learned to adjust to the American way from the earlier immigrants and through trial and error. Visitors that aided in their assimilation were the medicine man who came once a month with salves, oils, and other health aids; and the peddler loaded with combs, shoelaces, hankerchiefs, reading glasses, pocket knives, and mouth organs. Their visits created excitement because they brought items to sell and they shared news. The visitors got supper and shelter for the night, and the peddler usually entertained them with his mouth organ. Norwegians' faith in God enabled them to endure the hardship and disasters: grasshoppers, blizzards, prairie fires, drought, and hail.

The Norwegians who worked hard became prosperous farmers but others who were not able to adjust either committed suicide or went "mad." In 1920, more than half of all Norwegian Americans

resided in agricultural areas, especially on farmland in Minnesota. Years later, in one room school houses, children learned the English language and American culture; this information they shared with their parents.

Stanley Guterman (1968) used research based on first-hand observation in his article, "The Americanization of Norwegian Immigrants." The Norwegians who settled in rural areas of midwestern states segregated themselves according to the villages where they had lived in Europe. Self-sufficiency limited their contact with non-Norwegians especially in business transactions. Buying supplies or selling produce was minimal compared with their urban counterparts. Social activities were limited to neighborly visits, festive gatherings, church activities, and house parties. They helped newcomers from their homeland to adjust to American customs and contributed to a mutual aid fund.

In comparison, the urban Norwegians of Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and New York had more contact with non-Norwegians through employment and social contacts. They acquired the English language more quickly because of the necessity of earning a living. While the rural Norwegians made some attempts to learn the English language, necessity did not dictate their doing so. Many had difficulty in mastering national idioms and grammar. Guterman gathered information about the state of acculturation of the first generation and their offspring during childhood and adolescence. He found that Americanization of the Norwegians who settled in the city occurred at a faster pace than those in the rural areas because

many American cultural habits, dress, and customs had a greater effect on them. Although this study describes the Americanization of the Norwegians who immigrated to the United States in the 1800's, the problems they experienced in a rural setting are similar to those of all rural immigrants.

The Jewish Immigrants

Although their customs, culture, and even religious traditions may vary from country to country, the Jewish faith and synagogue are the ties that bind (Bernardo, 1981, p. 115). There were three major waves of Jewish immigration to the United States: (1) The Sephardic, descendants of Spanish and Portuguese Jews driven from the Iberian peninsula in 1940s. They were given a choice between conversion to Christianity or expulsion. Many decided to resettle in Dutch Brazil, but when Portuguese reclaimed the area, some of the Jews fled to New Amsterdam in 1654. They obtained for all Jews the right to serve in the militia, the right to travel and trade freely, and the right to own property. (2) Central European German-Jewish immigrants following the Revolution of 1848. (3) The Eastern European Yiddish-speaking Jews arrived in 1881 in record numbers from Russian controlled areas of Poland and Lithuania.

> Direct discrimination in education and the economic sphere as well as government sponsored massacres and periodic beatings and killings of Jews, generated large-scale emigration from Russian-controlled Poland and western Russia (Feagin, 1978, p. 149).

The Jews concentrated in the East Coast cities as peddlers, street venders, and unskilled workers. Some were skilled laborers and entrepreneurs, and managed to procure similar jobs in New York

City as shopkeepers and tailors. They had lived in urban settings which meant adjustment to the city was not a problem. They brought with them a distinctive Yiddish language, culture, and Orthodox Jewish religious orientation with an emphasis on religious scholarship and literature.

Their assimilation was made easier by the aid of the earlier Jewish immigrants, and the synagogue helped to bring the German and Eastern European Jews together. Also, the fraternal and communal organizations played an important role in their adjustment.

Therefore, partial cultural assimilation came relatively quickly for each of the three major waves of Jewish immigrants and their children. The German group encouraged the Eastern European Jews to Americanize rapidly.

Thomas Kessner, in The Golden Door (1977), claims the Eastern European Jews who immigrated with their families intended to stay in America. The Jewish immgirant had the incentive to strive to become something more than an unskilled laborer. He found that the second generation showed a significant increase over the first generation in socio-economic mobility. Forty-seven percent of the workers moved into white collar or professional work.

A study, By Myself I'm a Book, of immigrant Jews, based upon the oral histories of settlers in the Pittsburgh area between 1890 and 1920, was compiled in 1972 by the Pittsburgh Section of the National Council of Jewish Women and published by the American Jewish Historical Society. The purpose of this study was to record the recollections of Jewish immigrants still alive and willing to tell

their stories. This study is an account of life in the old country and departure and arrival in the United States. It covers aspects of daily life including employment, education, religious practices, recreation, and Americanization.

The education of adult Jewish immigrants and teenagers was largely ignored in Pittsburgh up to 1890; therefore, Rabbi Mayer of the Rodef Sholom Congregation organized a school for Russian Jews in the basement of the Temple. The first free classes in English and citizenship were sponsored by the Jewish Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, then known as the Columbian Council. Women or girls who worked outside the home learned to speak English from their non-Jewish co-workers. Young men and boys often learned the language more quickly because they spent more time outside the home with other groups.

Many of the respondents in By Myself I'm a Book recalled that the early immigrant children were placed in first grade, regardless of age. This was a traumatic and discouraging experience for the older students and caused many to dropout. For the adults, evening school was provided by the public school system. Between 1911 and 1923, thirteen elementary evening schools in Pittsburgh had an enrollment of 400 to 500 students. When the evening high school was established in 1909, the enrollment was over 800 students. In spite of obstacles such as language barriers, physical exhaustion from work, family responsibilities, and long travel times to school, those adult immigrants having strong goals and aspirations to succeed obtained an education.

In Nicolaus Mills' (1974) article "Community Schools: Irish, Italians and Jews," reference is made to a 1900 study which shows that out of 50,000 adult Jews, only 15,000 spoke English. The Lower East Side School instituted programs such as home visitation programs and language programs.

Mills (1974) describes a community-centered program, the Educational Alliance, formerly known as the Hebrew Institution, supported by wealthy American Jews which was established in a New York City ghetto in 1893. It was an educational institution and Settlement House with a kindergarten. The purposes were langauge instruction and vocational training as well as special classes in arts and writing. It was an intellectual and moral testing ground for those not about to become antisocial gangsters and killers. Some learned to box because boxing was the way to the top (Roskolenko, 1971).

Some Hebrew schools started religious classes after the regular school day ended. These were supported by Russian Jews who did not charge for instruction, and who provided shoes and clothing for the needy.

The Mexican Immigrants

The first Mexican-Americans did not migrate to the United States; they and their land were incorporated by force. There was no choice involved (Feagin, 1978). Most of the Mexican-Americans in the United States today are recent immigrants who came across the border following the Mexican revolution (1910-1920). Many came because of the expanding economic opportunities and the demand for

unskilled labor in fields and factories.

Mexican-American cultural background is part Native American and also a Spanish infusion that affected language, religion, and customs. They also suffered discrimination in economic, education, and political policies that were similar to other groups of non-European ancestry. Discrimination in housing usually meant that school segregation, too, was inevitable. Segregated schools often meant inferior facilities and poorly prepared teachers. This likely discouraged students to continue their education in high school and college.

The Mexican-Americans experienced the usual pressure of Anglo-conformity. In Anglo-centered schools, the children often faced hostility toward their language and culture. Emphasis in school for them was on vocational training.

First generation immigrants were assimilated in language and farm work; but, religion, and basic values were less directly affected. However, some parents wanted their children to retain ties to Mexican culture, language, custom, and religion. Travel back and forth across the border required little time and effort; therefore, much of their culture remained with them.

Hunger of Memory by Richard Rodriguex (1982) is an account of a Mexican American educational experience. He documented the emotional feelings he encountered during the process of assimilation. Rodriquex's parents migrated to California where he was raised in a Spanish-speaking household. Since he could speak only a few English words when he enrolled in school, he was placed in a

remedial class. His teachers suggested to the parents that they speak English in their home. Although the parents spoke in broken English, they were anxious to help their children. Richard Rodriguez received encouragement and praise from his mother and teachers during his schooling.

As he moved into the middle class, he expressed his feeling of growing "culturally separated" from his parents. He referred to the intimate life with his family as the private life; the life outside the home with his peer groups and others, as the public life. To gain success in the public life, he gave up his mother tongue and learned the English language and culture. He resented these sacrifices.

In spite of his success as a college graduate with a doctor's degree, he spoke of loneliness as he remembered his past. Distanced from his parents, he expressed guilt and shame when he recalled his embarrassment by his parents who had not fully mastered the English language.

Korean and Albanian Immigrants

In Jong-Yul Lim's disseration, "Education and Assimilation", he compares the rate, depth, and process of assimilation of three urban subcultures -- Albanians, Koreans, and Mexicans -- in the United States. By using interviews and participant observation, he was able to compare difficulties and problems encountered in the assimilation process between individuals in sample groups. He found that the rate and depth of assimilation depended on the individual immigrant's ability and what he brought with him when he migrated to America. For example, those immigrants who had high

education, economic assets, and occupational skills upon arriving in the new country and adjusted better and faster, regardless of ethnic group.

Lim also referred to social-cultural personality traits that perhaps speeded adjustment and assimilation: purpose for migrating - either political security, economic success or educational achievement, level of education, age at time of migration, time in the United States, occupational mobility, and motivation to adjust to American culture.

Koreans adapted more easily to middle-class American values and norms than the Albanians from a peasant-oriented rural area. Better educated Korean immigrants tended toward internal assimilation by adapting American norms, values, and beliefs. The less educated Mexican and Albanian immigrants resented changing or modifying their natural norms, values, beliefs, but tended toward external assimilation behavior.

The Albanians were not anxious to assimilate to American culture and were satisfied with existing situations. The Koreans were more anxious to raise their socio-economic status by upgrading their occupations. Also, the Koreans were anxious to learn the English language; they were conscientious in attending classes and accepted tutoring in English. However, others who made limited attempts to overcome language problems found assimilation a difficult process.

Early Studies Related to Italians: Their Education and Assimilation in New York City in the 1900's

Many of the Italian immigrants who landed in New York City

stayed on and made it their home. Every week, thousands of immigrants came with their children and settled in ethnic neighborhoods. The schools could not provide adequate instruction or even the physical facilities because of the large student populations.

Sister Mary Fabian Matthews' doctoral dissetration (1966) "The Role of the Public School in the Assimilation of the Italian Child in New York City 1900-1914", provided a brief description of Italian immigrants' backgrounds, settlement patterns, values, and education in Italy. The second section dealt with the problems of educating these immigrants and how the New York schools responded.

Although there was compulsory education in Southern Italy, it was not enforced. The upper classes were encouraged to obtain an education; however, similar opportunities did not exist for the lower classes. Economic needs resulted in parents who encouraged children to contribute to the family income rather than seek an education. The Italian immigrants brought their values and attitudes toward education with them to America. The parents had mixed feelings about the value of education when they saw skilled artisans and professionals unemployed because of the language barrier. Success was measured in terms of monetary contributions to family and community integrity.

Implementation of the U.S. Compulsory Education Act of 1895, which required children ages 8 to 16 to attend school, was supported by the social workers and reformers who were against child labor. During the peak immigration period, the Compulsory Education Act

caused overcrowded conditions in schools. The pupils could leave school provided they completed grade 5A or its equivalent, making them eligible for a work certificate (Cardasco, 1973, p. 46).

The schools failed to keep pace with needs in a variety of ways. Among them were an increase in school population due to heavy migration, a growing birth rate, the Compulsory Education Act itself, and school consolidation. In overcrowded urban classrooms, most teachers had 50 to 60 students, and proper instruction of students with so many special needs became impossible.

The peak migration period was also described in Francesco Cardasco's article (1973), "The Children of Immigrants in Schools: Historical Analogues of Educational Deprivation," Journal of Negro Education. He described the "new migrations" of 1892 and 1920 from Eastern and Southern Europe. The languages, customs, and religions of these people were different from those of previous migrants of Northern and Western Europe who came to America from 1819 to 1882. The new immigrants totalled over 20 million. By 1960, 17 percent of the school enrollment was foreign-born.

In the article, "Immigrants at School: New York City, 1900-1910," in Urban Education, Selma Berrol (1969) gave an account of the physical conditions of the New York City schools in 1900. The classrooms were poorly lighted and poorly ventilated with foul air from gas heaters. Some were unsafe and unsanitary, with inadequate "water closets." Classes in schools located near the elevated trains were frequently interrupted by the noise. Numbers continued to increase so rapidly that students were placed on a part-time

schedule, attending for two and one-half hours either in the morning or afternoon to spread the use of existing facilities. The afternoon classes usually had a substitute teacher; instruction was often inferior to that provided in the morning classes. The curriculum of city schools was inflexible -- it was the same for all students, regardless of their background and ability (Berrol, 1969, p. 8).

Angelo Patri (1917) describes his teaching experiences in A Schoolmaster of the Great City. He referred to the methods he used in teaching: drill and discipline. Even his principal encouraged this method. Many of the teachers stressed cleanliness and good health habits. They were not trained to cope with the large immigrant school populations and their various languages, customs and values; therefore, the most effective education of students was neglected.

Many references in the literature were made to the New York City Schools which, in 1902, proposed changes to accomodate those students who applied for admission but were placed on a waiting list or placed on half-day classes. Those changes resulted in a course of study of eight years for the entire city. However, it was not practical to do away with the half-day classes because of the constant change in the school population. Newcomers were arriving from Europe and the immigrants were constantly moving from one section of the city to another.

To respond to the presumed needs of the immigrant child, the role of the schools was to Americanize, to encourage assimilation, and to eradicate the foreign background of the students. There was no policy or program developed to meet the special needs of the

immigrant child. The tasks of providing English instruction and special classes or schools were handled by the district superintendent.

In 1903, Julia Richman, district superintendent of the lower East Side School, conducted a survey in her school district. She wanted to determine the reasons 14 year olds were applying for work certificates to leave school but could not read at the fifth grade level. The resulting illiteracy among the immigrant children was related to truancy, dismissal due to poor health, behavior problems, slow promotion, and long waiting periods for admission. Richman responded by introducing special classes that were geared to individual needs. As the pupils acquired increased competency in English, they were placed in the appropriate class. She also saw the need for more community and parental involvement in the school.

How the community responded to the school problems is described in the article, "Community Schools: Irish, Italians and Jews," by Nicolaus Mills (1974). It was an account of the efforts made by the community on behalf of three groups of immigrant school children 50 to 100 years ago: Irish Catholics in the 1840's, the Jews in the 1900's, and the Italians in the 1930's and 1940's.

An outstanding example of a community-controlled school was the Benjamin Franklin High School in Harlem, started by Leonard Covello. He claimed the school was obligated to understand the child's social and educational background. In 1935, his idea to link the school to the community began with a playground and an evening community controlled center for adults and teenagers. Evening programs were

established to teach basic skills. He had "open house" sessions one night a week in which parents and students could talk with him. He also taught Italian and worked on the pupils' feelings of inferiority (Mills, 1979).

In a study of Italian and Jewish immigrant mobility in New York City between 1880 and 1915, The Golden Door (1977), Thomas Kessner examined statistical material, federal and state census data, city directories, and other studies to measure immigrants' occupational progress and mobility.

The single male, primarily those from Southern Italy, migrated from the countryside, having no urban experiences or skills. Many came with the desire to accumulate money and return to Italy. The Italians in New York City were employed as common laborers who built roads, subways, and canals. Others were employed in service-related jobs. Kessner found that the second generation showed a significant increase over the first generation Italians in socioeconomic mobility; more than 20 percent of the second generation workers moved into white collar or professional work.

The Oral History Collection of Columbus University, edited by Elizabeth Mason and Louis Starr (1979), contains only one oral history of Italian immigrants. An account of the experiences of Edward Ferro, an Italian immigrant interpreter at Ellis Island, described eating and medical facilities and the roles of money exchangers and railroad ticket agents.

Early Studies Related to Italians: Their Education and Assimilation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1900

The first phase of Richard Kristufek's (1975) doctoral disseration, The Immigrant and the Pittsburgh Public School 1870-1940, included an account of the history of the Pittsburgh Public School System and the reorganization in 1912 of the Pittsburgh Board of Education. In the second section of the study, he identified and examined the ways in which the schools responded to the immigrant's educational needs.

In the response to the rapid industrial and economic growth, there was an increase in the foreign born who migrated to Pittsburgh. In 1900, there were over 84,000 immigrants; within ten years, that number had increased to 140,000. The largest immigrant groups were from Italy, Russia, and Germany. The schools experienced the problems of crowded classrooms and inadequate sanitary conditions. To meet the challenge, the school established various programs -- kindergarten, manual training, and industrial training. Evening schools were established in 1906 to teach immigrants to read and speak the English language. Later, a free evening class at the secondary level was established at Fifth Avenue High School in Pittsburgh.

One role of the public school was to utilize special teachers to educate immigrant children who were performing below their proper grade. The schools increased their vocational training classes special classes, and added such activities, as sewing, cooking, and woodwork. Depsite Pittsburgh's efforts to educate the foreign born,

it fell short of the goal. Public officials and educators were concerned with the government's report after World War I of the high illiteracy rate among the young draftees. Over 25 percent of the young men were illiterate; a large number were foreign born. Because of this report, the object of the schools was "to turn out" certified American citizens with the necessary skills in the English language. There was an all-out effort by various groups to help reduce the illiteracy rate. Nationality groups, religious groups, the Reading Railroad Company, and the settlement house in the Hill District all participated in this project. To reach the working women, classes were held at places of employment and community centers. The home-bound immigrant mothers were reached by home study programs sponsored by the Women's Christian Temperance Union (Kristufek, 1975).

After a time, educators realized that the teachers needed help with the program. In the 1920's, a teacher's manual was written which outlined ways to teach the foreign born. In addition, a course of instruction was introduced at the University of Pittsburgh Department of Education on methods for teaching English to foreign-born adults.

Since the Americanization of the immigrants became the responsiblity of the public schools, citizenship centers were created. These programs were well received. However, after World War I, there was a change in the ethnic composition of students attending the evening program. The quota laws of 1921 and 1924 gave preference to immigrants from Scandinavia and Western Europe over

those from Eastern and Southeastern European countries (Kristufek, 1975).

The study, Lives of Their Own, by Bodner, Simon, and Weber (1982), deals with the interviews of Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh from 1900 to 1960. The focus was on the migration process, employment, family structures, housing, home ownership, and neighborhood institutions. The purposes were to reveal their personal goals and expectations. The cultural background of each group greatly influenced patterns of mobility. The study emphasized the importance of premigration culture, attitudes, values, and family.

The premigration experiences and skills learned in Italy helped the Italians to get employment in the city, in bricklaying, tailoring, and shoe repairing. The newcomers also relied on kinship groups for employment. The Italians settled in close proximity to factories, churches, and shops. Later, when transportation by streetcars was available, they moved to the outskirts of town.

The authors found that many Italian parents encouraged their children to finish an academic program. However, some children felt obligated to learn a skill in order to get employment and to help their parents financially. The Italians were reared to help their parents and many of the interviewees said they gave most or all of their wages to them. Additionally, it was a common practice for children to remain at home until they married, even if they were employed.

The authors found that the Italian women did not seek employment outside of their homes. Their historical roles placed them

in the homes raising a family. They adjusted to the new culture by attending the church, the social functions, and by reading or scanning the newspapers.

Italian Immigrant Studies in Other Geographical Areas

Another publication, The Immigrants Speak: Italian Americans Tell Their Story by Salvatore LaGumina (1979), used the oral history technique. Twelve Italian Americans were interviewed: a coal miner, shoemaker, teacher, social worker, artist, lawyer, poet, and entrepreneur. They told of their experiences -- their coming to America, their homes, occupations, and leisure activities, and included personal views of customs, attitudes, and events that influenced their lives. The early immigrants who worked long hours did not have the strength to attend evening classes. Some were constantly on the move looking for work. However, some of them, including the entrepreneurs, learned the language and went on to school to become teachers, social workers, and lawyers.

A study of Italo-American College Students by Jeannette Subhas (1964) was done at the University of Pennsylvania using the oral history technique. The purpose of the study was to determine college students' attitudes toward higher education and level of aspiration in American society. The interview questions were divided into categories in order to obtain information on the family residence, the family attitude toward education, and student attitudes toward the Italian community and the Italian language. Their personal aspirations were also indicated. The study was limited to one school. To select interviewees, the author used

Italian-sounding names taken from the school directory.

Subhas (1964) found the level of aspirations and the negative attitudes toward higher education among the males had increased. Apparently, the historically negative attitude toward education was a carryover from their Southern Italian beliefs and traditions.

Charles Ferroni in his dissertation, The Italian in Cleveland: A Study of Assimilation, examined four institutions to determine the degree of assimilation they provided since the late 1920's: national churches (Roman Catholic and Protestant), local and national organizations, public schools, and the settlement houses. Although all four institutions served as bridges connecting the Italian culture with the American experiences, the public schools and settlement houses were from the beginning strongly American-oriented institutions.

Certain events changed the original roles of the institutions such as restrictions of Italians caused by shifting immigration quotas, prohibition, and the depression. However, improved economic conditions and World War II contributed to the process of assimilation; the Italians became more financially able to move out of their communities. World War II brought an increase in intermarriage with non-Italians and a more rapid assimilation.

The Italian lodges, found earlier to have preserved customs and tradition, also helped in the adjustment to American ways. However, they suffered a drop in membership due to the restriction of Italian immigration, the older men dying off, and the younger men expressing disinterest in preserving the organization. Today,

non-members who married Italian sons or daughters are welcomed into the lodge.

Many other changes occurred in the nationality church. The Italian language in church services disappeared. The non-Italian priest or priest of Italian descent no longer spoke the Italian language, and the ethnic festivals, parades, and fireworks displays also disappeared. When the Italians moved out of the Italian neighborhood, the church membership consisted largely of non-Italians.

The public schools offered an opportunity for a free education which was the key to mobility. The services they provided facilitated the assimilation of the Italians into the American environment. Special classes designed to concentrate on the English language were available for students from 6 to 18 years of age.

Other services available to immigrants were health related, such as the medical and dental dispensaries, public swimming pools, and open-air classes for those who suffered from lung ailments (1924-1928). To provide for social and cultural growth, a model home was built (1935) where young Italian girls learned cooking and housekeeping, as they were done in America. This information filtered into the Italian homes.

The role of the school in assimilation was to prepare youth for the American environment and to enable them to adjust more easily. There was generally good rapport between school and home. The school respected the Italian culture and did not attempt to destroy the culture of the native land. The school board, principal and

teachers tried to be aware of the needs of the community. Italian language was taught to the children while English was taught to the adults (1937).

The parochial school experience appeared late because of the economic status of the Italians. However, some Italians were satisified with the education the children received in the public school and did not send their children to the Catholic schools. Eventually, programs such as open-air classes and the model home were no longer needed in the public school and were discontinued.

The settlement houses served as bridges in facilitating the assimilation of the Italian community by teaching American customs and traditions. The Alta Settlement House named in honor of John D. Rockefeller's daughter (who made funds available for the building and its up-keep), opened in 1895 with a nursery and kindergarten. It also provided social, educational, and recreational activities. Special classes for young girls were held in sewing, cooking, and millinery.

A library was added to the settlement house, and it provided classes in English, as well as books in English and Italian. The librarian translated books into English, read stories to the children, and guided them in developing good reading habits.

The settlement houses which once emphasized teaching of American culture and traditions are now used by people of many different ethnic and social background. The author concludes, that in the process of assimilation, the Italians did not discard their heritage to replace it with Anglo-Saxon one; instead, they willingly gave of self and adapted their heritage to the American experience.

A study frequently quoted in the literature is the U.S. Immigration Commission's The Report on the Children of Immigrants in Schools (1911, Vols. 29-33). It contains detailed statistical analyses of children's backgrounds, place of birth, school progress, and home environment. The survey included 2,036,376 children in public and parochial schools in 37 cities from 1819 to 1910. The purpose of the study was "to determine to what extent immigrant children were availing themselves of educational programs and what progress they made in school work" (U.S. Immigration Commission, Vol. 1, p. 3). The following cities in Pennsylvania were selected for the study: Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Scranton.

The commission reported that the term "retardation is applied to one who is two or more years older than the normal age for his grade... thus a pupil is retarded if eight years of age or more in second grade -- and so forth" (U.S. Immigration Commission, 1911, Vol. 1, p. 31). The retardation rate was higher for children from non-English speaking countries than from English speaking countries. Other factors that contributed to "retardation" were irregularity of school attendance, children from homes in which English was not spoken, and the time of family arrival in the United States. In the reports, the Italian immigrants were classified as Northern Italians and Southern Italians. Southern Italians were the latecomers to America and arrived unable to speak the English language; therefore, they were more frequently labeled "retarded."

Summary

This section deals with the educational experiences and

assimilation of the Italian and other immigrant groups and their children throughout the United States. In the literature, it was found that studies were done in large cities in the United States between 1890 and 1940, but little investigation was conducted in rural areas. The studies were presented in chronological order and grouped according to ethnic group or geographical settlements. Several ethnic groups were examined for comparison with the Italians if they arrived in the United States at the same time.

The next chapter describes the methodology employed in this study of the educational experiences of Italian immigrants and their children.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this study, the personal interview was used in determining what factors influenced Italian immigrants to become assimilated into American culture. Therefore, the purposes were to determine who helped them achieve literacy in the English language and under what circumstances and environmental influences.

Washington, Pennsylvania, was chosen as the area of investigation because of its sizeable Italian population and because the time of settlement (between 1890 and 1940) reflected a period of transition from a small rural area to an industrialized one. The Italians constituted the largest ethnic group in the area (see Tables 1 and 2), making them an ideal group to study.

The methodology included oral interviews with questionnaires and tape recordings. The material gathered from the transcriptions, notes, and questionnaires were summarized and analyzed. This information will eventually be made available to libraries and/or archives.

Background of the Area

In the 17th century, immigrants from Scotland and Ireland settled in the area because of good farm land. Their surplus crops were sold so they could purchase what they could not produce -- salt, spices, glassware, weapons, and tools. Factories were not established and the community remained agrarian because of

Table 1

Ethnic Composition of Washington (City), Pennsylvania: 1970

Foreign Stock	Number
Austria	111
Canada	55
Czechoslovakia	163
German	275
Hungary	63
Ireland	71
Italy	947
Mexico	9
Poland	389
Sweden	22
United Kingdom	410
USSR	98
Other Americans	15
All others and not reported	363

Source: Census of Population, U. S. Department of Commerce, 1970 Social Characteristics for Places of 10,000 to 50,000

Table 2

Number of Persons Responding to a Single Ancestry Group in Washington (City), Pennsylvania: 1980

Single Ancestry Group	Number
Dutch	84
English	1238
French	33
German	1098
Greek	36
Hungarian	78
Irish	753
Italian	1506
Norweigian	7
Polish	749
Portuguese	0
Russian	105
Scottish	73
Swedish	105
Ukrainian	38
Other	2469

Source: Census of Population and Housing, U. S. Department of Commerce, 1980

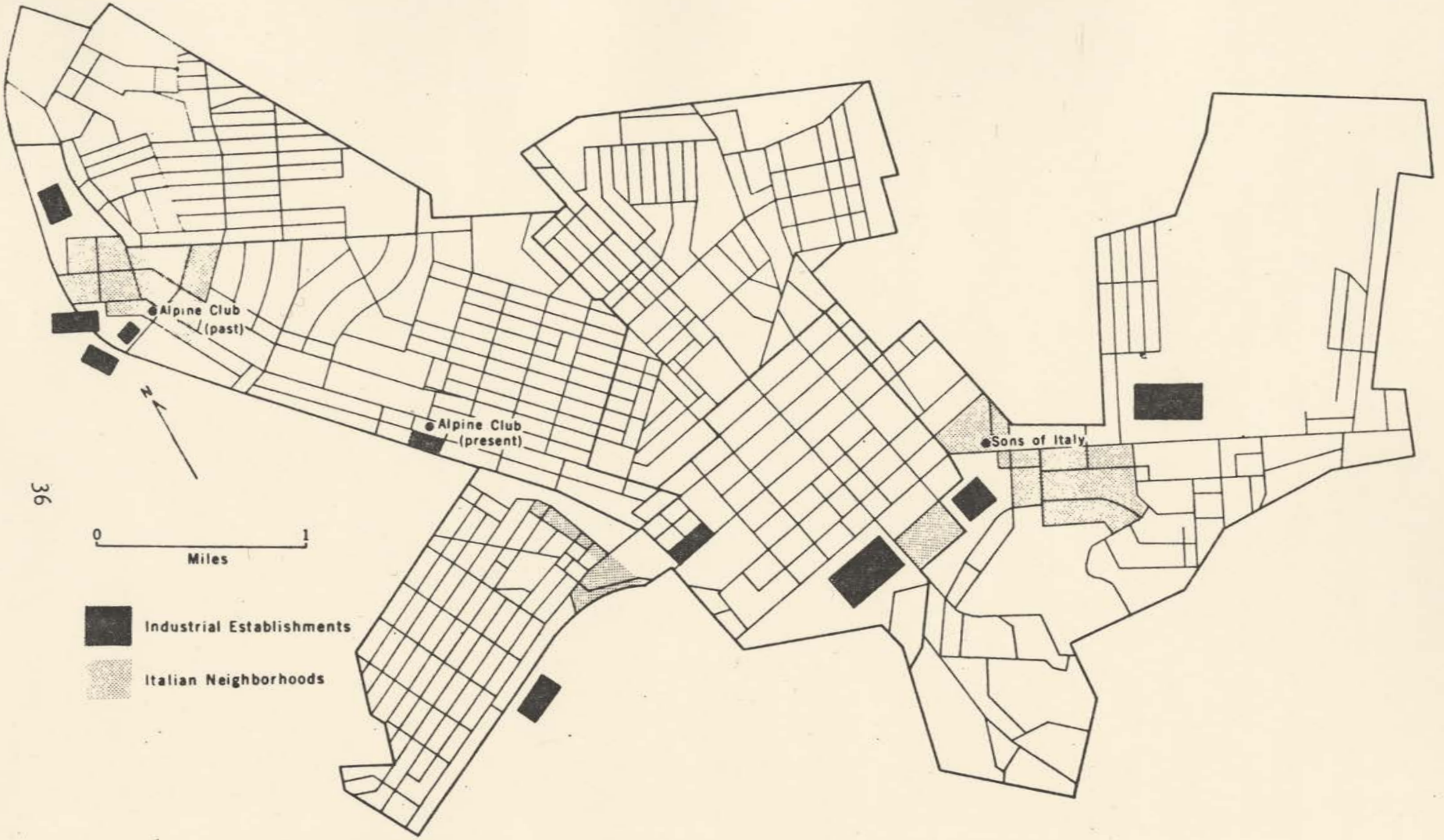
inadequate water power.

With the discovery of petroleum and natural gas in 1884, and given the rich supply of coal, the economic thrust became industrial rather than agrarian. The improvements in transportation, evidenced by the National Road joining Cumberland, Maryland, and Wheeling, West Virginia, expanded markets to the West and South. Coal, glassware, and metal products could now be shipped more easily. With the proliferation of these industries, men were needed in the mines and factories, making this area an attractive one for immigrants.

Italian Immigration of Washington, Pennsylvania

Since the Italian immigrants who arrived in Washington, Pennsylvania, in 1900 had no homes, they lived with relatives or friends who had arrived earlier from their villages in Italy. Some came directly to Washington, Pennsylvania, to live, while others who worked on the railroad found themselves stranded there. When a job was completed, they were simply forced to settle in the region. The immigrants found employment in the glass factories, steel mills, and coal mines. Polks' City Directory for Washington, Pennsylvania, in 1890 - 1900 listed six glass manufacturers and one brick plant. Map I shows the location of these industries.

The Italian immigrants, skilled and unskilled young men, were handicapped by the language barrier and cultural differences. Those either knowledgeable in English or having a skill were more likely to find employment as musicians, masons, carpenters, shoemakers, or



Map 1. Industries in Washington, Pennsylvania. (Adapted from Anthony Costanzo, A Geographic Study of the Italian Community in Washington, Pennsylvania: 1900-1970. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1974)

fruit dealers. Five or ten years later, many became owners of confectionary stores, grocery stores, bakeries, barber shops, tailoring shops, and pool halls.

Italian Population of Washington, Pennsylvania

Basically, the number of Italians who migrated to the Washington area in the early 1900's was small. The population of Italian immigrants recorded in the United States Census of Washington, Pennsylvania, in 1890 was 48. The 1900 Census showed a slight increase with 52 people born in Italy and 19 born in America, making a total of 71 people of foreign stock (i.e., foreign-born with children born in America). There was a significant increase in 1910 when the total reached 590 (see Table 3).

According to the United States Census of Washington, Pennsylvania in 1970, 947 residents were of Italian foreign stock. In 1980, there were 1506 Italians listed under the single ancestry group (see Table 3). Of the 15 nationality groups identified, over 11 percent of the city's population of 17,272 were Italians or Italian-Americans (see Census Trace Outline Map 2).

Selecting the Sample Population

For this study, 40 subjects, 19 male and 21 female (approximately 3 percent of the 1506 Italians), were interviewed:

A.	First Generation Italians	n = 30
	Second Generation Italians	n = 10
B.	Born in Italy never attended American schools	n = 20
	Born in Italy attended American schools	n = 10
	Born in United States attended American schools	n = 10

Table 3

Population Distribution of Italians
in Washington, Pennsylvania
1890-1980

Year	Washington County	Washington Borough	City Foreign Born Italians	Foreign Stock
1890	71,155	7,063	48	
1900	92,181	7,670	52	19
1910	143,680	18,788	590	
1920	188,992	*21,480	690	
1930	204,862	24,545	701	
1940	210,852	26,166	648	
1950	209,628	26,280	530	
1960	204,481	23,545		1403
1970	210,876	19,827		947
1980	223,899	17,272		**1506

*Foreign stock, foreign born and mixed or foreign parentage

**Single ancestry used in 1980 Census (based on self-identification)

Map 2. 1980 Census Tract (Outline Map) of Washington, Pennsylvania
Italian Population in Parentheses

The names listed in the 1920 - 1980 Census are closed to the public, so a systematic sample was created by choosing every thirtieth Italian-sounding surname (at regular intervals) that appeared in the 1980 City Directory. When these individuals were telephoned, it was found that some had been born in Italy and others were born in the United States. Third or fourth generation Italians and those arriving in the United States after 1940 were not included in the study. Therefore, five of the 45 chosen were omitted, leaving 40 subjects to be interviewed.

Instruments

The questionnaire was constructed with reference to existing questionnaires: John Bodner's (1982), "Basic Oral History Questionnaire," Sister Mary Fabian Matthews' (1962) "Role of the Public School in the Assimilation of Italian Immigrant Child in New York City 1900-1914" (pp. 341-352), and Toronto's Multicultural History Society (1977) "Topics for Discussion and Taping on Immigration and Ethnicity." These questionnaires deal with the immigrants' journey, early settlement, employment, family history, education, social institutions, ethnic identity, and the role of parents in the home, school, and organization.

Most of the open-ended questions designed for this study focused on the Italian immigrant's recollections of their educational experiences and assimilation. The questionnaire was divided into three sets of questions. The first set, Part I, included questions on general information about place of birth, schooling in Italy, father's

occupation, reason for migrating, and settlement pattern. The questions in Part II were used for Italian-born subjects (arriving after age 14) with no formal American education. Usually, this group did not attend public school because of age and lack of English classes for immigrants. The third set of questions, Part III, was used for Italian-born subjects with either a partial or complete American education. These questions were also used when interviewing second generation Italians reared in an Italian family in which only the Italian language was spoken (see Appendix A Interview Guide).

Of primary interest were the responses to questions concerning language acquisition. An effort was made to determine the conditions under which language was acquired and various forms of instruction. Respondents were asked if they received help from merchants, peddlers, co-workers, relatives, boarders, or neighbors.

The second purpose of the study was to determine factors either in or outside school which affected the Italian immigrants' and their children's assimilation into American culture. They were asked if they received help in their adjustment from co-workers, interpreters, the Vice-Counsul, fraternal organizations, churches, and recreational activities.

Procedures

The subjects were called and asked if they would participate in the project. The procedure and purpose of the research were explained. They were told that their early experiences in America, especially how they learned the language and culture, should be

preserved. If they hesitated or wanted more information, a letter, listing specific topics to be discussed in the interview and including more details of the project, followed the telephone call. In the second phone call, arrangements were made for the interview in the subject's home.

During the interview, a questionnaire, tape recorder, and notebook were used. The individual was told that identity and anonymity were guaranteed by use of fictitious name if any of the remarks were quoted. If their names were used, a signed legal agreement (release form) was obtained from the interviewee. If certain information was highly personal, restrictions for use were noted on the release form (see Appendix B). The interview usually lasted an hour, and if more time was needed, another interview was scheduled.

Summary

Oral history techniques were the primary source for collecting data for this study. The systematic sample population was generated by choosing every thirtieth Italian sounding surname that appeared at regular intervals in the 1980 City Directory. The first generation (n = 30) and the second generation Italians (n = 10) were interviewed to obtain information about their educational experiences and assimilation during the period 1890 to 1940.

The interview guide was compiled from other questionnaires to fulfill the purpose of this study. One set of questions was used to obtain general information on all the interviewees. Questions in Part

II were used for the Italian immigrants with no formal education in America (n = 20). Part III was used for the first and second generation Italians educated in the public schools (n = 20). Care was taken to verify responses with historical documents or with other respondents, whenever possible. The information gathered from the interviews, tapes, and notes is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter records the findings and discussion from a sample population of Italian immigrants and their children who were interviewed in a rural area. The first section describes their background: place of birth, schooling in Italy, father's occupation, age of emigration, reasons for migrating, and settlement patterns. The second section describes how the Italian immigrants learned to speak, read, write, and count in the English language. It also analyzes the prominent factors that influenced their assimilation and education. The third section compares and contrasts the urban experiences with the rural experiences through a review of the literature.

There were 40 subjects interviewed; of these, 30 were Italian immigrants and ten were second generation Italians who were born in America. Most of the respondents were born in Italy between 1890 and early 1900; therefore, some were unable to recall or respond to all questions. The interviews were conducted in English and Italian.

Italian Background and Subject Characteristics

To insure rapport with the interviewee, the immigrants were questioned about their backgrounds in Italy. The majority of the Italian immigrants were born in small contiguous villages in southern Italy in the provinces of Avellino, Caserta, Cosenza, Catanzaro,

Foggia, L'Aquila, Salerno, and Undine (see Map 3). Table 4 indicates the number of Italians who migrated from each province to America.

When asked if there were schools in their villages, they admitted that there were elementary public schools providing three years of education, but it depended on the size of the village and the year they resided there. Approximately three-fourths of the respondents (21) had one to three years of schooling. Table 4 also indicates the number of years of education in Italy. Although theoretically there was compulsory education in Italy, it was not enforced until 1922 when Mussolini came into power and extended that period to five years. One interviewee described the disciplinary measures in the first grade. If a student failed to respond to a question correctly, he was struck on the hand with a bamboo stick for each error. One youngster received 22 blows on the top and bottom of his hand.

Students were taught in the first grade to read and write using pen and ink. However, spelling was not taught in school because Italian is a phonetic language and words are spelled as they are pronounced.

After completing elementary education in Italy, and if they wished to continue their education, students were sent to urban Italian schools. In addition, there were monasterial schools in the villages where several boys received their education because it was free.

Education for girls was neglected because they had to help on the farm, prepare food for the farmworkers, or watch their younger

Map 3. Map of Italy (Provinces)

Table 4

Summary of the Place of Birth, Schooling in Italy, Father's Occupation in Italy, and Age Emigrated for Those Subjects Born in Italy

Italian Background	Born in Italy Never Attended American Schools (n=20)	Born in Italy Attended American Schools (n=10)
Place of Birth (Provinces)		
Avellino	1	1
Caserta	2	1
Cosanza	3	2
Foggia	1	1
L'Aquilla	3	1
Pistoria	0	1
Salerno	5	3
Udine	4	
1-6 Years of Schooling		
Yes	11	10
No (but old enough to attend school)	7	
No (too young to attend school)	2	

siblings. Some parents did not believe in education for girls other than cooking or sewing, fearing that if they learned to write, they would correspond with their boyfriends. Some parents did, however, allow their daughters to attend the elementary school.

Since the young men were required to serve in the Army, many took advantage of the schooling provided by the Army and learned to read and write Italian. In many cases, necessity provided the initiative if a buddy were not available to write letters to their mothers and fiancees.

Most of the Italian immigrants came from southern Italy, which is an agricultural area, and their fathers were predominantly farmers (approximately 50% [n = 30]) and farm owners (3%). However, it was those with other skills provided various services to the villagers: shoemaking, stone masonry, carpentry, tailoring, and shopkeeping. Table 4 indicates the number of the respondents' fathers who were in various occupations. If one wanted to learn a trade, he worked as an apprentice. One young man claims his father lived with a master for six years to learn the art of shoemaking.

Reasons for Migrating, the Journey, and Hardships

The main reason for migrating was to find employment, since work was scarce in the Italian village. Approximately 30 percent came to find employment and 25 percent came with their fathers who were looking for employment. Others came because they were called by spouse or family members. Frequently, the father or unmarried son migrated alone or met others from neighboring villages on their

Table 4 continued

Italian Background	Born in Italy Never Attended American Schools (n=20)	Born in Italy Attended American Schools (n=10)
Father's Occupation		
Land Owner	3	
Farmer	14	
Tailor	2	
Shoemaker	2	
Butcher and Grocer	2	
Carpenter	1	
Stone Mason	2	
Postal Clerk	1	
Police Officer	1	
Miner	1	
Age of Immigration to America		
Under age 14		10
Over age 14	20	

journey to America.

Having settled in the United States, the immigrant's goal was often to accumulate money to send for his family, fiancee, or relatives. If the father was an American citizen, he was able to send for his children (under 14 years of age) because they were considered American citizens.

When asked, "Who sent for you?" the responses were: my father, aunt, relatives, or friends. In one case, a father who originally planned to settle in America and send for his sons overstayed his visa in Italy and was unable to return to America. His oldest son went to South America to work on a farm with relatives. Ten years later, he was able to migrate to the United States when his aunt asked for his help on the farm after her husband's death. Years later, he sent money to his younger brother in Italy for his transportation to America. One woman told of her father who returned to Italy and brought the entire family to America.

Usually when the father sent for his wife and children, they traveled alone and occasionally encountered problems. A mother with her three children at an Italian station at Eboli boarded the train with only one son. Through some misunderstanding, two of her children did not board the train and were left at the station. When the mother realized that her two children were not on the train, she created a scene, asking the conductor to stop the train. Since this was impossible, they wired to the next train station in an attempt to locate the two youngsters. The 17-year-old boy and 18-year-old girl

walked on the railroad track about nine miles until they reached the next station, where they were reunited with their mother.

Other reasons for migrating to America were to get away from inpleasant situations: step-parents or serving in the Italian Army. In one case, the Italian government granted free transportation to a young married couple after the husband served in World War I. A few came with the intention to save money, then return to Italy and purchase farmland. The shorage of men in Italy caused many parents or relatives to send their daughters to America to meet future husbands. One respondent described the conditions of Italy that forced his family to migrate when Mussolini came to power. The Fascist party harassed young men to join their ranks. Some of his friends were picked up and interrogated while others were subjected to a treatment of castor oil poured down their throats.

Although few recalled details of their journeys across the ocean, all commented on the long, rough voyage. When they arrived at Ellis Island, various problems were encountered. One family was held there for three days waiting for the father, who lived in America, to send them train fare. Some described their horror at being checked for body and head lice. After they were cleared through customs, they were given name tags with place of destination. A young man recalled a sick child being taken away from its mother. The officials phoned the father at his home to come and get his wife at Ellis Island. She was never informed about what happened to her child. It was a traumatic experience for a young mother among strangers not to know whether her daughter had been sent to a city hospital

or had died and been buried in New York City.

Settlement Patterns

Although the immigrants settled in an Italian neighborhood where old village friends were living, they segregated themselves according to their regions in Italy. For example, in one section of town, people from Abruzzo lived on one street while across the street or on the next block were those families from Compania, Basillicata, or Calabria. Having the same dialect and customs helped them overcome the cultural shock. Seventy-six percent (n = 30) settled in Italian neighborhoods.

Most of the young men boarded or lived with relatives. Their experiences were similar to those of other ethnic groups which arrived in the early 1900's--they slept in double beds, three or four beds in a room without adequate washing facilities. One respondent recalls his father telling him that they went to the YMCA to bathe for five cents. The boarders usually paid $10 a month, which included meals and laundry. In some homes, they had to buy food and prepare their own meals in the kitchen. However, the immigrants who worked on the railroad lived in box-cars where they slept and prepared their meals.

How Italian Immigrants Learned English

Not all the Italian immigrants who were interviewed attended American schools. Twenty of those over 14 years of age who arrived in Washington, Pennsylvania, in the early 1900's were deprived of a formal education because they were too old to attend day classes

and there were no evening schools for adults. However, those immigrants who were under 14 years of age and attended American schools (n = 10) were able to obtain a formal education. How they learned to speak English is reported in Table 5. All claimed that they learned to speak English through self-education and help from others, but were unable to recall accurately when they learned the language.

When asked how they learned to speak the English language, all (100 percent) answered, "I taught myself." They frequently experimented with new words and learned by trial and error.

The second method they used to learn to speak the language was to seek help from other people -- co-workers, neighbors, boarders, and relatives who had migrated earlier, or from their children. A few received a formal education in the Army (1 percent) or in Work Project Administration (WPA) classes (3 percent, n = 20). Those who married non-Italians got assistance from their English-speaking spouses.

Although they learned to speak a few English words, their vocabulary was limited because they learned only words necessary for survival. At the least, they needed to communicate with their co-workers, bosses, merchants, bankers, or other business personnel. Those who settled in English speaking neighborhoods were motivated to learn the English language and develop a method of communication. However, those who settled in Italian neighborhoods generally tended to deal with their own kind and were not motivated to speak English since they only heard Italian spoken. If they

Table 5

Speaking: "--Tell me how, when, where, and who helped you to speak English"

	Born in Italy Never Attended American Schools (n=20)	Born in Italy Attended American Schools (n=10)	Born in U.S. Second Generation (n=10)
Self-education (informal)	20	10	10
Learned from others (e.g., co-workers, relatives, army, children, neighbors, boarders, W.P.A. classes)	20	10	10
Did not learn	0	0	0
Could not remember or report	0	0	0
American schools	0	10	10

NOTE: Frequencies indicate the number of respondents who mentioned each category in response to the question.

needed groceries, they shopped in the neighborhood Italian store; however, many raised their own vegetables and chickens and did not need many groceries.

In spite of limited educational opportunities, the Italian immigrants made themselves understood. When shopping for housewares and wearing apparel, they frequently had someone accompany them when they shopped or patronized stores catering to immigrants; some merchants even learned Italian to accommodate them. Otherwise, Italians pointed to the merchandise, mimicked, or used various ingenious methods to make themselves understood. A lady who needed a colander but did not know the English word or how to make herself understood asked the clerk for a pan and said, "Macaroni stop, water go." Another person wanting to buy cheese became frustrated. Finally, she said, "Che te vedo ucciso," in dialect. In standard Italian, this expression is "che ti possa venire un accident." Essentially, this translates to "drop dead." The word "ucciso" is pronounced ucheeso, and the clerk thought she said cheese and asked her if she wanted cheese.

One respondent told of his experience trying to buy a hat. He checked in his dictionary for the word "hat." He repeated the word over and over, "hat, hat, hat." When he arrived at the clothing store, he told the clerk, "I want to buy a new head." They all laughed, but he kept repeating the word, "head, head." He became frustrated and humiliated as he pointed to a hat in the store.

The housewives who were shy and ashamed to go to town to shop had their husbands or children shop for them. Frequently,

they purchased drygoods from a peddler who went door to door once a week. Twenty-seven interviewees recall a Syrian peddler wearing dark clothes, with a large suitcase and a big bundle of clothes flung over her shoulder. She brought sheets, blankets, pillow cases, socks, towels, shoes, pots, pans, and knicknacks and furthermore spoke some Italian. As one lady said, "It was so convenient." Needless to say, this was a great way for the foreigners to shop, although the selections were limited. Besides selling, the peddler brought news of the community and introduced aspects of American culture.

Learning to read English was difficult because the Italian language is phonetic--every letter is pronounced whereas in English this is not true. Also, the Italian alphabet has 21 letters, the same letters in the English alphabet except J, K, W, X, and Y, which if they appear in an Italian word, are usually borrowed from other languages (Jackson & Lopreato, 1960, p. 3).

A daughter told of her father's eagerness to learn the English language and how he taught himself to read the American newspaper, and even studied from her school books. Frequently, he asked her to explain the meaning of a word and questioned her about why all letters were not pronounced.

Those who had some education in Italy and a knowledge of the alphabets and numbers found it easlier to learn and read English than those who were not even literate in their natural tongue. Those born in Italy who never attended American schools taught themselves to read the newspaper or had someone teach them.

Several were able to use the Italian-American dictionary to look up words. One woman wrote down English words she heard "her way" and then asked her sister or niece for the meaning of the word. She also bought children's picture books to teach herself to read the words using the pictures.

Six of the 20 interviewed never learned to read English, claiming it was not easy; as a result, they could not read telephone numbers, signs, or price tags. For a summary of responses to the question of how they learned to read, see Table 6. Thirteen learned to read in English by teaching themselves or obtaining help from others.

Writing in English was also difficult for Italian immigrants because English spelling rules are different from Italian. One interviewee gave an example of the word "knife" that is pronounced without the letter K, but is written with the K. She asked, "What is the letter K doing in there?" Other words offering similar problems were "height," "caught," "weight," and "dough." Most of the respondents failed to understand the more complicated changes necessary to make nouns plural; when to drop or retain a final "e", or when to double consonants on verb endings.

Some Italians who did not attend American schools never learned to write English because of their frustration with the English language. As indicated in Table 7, 14 taught themselves to write some English words, but 5 did not. Therefore, Italian men were not able to advance in their careers and to keep pace with industrial progress. It was essential for miners to record the amount of coal

Table 6

Reading: "--Tell me how, when, where, and who helped you to read English"

	Born in Italy Never Attended American Schools (n=20)	Born in Italy Attended American Schools (n=10)	Born in U.S. Second Generation (n=10)
Self-education (e.g. newspapers, picture books, dictionary, signs)	13	10	10
Learned from others (e.g., co-workers, relatives, army, children, neighbors, boarders, tutors, W.P.A. classes)	13	10	10
Did not learn	6	0	0
Could not remember or report	1	0	0
American schools	0	10	10

NOTE: Frequencies indicate the number of respondents who mentioned each category in response to the question.

Table 7

Writing: "--Tell me how, when, where, and who helped you to write English"

	Born in Italy Never Attended American Schools (n=20)	Born in Italy Attended American Schools (n=10)	Born in U.S. Second Generation (n=10)
Self-education	14	10	10
Learned from others (e.g., co-workers, children, army, neighbors, W.P.A. classes)	12	10	10
Did not learn	5	0	0
Could not remember or report	1	0	0
American schools	0	10	10

NOTE: Frequencies indicate the number of respondents who mentioned each category in response to the question.

they mined and for glass workers to record the temperature of the glass furnace and the amount of ingredients used. An immigrant son recalls going to the glass plant every day to help his father write his report. Many children even had to teach them to write their own names.

Learning basic arithmetic skills and counting was essential to fruit and vegetable vendors and storekeepers. Young boys selling newspapers and girls selling produce from their fathers' gardens also needed these skills. One immigrant had a successful Italian grocery store. He ordered produce and wrote his own checks, but another who also had a grocery store but could not read and write in English kept a ledger on his counter for his customers who wanted to charge their purchases. He would ask the next customer who entered his store to read off what the previous customer recorded. He often wondered if he could trust the second customer.

One interviewee tells how she learned the money exchange on the ship coming to America. When bursar changed the Italian currency, he explained the American money to her. She found it difficult to learn because there are no numbers on pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters. With practice and determination, she learned how to make change.

A majority did learn to count and do basic arithmetic (95%), and it was necessary for their very survival. One woman taught her children to count by using dried beans. Even recreational activities such as playing games required this skill, so the motivation was strong to learn and most did. The results of how the immigrants

learned arithmetic functions are reported in Table 8.

When adult education was made available to the immigrants in Washington, Pennsylvania (1930), many took advantage of the opportunity; one-third of the Italian immigrants who were interviewed attended citizenship classes twice a week at the high school. This was an adult education project sponsored by the Federal Government as part of its relief program. The WPA designed educational programs for the illiterates who constituted more than four percent of the population at that time. Both men and women attended the citizenship classes for six to twelve months, but only a few continued with the more advanced English classes.

Women rarely sought further education; either family responsibilities were too great or their husbands discouraged their efforts. Those unable to attend classes had neighbors or children who tutored them for the correct answers to questions asked by the Naturalization Board. Many of the respondents, during World War I, had to choose between returning to Italy in order to serve in the Italian Army or enlisting in the American Army. They also learned to speak English while serving in the Army. As soon as they put on the army uniform they were immediately granted American citizenship.

<u>How Italians (Born in Italy) and Second Generation Italians (born in the U. S.) Who Attended American Schools Learned English</u>

The Italian immigrants who migrated to Washington, Pennsylvania, and who were young enough to enroll in the school, attended the neighborhood public schools. This section is an account

Table 8

Counting and Arithmetic: "--Tell me how, when, where, and who helped you to count and learn arithmetic"

	Born in Italy Never Attended American Schools (n=20)	Born in Italy Attended American Schools (n=10)	Born in U.S. Second Generation (n=10)
Self-education	19	10	10
Learned from others (e.g., merchants, customers, W.P.A. classes, army)	10	10	10
Did not learn	0	0	0
Could not remember or report	1	0	0
American schools	0	10	0

NOTE: Frequencies indicate the number of respondents who mentioned each category in response to the question.

of their formal education and experiences in school. They were asked if any efforts were made to help them learn English, what their parents' attitude was toward education, and if they experienced discrimination when in school or at their part-time jobs.

A Brief History of the Public School

The history of the Washington School System goes back to the early pioneer settlement. In the early 1700's, the settlers were mostly Scotch-Irish immigrants. In addition to material goods, they brought ideas on religion, education, and politics. Their first projects were to build their homes and a place of worship. Later, a school was added to the church for their children's education.

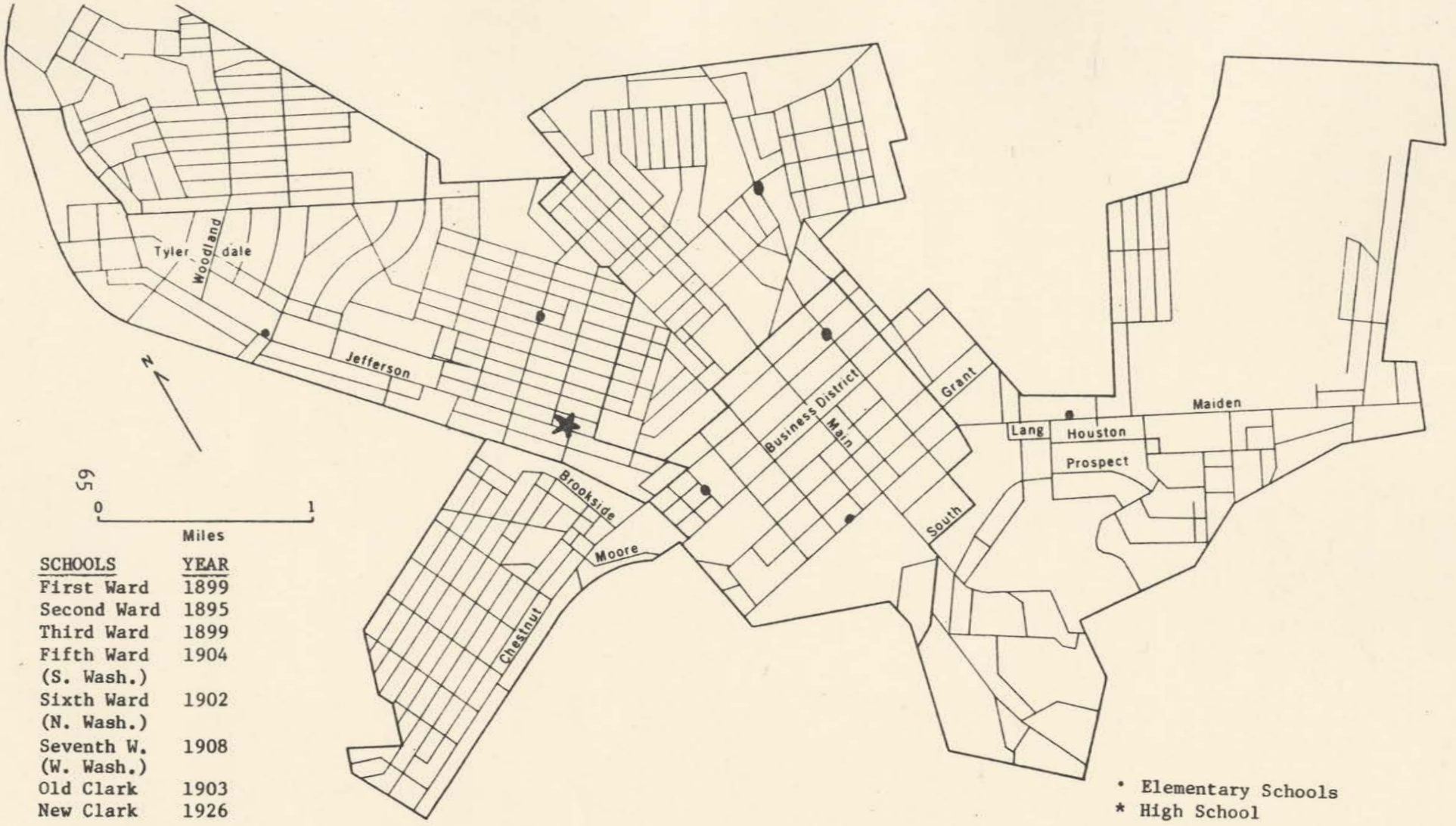
After the Revolution, the elementary church schools became "Common Schools," also known as old Subscription Schools. Under the Act of 1809, the Subscription Schools were built to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. Students who were unable to pay for their schooling were permitted to attend. The teachers billed the County Commissioners for tuition, books, and papers for those who could not pay (Forrest, 1926, 644-647).

Although the common people were not well educated, they were anxious for their children to learn the three R's. Everywhere, schools multiplied rapidly, many started by ministers and located in churches. In addition, private academies and seminaries for boys and girls were established in various parts of the community. With the passage of the State Public School Act of 1834, the district schools came into existence and were named according to the wards in which they were located.

Ten elementary schools were established between 1900 and 1926, the period when the Italian immigrants settled in Washington. Map 4 shows the location of the elementary schools and Washington High School. Though Italian immigrants children and second generation Italians did attend these elementary schools, it is difficult to determine the number of Italian students in the schools before 1913 because records are not available. However, the 1913 attendance record indicates 29 students with Italian-sounding names in the Fifth Ward School, 7 in the Seventh Ward School (formerly Tylerdale School), 2 in the Third Ward School, and 2 in the First Ward School. This information is valuable when plotting the Italian immigrants' settlement pattern in Washington, Pennsylvania.

Although the majority of the Italian students were six years of age when they attended school, there were a few exceptions. For example, a 14-year old girl, and three boys ages ten, seven, and eight, were placed in the first grade when they migrated to America. This was a humiliating experience for the 14-year old girl, who later dropped out of school.

In most of the Italian homes, the Italian language was exclusively spoken, but English was spoken among playmates and siblings. There was parental pressure for Italian to be spoken in most of the homes because the parents could not understand English and because they were impatient, expressing themselves more slowly in the new language. Parents learned about America from their children, who brought home information about culture, health, and hygiene. Later, efforts were made by some of the parents to learn



SCHOOLS	YEAR
First Ward	1899
Second Ward	1895
Third Ward	1899
Fifth Ward (S. Wash.)	1904
Sixth Ward (N. Wash.)	1902
Seventh W. (W. Wash.)	1908
Old Clark	1903
New Clark	1926
High School (Jr. & Sr.	1932

Map 4. Location of Public Schools in the School System of Washington, Pennsylvania, 1900-1926 (Adapted from Anthony Costanzo, A Geographic Study of the Italian Community in Washington, Pennsylvania: 1900-1970. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1974 .

the English language from their children.

Although the respondents claimed their childhood memories of elementary school were vague, they were overwhelmed with the strange environment, language, dress, and behavior. One said, "I wonder, in what grade was I able to comprehend what was going on in the classroom? When was I able to speak with the teacher and classmates?" In several cases, students had to repeat the first grade just to have a better command of the English language. One woman told of repeating the first grade three times. Jokingly, she said, "The teacher liked me because she kept me in her classroom three years."

The immigrants were helped with their school work in various ways. One remembered going with her brother to an aunt's home where her cousins helped them. Others had older sisters. Occasionally, fathers helped their children with arithmetic problems after they were translated. One woman, asking her father to help her with her reading, learned incorrect pronunciation and was ridiculed the following day in class. "The students laughed and made fun of me."

According to the respondents, very little effort was made in the school to help the foreign students learn English. The teachers, unlike those today, were not trained in teaching foreign students, and had no knowledge of their background. There was no Italian teacher in the school system until 1930 and when one was finally hired, it was at the high school level. One man memorized whole sections in a book, not knowing what they meant. "After two or

three years, I was able to hold my own." He spent long hours studying with a dictionary until he grasped the meaning of words. Ten years later, in 1925, one of the elementary schools assigned a tutor to foreign students who were having problems with their English pronunciation.

Occasionally, a child would have her name changed when enrolled in school. In one case, a child was taken to school by her mother and an interpreter. The principal asked her name. The three replied "Letitia." The principal asked them to translate her name in English. Since they did not know the English translation (Letitia), the principal asked if the name "Daisy" was all right. Throughout her life, this woman had to respond to the name Letitia at home and Daisy to her teachers and classmates.

According to the respondents, the teachers were friendly, kind, and helpful, though some criticized them for not explaining what was taking place in the classroom. There were various incidents of teachers lowering grades because they disliked Italians. In one case, a principal requested that the teacher lower a grade because an Italian student could not have the highest grade. The teacher refused.

However, parents and students respected the teachers and principal, especially when the teachers praised and encouraged them to study. One thought teachers were interested in their home life, culture, and style of dress. "Perhaps we were a curiosity to them." Occasionally, if a student was ill for a long period, the teachers visited the home.

When parents were asked if they visited the school, they told of having little contact with the school because they could not speak English or understand what took place. Many parents, realizing the importance of an education as a vehicle for upper mobility in America, encouraged their children to study and stay in school even if the neighborhood children dropped out. A few students dropped out of school when their fathers died in order to increase their family income. Most of these parents deprived themselves of comfort so their children could be properly clothed and fed before they walked to school.

Prejudice and Discrimination

In the American schools, some of the Italian immigrants and their offspring experienced prejudice and discrimination. The respondents claimed that it was not as prevalent in the elementary school as in high school.

Prejudice (unfavorable beliefs or feelings toward an ethnic group) may lead to discrimination which denies a privilege or opportunity granted to other members of the society. Discrimination against the Italian was based on his or her physical appearance, style of dress, religion, language, and mannerisms.

Discrimination existed not only in school but at work and in church. Immigrants were kept out of better paying jobs and were prevented from purchasing property in residential areas. Children learn about discrimination from parents, peers, and teachers; a woman's neighbor told her children not to associate with the Italians because they were "dagos."

Respondents were harassed by name-calling. They were called dagos, wops, and spaghetti kids. Two girls age 12 and 14 who migrated from Italy were placed in the first grade. Every day when they walked home after school, they were chased by boys and called names. The Italian immigrants also experienced physical abuse from students in school, such as fist fights, kicking, and slapping.

These experiences were very traumatic, and thus they remained firmly implanted in the Italian immigrants' memories. Many immigrants recalled that they were denied the post of class officers and acting parts in the high school plays. One said, "We were not called on in class. We were kept down." Usually, they associated with other Italian children since they were left out of school activities and could not afford money for football games. Even in school assemblies, they did not associate with other children.

One experienced embarrassment when his classmates whispered and looked at him. He also claimed the words his peers taught him were "bad words." One student coped with the situation by "ignoring them and trying to be an outstanding student." She kept herself busy studying. Others segregated themselves, depriving themselves of the opportunity to learn the language and the customs.

Several respondents told of being denied scholarships to college. One with the highest scores in college was denied admission to the medical school because he was an Italian and a Catholic.

In one case, a frustrated Italian immigrant took care of a situation "his own way." A teacher sent his niece home because her

long hair was not combed, although she told the teacher that her mother was ill in bed and could not comb her hair. She met her uncle on the way home, and he asked her where she was going. After he heard her story, he took her by the hand and went to see the teacher. "With his two big hands, the uncle disarranged her hair."

A woman told of her experience in an eighth grade cooking class. Usually two girls, assigned by alphabetical order, would cook at one stove. The girl who was assigned to cook with her cried out, "She is a dago; I won't cook with her." The woman remembered how she cried and cried. A black girl named Mary was assigned to cook alone at a stove. The student asked the teacher if she could cook with Mary. The teacher replied, "No, Mary cooks alone." The woman remembered rebelling and going to Mary's cooking area and cooked with her throughout the school semester.

In school, disciplinary problems were handled by the teachers and principal. A teacher would bang the student's head against the blackboard if he made a mistake. Others told of boys and girls who were sent to the principal's office and paddled, but when they got home, the punishment from parents was even more severe.

The interviewees were asked how they felt about being Italian. A few claimed that at some point in their lives they were ashamed of being Italian, wearing earrings and homemade dresses. Also, when meeting their classmates or teachers in town, many felt ashamed to introduce their parents if they were with them.

Students Part-Time Jobs

Sixteen of the 20 students who attended American schools worked two or three hours every day after school and ten hours on Saturday. There was no problem getting employment in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Ambitious and industrious youngsters created their own jobs--picking grapes for one cent a quart, shoveling snow, gathering and bundling old newspapers (sold for one cent a pound), and selling newspapers on street corners. One helped clean the Globe Theater for twenty-five cents a week and got free admission to the movies. He also sold garden vegetables before and after school. Another boy at nine years of age sold laundry soap door to door with his toy wagon. After his father's death, the factory superintendent allowed him to go into the factory with a basket full of candy and sandwiches to sell during lunch break. After school, he bought food and prepared supper for two bachelor tailors.

Children learned the value of money in their parents' businesses--the grocery store, the restaurant, the shoe store, and the shoe repair shop. Others helped their parents sell farm products from a pushcart or sold icecream. In the summer, a few boys were taken to a farm to hoe corn at six o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening.

In addition, students worked for others in icecream parlors, drug stores, soda fountains, shoe repair shops, tailor shops, and garages but always in menial positions. It was difficult for an Italian immigrant to get employment as a sales clerk, bank teller, or

telephone operator.

During the summer, boys 13 and 14 years of age frequently worked in the glass plants with the labor gang. They described their work experience as hard and dirty, and experienced discrimination first-hand.

When asked if they had time to study after work, one admitted that his grades suffered when he worked nights in the glass factory. The parents encouraged the youngsters to work, and the children usually contributed their entire pay to their parents. Very seldom did they receive an allowance or money for anything other than necessities, except perhaps for an occasional school function.

There was a custom in Italy to keep youngsters off the streets after school by having them work without pay in a shop learning a trade or running errands. One man heard his father ask a friend, "Can you use my boy to clean in your shop after school?" He was hired and worked from four o'clock to six o'clock in the evenings without pay. Later, he received $.50 a week, and $1.00 for working 11 hours on Saturday. After four years, his wages were increased to $2.00 a week. He said, "It served a purpose. I learned how to repair shoes and repaired all my family's shoes." One woman pumped water for her neighbors on wash day to earn ten cents for admission to the movie, while her brother ran errands to obtain his ten cents.

These part-time jobs helped children learn some English words, local customs, and the value of money. After completing high school, some continued with the same occupation, while others went on to college.

Primary Factors that Influenced the Italian Immigrants' Assimilation

Factors that influenced the Italian immigrants' assimilation were their work experiences, contact with the Vice-Consul or interpreters, and fraternal organizations. A summary of responses to the assimilation questions appears in Table 9.

Another major factor was the Order of Sons of Italy in America (OSIA). Although it had no English classes, it assisted them in procuring sick and death benefits and provided a place to socialize, play cards, hold meetings and receptions. Later, the Alpine Lodge for men and two lodges for women were established for social activities.

Other factors that were of lesser importance in the Italian immigrants' assimilation process were the churches (Catholic and Protestant), their involvement with others in recreation, and reading the newspaper (Italian or American). Although Table 9 shows that all 30 of the Italian immigrants were members of the Catholic Church, the interviewees indicated that the church did very little because the church officials did not speak the language and did not understand the Italian culture with its particular beliefs and superstitions.

Although occupation was a primary factor in learning the language and customs, when asked if English classes were offered on the job, they said no; nor did they receive instructions about their work. However, they did learn some English words and skills from their co-workers and by observation.

Peddling, drygoods, and housewares or picking rags (ragpicker) for a livelihood were not as common in this area as in the city.

Table 9

Factors that Affected Italian Immigrants and Their Children's Assimilation

	Born in Italy Never Attended American Schools (n=20)	Born in Italy Attended American Schools (n=10)	Born in U.S. Second Generation (n=10)
Aid to Assimilation			
Work environment	16	6	10
Interpreters (e.g., in courtrooms, Banks and others)	11	0	2
Vice-Consul	6	2	2
Lodges			
Sons of Italy and Alpine Lodge	9	1	1
Victoria Lodge and Divina Madre	9	1	2
Organizations			
YWCA	0	1	4
YMCA	0	0	0
Brownson House	0	0	0

Table 9 continued

	Born in Italy Never Attended American Schools (n=20)	Born in Italy Attended American Schools (n=10)	Born in U.S. Second Generation (n=10)
Church			
Catholic	20	10	9
Protestant	0	0	1
Newspapers			
Read: Italian paper	14	2	0
American paper	2	10	0

NOTE: Frequencies indicate the number of respondents who mentioned each category in response to the question who aided their assimilation into the American culture.

Several purchased produce from the farmers and went door to door with a pushcart selling vegetables and fruits. This helped them to learn some English words and customs and to earn enough money to buy a horse and wagon. One saved $300 to purchase a grocery store.

Most of the immigrants worked in one of the six glass plants, the tin mill, the tube mill, the brickyard, the coal mines, or on the railroad. If one could not find employment in the trade he learned in Italy, he would work at different jobs or in the glass plant until he accumulated money to set up his own business or work with another shopkeeper. Several washed dishes and pots at the hotel for $50 or $60 a month until they learned the English language or obtained other employment. The stone masons and bricklayers also experienced difficulty in getting employment because of the language barrier, but a few who worked in the glass factory were later employed to build the furnaces.

Getting work in the factories was relatively easy. Friends would take them to the factory and introduce them to the boss. "They talked for or helped each other." When work was scarce, a few respondents related, men appeared at the factory several times a day between shifts, hoping they would be hired.

Even after they obtained employment, there was fear of losing the job or being laid off. In order to keep their jobs, some kept the boss well supplied with Italian homemade wine and vegetables from their garden. An Italian immigrant who did not work for several years asked his friend how he could get back to work. He was

informed, "You have to go to the boss's house and knock with your feet. You can't do this unless your hands are full with food."

Other ethnic groups who worked with the Italians included the Irish, Polish, and Germans. The interviewees claimed that the Irish resented the Italians, who were considered hard workers. "They were a clique working together." The Irish, who migrated to Washington, Pennsylvania, before the Italians, feared losing their jobs to them. Therefore, jealousy was an additional worry for the station worker.

Those employed in the glass plant worked in the mixing room or packing room. One told of his experiences driving a batch truck (glass mixture) between the two plants. Some worked in the "mill wright gang" as "jacks of all trades" or as "fixer uppers." Others worked as "put in boys" and "turn outs" (placed bottles on belt) and "take offs or snap offs," processes in making canning jars. Respondents who came in the early 1900's worked in the glass factory for ten hours a day at $.10 an hour.

In addition, the glass plant never hired Italian immigrants as machine operators because this job paid more money than working in the labor gang. If the machine operator saw an Italian observing him working at the machine, he would spit at him. One Italian was hired because the boss thought he was American born; upon immigrating, he had changed his name to one easier to pronounce.

One immigrant's son recalled that his father, so annoyed by a Pole who harassed him and called him "dago," one day he picked up a shovel and hit him with it. In another case, an Italian lost his

temper and struck an Irishman. Every day when the Italian was eating his lunch, several Irishmen would walk in front of him and clear their throats or spit. One day, he grabbed a shovel and hit one of them on the head. The supervisor did not reprimand him, but suggested that he go home early because if he had waited until the end of his shift, those men would have killed him.

Various types of industrial injuries were common among the glass workers, especially eye damage from broken glass. Occasionally, dust in the injured eye caused an infection. Two of the greatest hazards were dust inhalation and heat exhaustion, particularly in the summer. One respondent told of other ethnic groups working at the glass plant who took off during the summer due to the heat and wanted their jobs back in the winter months. Men working in the mixing room of the glass plants were exposed to dangerous elements such as broken glass fragments and mixtures of silica and alkali. They were not aware of nor warned that this exposure might result in silicosis later in life. There was no accident insurance or compensation for workers. However, in the 1930's, it became mandatory for men to wear protection goggles and masks. If the workers were seen without the masks, they were sent home for several days. Men working in the brickyard were also exposed to dust from the bricks, and today, some suffer from emphysema.

One respondent told of an accident to which he attributes his father's death. His father fell in a ditch full of water at the glass plant, and with wet clothes, walked home on a cold winter night. The following day he got a cold that developed into pneumonia. Nine

days later he died, leaving his wife with nine children. They had no life insurance, and the funeral expenses were paid on a monthly installment plan.

A common practice in the glass plant when the furnace had a crack and needed repair was to send men into the furnace to remove the glass and clean it, since the boss did not want to wait the several days needed to cool the tank. They went into it with clothes wrapped around their heads for protection. They could only tolerate the high temperature for a short time. Many suffered burns, back injuries, and brain hemorrhages.

Other accidents occurred in the construction of buildings and in the mines. To some, the danger was less important than the freedom of working in the coal mine and making their own choices. "It was dangerous, but I was careful where I placed the post. No one taught me, but I watched and learned by trial and error." However, many suffered back injuries and developed black lung disease (silicosis).

Another occupation for the immigrants was working on the railroad, which consisted of cutting and replacing logs, or working as water boys. They worked ten hours a day, seven days a week for $60 a month.

When work was scarce, they worked in the mines or in a quarry; the immigrants were constantly on the move. They even left their families and traveled to surrounding towns to build roads, haul stones, and clear land for buildings or airports, returning on weekends to get clean clothes and food.

From several interviews, it was found that the glass plant had

a hotel similar to a boarding house, which provided room and board for employees during the peak migration period. It also held picnics for employees which many times were held at Kennywood Park in Pittsburgh. The entire family would board the train near the glass plant with their picnic basket for a day of fun and many door prizes and gifts were provided by local merchants. Italian culture, rich in its musical heritage, stressed performance, and many imimgrants played an instrument in their native land. Among the Italians who were interviewed, many could read music or play an instrument by ear.

Vice-Consul and Interpreters. Various people, including the Vice-Consul and interpreters, helped the newcomers adjust to a new culture. The Italian Consul is an official appointed by the government of Italy to reside in America and to look after his country's citizens and discharge certain administrative duties. The Italian immigrants in the rural areas, using his services, traveled the 31 miles to Pittsburgh by train or trolley. When the respondents were asked if they used the services of the Vice-Consul, many claimed that he assisted Italian veterans to apply for their pensions from the Italian government if they servied in World War I. The Vice-Consul arranged for wives, children, parents, or siblings to be sent from Italy and aided in the selling or transferring their property in Italy.

Many recall their experiences or their parents' experiences with the Vice-Consul. Approximately 20 percent of the first generation Italian immigrants interviewed used his services to obtain passports,

to send money to Italy, or to exchange coupons from the Debito Publico dello Stato Italiano (Bonds of Italian Public Debt--money loaned to the Italian government).

During World War II, when Italy declared war on the United States, the Vice-Consul's office in Pittsburgh was closed, reopening after the war to assist the Italians who wanted to sponsor a member of their family to come to America.

The interpreters at the courthouse and the banks assisted the Italian immigrants with their problems or their business transactions. In the early 1900's, several banks in the community had a foreign department. The respondents made frequent references to the Italian interpreter at the Washington Union Trust Company, a local Italian immigrant who was not only fluent in Italian and English languages, but also knowledgeable of the American customs. Naturally, he was knowledgeable in banking matters, assisting the immigrants in making deposits, sending money to Italy, and even in writing their letters. He was their advisor, yet made only $50 a month as interpreter. This service was available from 1910 to 1930.

Many of the immigrants went to Bridgeville Trust Bank when Mr. Phillip Green was in the bank's foreign department. Fluent in seven languages, including Italian, Mr. Green helped Italian immigrants with the sale and transfer of property in Italy. After the affidavit was completed by the bank, it was sent to the Vice-Consul in Pittsburgh for his approval and seal before it was sent to Italy.

Children who learned the English language in school, became the interpreters for their parents, often a humiliating experience for the

parents forced to ask for the translation of a word or conversation, and for the children, ashamed of their parents' inability to speak the English language. A few Italian immigrants who learned to read and write in English were able to take care of their own business affairs, but most had to depend on early immigrants, relatives, and friends.

One woman who could speak the English language but not write it was frequently asked to accompany immigrants to the doctor and to the store. She also took the neighborhood children to register before they enrolled in the public school. Although she migrated from Italy to the United States at age four, she never attended public school. No one knows how she escaped the truant officers.

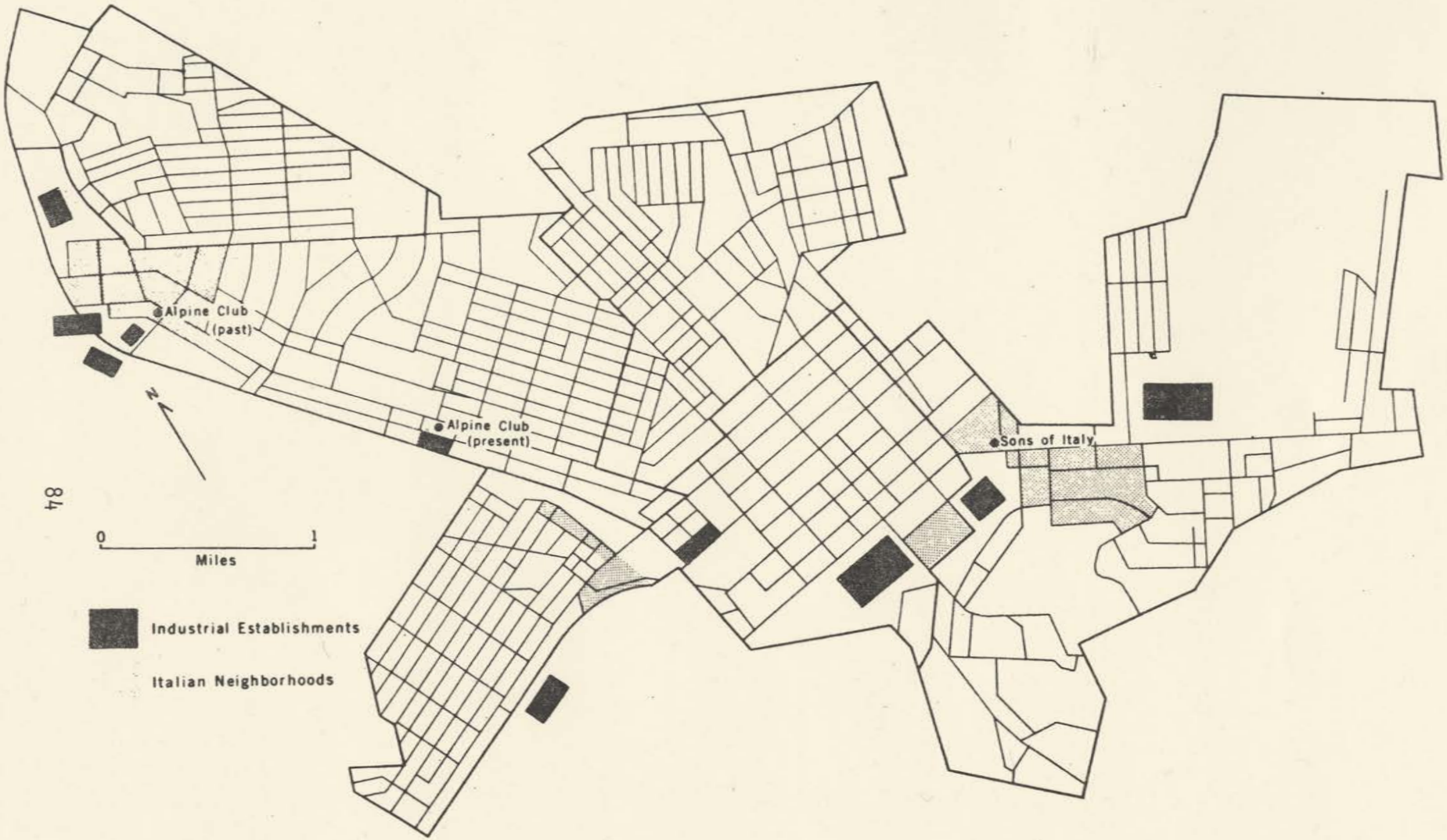
Another interpreter was an American-born woman married to an Italian immigrant. She learned to speak, read, and write the Italian language and was an asset to the Italians. This woman explained letters and written documents that needed signatures. She also assisted and tutored the Italian immigrants in applying for naturalization papers and frequently appeared as their witness in court.

Fraternal Organizations. The largest Italian fraternal organization in the United States, established in 1905, is the Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA). Located in 30 states and the District of Columbia, there are currently 1,100 lodges. In past years, the OSIA has been an important source of leadership, assistance, and activities for Italian immigrants and their descendants. It has helped ease the transition of the Italian immigrants into the American culture. Similar organizations do not exist in Italy. The oldest of

the Order Sons of Italy (Leonardo da Vinci Lodge No. 270) was founded in 1914 under the guidance and direction of the Grand Lodge in Philadelphia. It was located in the eastern section of the community, thus making it accessible to the Italian community (see Map 5). At its peak period, there were approximately 400 members.

The main purpose of the Sons of Italy Lodge was social interaction, but the lodge also provided protection through insurance benefits in case of illness or death. The lodge was a place to meet every Sunday afternoon to play cards, drink wine, and socialize. In addition, the Sons of Italy sponsored dances, picnics, and festivals. The biggest event was the Columbus Day celebration, with a parade, led by their brass band, to Washington Park where the festival usually ended with fireworks.

The members were encouraged to get involved in civic and patriotic activities, raising funds for charitable causes and supporting the Italian-American cultural events. At first, the Italian language was used in meetings and events; today, both English and Italian languages are spoken. The Sons of Italy Lodge was invaluable in the early 1900's when the Italian immigrants were among strangers and unable to communicate with other ethnic groups. They felt secure and protected. The younger generation, however, was not interested in the lodge because it did not fulfill its needs; the current membership has dropped to 35 and today meetings are held in the homes of the members. Their monthly publication, Sons of Italy Times, contains news concerning the 300 lodges in Pennsylvania plus editorials, articles on education, law,



Map 5. Lodges in Washington, Pennsylvania. (Printed from Anthony Costanzo,. A Geographic Study of the Italian Community in Washington, Pennsylvania: 1900-1970. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1974)

politics, sports, and Italian-Americans in Pennsylvania (Tomasi, p. 116).

A local women's branch of the Sons of Italy, Divina Madre Lodge No. 1701, was founded in 1934. Its activities are geared toward social, protective, and educational issues. The Alpine Star Lodge No. 9 (Order of Sons and Daughters of America ISDA) was founded in 1929 and was located in Tylerdale, the western section of town. This lodge, catering to the younger group, holds meetings in English and has more social activities--bowling, dancing, and bingo. In 1936, the lodge provided low-cost insurance for its members. The newspaper Unione, adopted as the official publication by the ISDA, is written in English and contains news of Italy and the United States. The Vittoria Lodge No. 76 of the Order of Italian Sons and Daughters of America was established in 1934. Their meetings and activities are held at the Alpine Lodge.

Eight of those interviewed were members of the Sons of Italy Lodge, and 16 had husbands or fathers who were members. Although the lodge provided no English or citizenship classes, it educated immigrants in American customs, laws, and politics. Entire families attended their socials, picnics, and the celebrations of feast days and Columbus Day. Nine of the interviewees were active members of the Divina Madre Lodge. One of their projects was to raise money for earthquake victims in Italy. Another was to purchase two statues for the Immaculate Conception Church. Through the years, their membership has dropped because the younger women are becoming members of the Vittoria Lodge, which offers more social activities.

Organizations such as the YWCA, YMCA, and the Brownson House (settlement house) were not used by the early Italian immigrants. They did not feel accepted. Others claim that they were not aware of the organizations, they were too expensive, and they catered to the Protestants.

The Church The influences of American churches on the immigrants were negligible, as they offered no English classes and made little attempt to help them adjust. One man claimed, "The priest was overworked and there was no means of transportation." Catholics, in any case, were in the minority and without a church until 1855. Before that time, church services were held sporadically in various worshippers' homes. According to courthouse records, Father P. Lanigan, a non-Italian Catholic priest, preached in Washington, Pennsylvania in 1801. Many priests from St. James Parish Council, located east of West Alexander on the Old National Pike, visited Washington frequently to minister to the Catholics in the area.

Most of the early settlers were non-Italian Protestants attending the local Presbyterian church. By 1841, the Catholic population had increased and property was purchased on East Maiden Street to erect the church. The Protestant neighbors protested and the project was abandoned (Crurine, 1882, p. 424). Later, in 1855, the first church was constructed and dedicated on East Wheeling and South Lincoln Streets. Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary seated 400. Most of the parishioners were Irish or of Irish descent, attracted to this area because of available jobs in constructing the

National Pike (Route 40) and the Hemfield Railroad between Washington and Wheeling, West Virginia. The coal, gas, steel, and glass industries attracted laborers from other parts of Europe as well.

The congregation's ethnic population changed rapidly. In 1891, there were mostly Irish, a few Germans, Italians, and Slavics. By World War I, there were ten different nationalities represented in the church records, baptismal, and marriage registers. The largest group was from Italy, followed by Poland, and then the other European countries.

In later years, the church made an effort to help these immigrants in their religous needs by assigning priests who spoke their language. One assistant priest, Father Nicholas Fusco, was assigned from 1913 to 1914; Father Sliwinski, a Polish priest, from 1914 to 1916; and Father Pikulik, a Slavic priest, served three years, from 1916 to 1919. However, many interviewees said they were not aware that Father Fusco had come and there was no other Italian associate pastor until 1953, when Father Anthony DeLuca arrived and again in 1958, when Father John Cassella came. Although in the 59 years between 1854 and 1913, there were 24 priests but only one was an Italian.

A second Catholic church was erected in 1918 in another section of town (on Henderson Avenue) to serve immigrants living and working in the western part of the community. Named St. Hilary's, it was founded by Polish immigrants who procured a Polish-born priest, obviously an advantage in their adjustment. The church's identity

was maintained until 1955, when it became a territorial rather than an ethnic parish. In 1960, St. Hilary's served over 600 families of all nationalities. Today, there are 776 families and 2,654 members (Maotta, 1985, p. 134).

Due to increasing population, a new church was constructed in 1930 to replace the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Designed in a Gothic style with a seating capacity of 962, the church was constructed on West Chestnut Street, convenient to downtown, the convent, and the existing school. According to the 1955 church census, there were 1,200 families (8,500 members) who worshipped there, compared to the 20 families in 1880.

Nearly all the respondents said they belonged to the Catholic Church, though one woman's father left to join the Protestant Church, which offered English classes and helped him obtain his naturalization papers.

As a whole, the interviewees did not attend church on a regular basis because they could not understand the priest and could not confess their sins or receive the holy sacraments. One comforting feature was that the Mass and certain prayers were said in Latin and were familiar to the Italians. (In 1964, English was substituted for parts of the Mass, in accordance with other liturgical changes of the Second Vatican Council.) On the other hand, the immigrants felt uncomfortable in the Catholic Church because the fabric and style of their clothing were out of fashion. And, "The priest catered to the Irish. They were in control. The Italians were not accepted." One woman felt humiliated when accidentally she sat

in a rented pew (in the early days, people of means rented pews). After the usher asked her to move to another seat in the back of the church, she walked out, never to return. Another factor which prevented them from attending was that they were simply too busy--cooking, washing clothes, babysitting, and just trying to survive.

However, despite the church, religion played a major role in the lives of these people. There were devotions every evening, morning, and mealtimes, and special holy days were celebrated. Though they themselves felt alienated, they encouraged their children to attend church and made sure they received instructions preparing them for Communion and Confirmation. Such instruction was available in public schools for children fortunate enough to have Catholic principals, who permitted early dismissal to attend these classes.

The schools which did cooperate should be commended, since the seven-year olds needed time for preparation for Holy Communion or Eucharist, and 12-year olds for Confirmation. These last two sacraments, with the Baptism at birth, complete the Christian initiation of children into the Catholic community, as full-fledged adult members. Needless to say, religious affiliation and orthodoxy were high priorities for the Italians.

Recreation

Unfortunately, there were no social activities provided by the church in the early 1900's. In later years, Protestant groups provided recreation, sewing, religious classes, and story hours for

children after school and in the summer. These services, enticing many Catholic youngsters who were starved for education, recreation, and companionship, caused some families to switch their allegiance to the Protestant Church.

Recreational activities in the early part of the century were spontaneous and included social gatherings, picnics, and outdoors sports. Although the activities were loosely organized, the people participated in them and apparently enjoyed them. The fraternal organizations (Polish and Italian) supplied a place for these leisure-time activities for their respective nationality groups; the native language was spoken, making activities more comfortable.

However, a majority of the activities for young people took place in their own backyards--jumping rope, riding the swings, or swimming in the small creeks. Because of the wide open spaces, there were places to hike, race, climb trees, and play ball; however, when the wide open spaces diminished, organized activities in commercial areas were developed--a rink for roller skating and theatres for vaudeville acts and plays.

Washington, Pennsylvania, was a site for tourist attractions and became a lively entertainment center on weekends. Miners and laborers came to town by train to enjoy shows or to go to saloons. Small theatres, suitable for vaudeville and motion pictures were usually located in upper floors of banks or social halls and also famous acts were brought in by outside entrepreneurs. These traveling shows were one- or two-night engagements, seats selling for 25¢ and 50¢, among them "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and Pawnee Bill's

Wild West Shows. Other forms of entertainment were the traveling minstrel show and plays produced by the high school.

Trolley service expanded throughout the early part of the twentieth century and was widely used by most residents. In 1903, the Washington Electric Street Railroad Company extended its trolley service to Canonsburg, and three years later, expanded to Pittsburgh. The improvement in transportation made it possible to travel to the outskirts of town for recreation and entertainment. Also, street car companies offered trips to Mapleview Amusement Park for dancing, amusements, roller coaster and merry-go-round rides, and slides. The Mapleview Amusement Park attracted nationally known bands and band leaders to its pavilion.

Others traveled to Pittsburgh by train for their entertainment, and returned on the last train, called the "bummer's train." In 1910, the horseless carriage increased in popularity and within ten years the Model "T" Ford was in vogue and more people traveled to the cities.

In 1913, the city government established the Washington Park on land donated by Shrontz and Dunn to provide facilities for picnics and family gatherings. In 1921, a swimming pool and a baseball field were added. Independent baseball teams that were sponsored by industries--Tyler Tube, Sackville, Stogies, and Shrontz Independents--played there. Several attempts were made in the community to start a professional team but those attempts failed.

When asked what they did for recreation, the men who were interviewed claimed they had no time for recreation because they

worked long hours in the factory, garden and home. However, many visited the Sons of Italy Lodge to play cards. Occasionally, the whole family attended wedding receptions, Columbus Day, and feast day celebrations. A second generation respondent told of her father taking her to an Italian opera in town. Her father, who loved music, had a large collection of Caruso records that he played every Sunday.

A leisure-time activity for men with some knowledge of music was to gather together (with mandolins and accordians) and provide music for christenings, weddings, and dances. Local bands composed of brass and drum players were common and varied in quality. Some band leaders had no previous band training and played mostly marches.

The respondents told of two outstanding bands--the Lopiano's Band and the Sons of Italy Band, led by Professor Alfred Longo. Lopiano's Band was composed of four members of that family and several young Italian-American college students. During the summer, they practiced on the front porch of the Lopiano's house. People in the neighborhood would gather on the street to hear and watch them play. Frequently, the band marched to Washington Park with youngsters following them. The Lopiano's Band provided music for weekly dances, parties, and funeral processions. In a band photograph of a funeral procession, six young teenagers dressed in white were carrying a small white casket, followed by a black hearse drawn by black horses. Bands in funeral processions were not a common practice. Occasionally, when such a request was made, it was

honored by the family.

Professor Alfred Longo was an accomplished musician when he came to the United States at age 22. He began his music career at age seven in Italy. Professor Longo, along with the Lopianos, organized the Sons of Italy band that participated in the Columbus Day parade and gave free concerts in Washington Park. Longo also gave music lessons to Italian immigrants and their children. He was also pit musician at the Old Capitol Theatre when they presented vaudeville acts. Later, he organized the WPA band at the Brownson House with local musicians (both employed and unemployed) and gave instruction in music to the elderly. Before the advent of talkies, he provided background piano music for the silent movies at the Casino Theatre, which later became the State Theatre on Main Street. When "talking pictures" became the rage, he lost his position at the theatre and this prompted the family to move to New Jersey, where he conducted the St. Rocco Band, the Senior Citizen Band, and played with the Joseph Dasile Band at the Olympic Amusement Park. He also composed music for symphony, band, and circus. Although distinctly Italian bands no longer survive in Washington, Pennsylvania, their tradition of musical excellence lives on in numerous local musicians and local dance bands.

Children found their own means of recreation. The boys played ball in the streets or on Gallows Hill named because the hanging of condemned persons took place on this hill. One young man took an interest in the boys and coached their football team. Some shot marbles on hard-packed ground in alleys, playing for "keeps," which

meant one kept the marbles he won from others. When the circus came to town, young boys carried water to the animals in order to obtain a free admission.

A great pastime for girls was to play house with their dolls or pretend to be storekeepers. Another one was to imitate grown-ups by putting on their mothers' long dresses, high heel shoes, large hats, and carrying a long-handled purse.

In the summers, the school provided a playground behind the school where crafts and games were taught by a teacher. In the evenings, the girls occasionally observed a religious service in a tent where the congregation's singing was accompanied by a violinist. The youngsters were frequently thrown out of the tent for giggling. They also observed baptism, immersion of a person in a wooden tub filled with water that stood near the home of the minister. Teenagers had sewing clubs that met in the members' homes, where there was more socializing than sewing. In high school, they attended the Girl Reserves Club at the YWCA, which provided a variety of activities and parties. The YWCA also provided dances and facilities for bowling and swimming.

The family enjoyed many leisure-time activities together. The children often observed and helped the parents with the making of sausage, wine, or soap, or in the preparation of special holiday meals. They also helped with the sewing and the repairing of shoes.

When asked if they used the citizens' public library, the respondents said the library had only one librarian, and there was no one to guide them in the selection of books. Therefore, they

frequently borrowed cheap ten-cent novels to read from their neighbors as a means of entertainment.

In summer, leisure time activities--recreation, visiting and game-playing--all contributed to learning English and becoming integrated into the American culture. The women exchanged recipes, tips on rearing their children, and health remedies. Usually, the men who worked long hours in the factory, garden, and home had no free time for recreation.

Another factor that helped the Italian immigrant in assimilating was reading the Italian newspaper, Il Progresso, published in New York, which was subscribed to by many. Others borrowed it or had someone read it to them. Sixteen of the respondents told the interviewer that they read the Italian newspaper, Il Progresso. Two of the Italians born in Italy who never attended American schools taught themselves to read the American newspaper. Between both publications, they learned the news of the world and what was expected of them in America.

Comparisons and Contrasts of Urban and Rural Experiences

This section deals with the third objective of the research which was to compare and contrast the urban with rural experiences Italian immigrants and their children. Since little has been written about the Italian experiences in rural areas, the urban experiences recorded in the literature will be compared with the rural experiences of this study.

The rate of assimilation for Italian immigrants was influenced by

where they settled. Many Italian immigrants settled in congested New York City neighborhoods because they were the only places available. Other Italian immigrants settled in such cities as Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh and many immigrants did not experience the crowded conditions that existed in New York City. Their homes were not single dwellings but tenement houses -- damp, dark, and poorly ventilated with windows only in the front or back part of the buildings. Their apartments were usually located on the top floors of the tenement houses which had no elevators. Since the buildings had no porches, the people sat on the front stoop. There were no open spaces for children to play (Cardasco, 1973: Berrol, 1969).

In contrast, the Italian immigrants who settled in the community studied boarded with relatives or lived in single dwellings. Many had plots of land for their vegetable gardens, ovens in their backyards for baking, and areas for raising chickens.

One of the most important steps in assimilation is learning the language of the host society. Being able to speak and read the English language hastens their knowledge of the American way. Learning the language was easier for those with previous schooling in Italy, or with some knowledge of letters and numbers. One's age at migration was an important factor because those under 14 years of age were able to attend free public schools. However, some worked in shoe shops, tailor shops or glass plants at age 12 and 13 and did not attend school.

However, Italian immigrants in the city had more opportunity to

learn the language than Italian immigrants in rural areas because evening classes were available for them along with classes being offered in Italian churches and settlement houses. They also learned from earlier immigrants, and others through services offered by the Italian interpreters in the large department stores, and banks, and by travel agents, the Italian Counsul, attorneys, doctors, and patroni who spoke their language (Kessner, 1977; Rodriguex, 1982).

In addition, the language acquisition in rural areas was much slower because English classes were not available, and people were more self-sufficient, requiring less contact with other groups. In this study the interviewees claimed they learned the language by self-teaching, motivation, help from others, and trial and error.

Work experiences in urban and rural areas also varied. Italian immigrants who settled in the city found better opportunities for employment because of diverse services and industries. There were also more peddlers in the cities who bought and sold merchandise and food on the streets or went door to door. Some worked in industries, service-related jobs, or with labor gangs to build railroads, subways, canals, and bridges. Their wages, at that time, were meager, and they experienced industrial health hazards and accidents in construction work.

In this study, many Italian immigrants in the rural area were employed in construction projects, while many also worked in the coal mines, steel mills, and glass plants. When there was no opening in these industries, Italian immigrants worked at other jobs until there was an opening. Some immigrants were constantly on the move,

looking for work in West Virginia's oil fields and coal mines. In Pennsylvania, immigrants looked for work in coal mines, steel mills and glass factories. The padroni system prevalent in the city, did not exist in this community studied because the Italians did not need their services in finding employment, housing, or banking services. But Italian immigrants in this study did require help in writing letters to relatives in Italy and in reading letters.

Urban schools were overcrowded, poorly ventilated, and had inadequate sanitary facilities. There was a high dropout rate, and many were dismissed for poor health or poor conduct. The role of the school was to Americanize, to encourage assimilation, and to eradicate the foreign background of the students. The method of teaching was rote learning and memorization. The curriculum was inflexible: the same course of instruction was offered for all students. However, urban schools over the years met the problems of educating the immigrants by introducing kindergartens, industrial training programs, vocational training, special classes, and by involving parents and the community in the educational system (Kristufek, 1975).

Rural schools did not experience the same problems, but neither urban nor rural teachers were educated to meet the needs of the immigrant student. Some teachers stressed cleanliness and conformity. Although water was plentiful in the rural areas, it was not always accessible to urban tenement dwellers. It was not unusual for a mother to carry water from the first floor to the fifth floor to bathe her children and keep their clothes clean.

Since there were more Italians in the urban neighborhoods, they were in a better position to support the church, parochial schools, and Italian priest. Festivals honoring various saints were common in the urban Italian neighborhoods. The church provided religious instruction for the children and social activities for the entire family. There was better communication between the Italian priest and church members, and he helped in their adjustment.

In this study, most of the priests were Irish. Although there were 24 priests between 1954 and 1913, only one was Italian. The church made little effort to help the Italian immigrants in learning English. However, their children who attended public schools were given permission to attend classes, after school, to prepare them for communion and confirmation.

When comparing recreational and leisure time activities in urban and rural areas, one finds an enormous discrepancy in opportunities. Some of the attractions the city provided were films in Italian, operas, concerts, plays, and vaudeville acts. In the summer, plays and concerts were held in the park. There was more awareness of what was available through the media: foreign newspapers, church bulletins, Italian lodge newspapers, and Italian and American newspapers. The city libraries also had books in the Italian language.

In contrast, the rural area studied did not have as many commercial recreational activities as the city, but it had movies, high school plays, and piano recitals. Of course, films and library books were available.

When comparing urban and rural social institutions, circumstances must be taken into account. In urban areas, there were more Italian lodges that provided not only a place to socialize, but mutual aids. Specifically, lodges offered English classes, citizenship classes, and scholarships for young Italian children. Many lodges instituted on Columbus Day celebrations, Italian's day picnics, and annual dinners at which awards were given to outstanding Italian-Americans on the local and national level. However, after World War II and an improvement in the economy, Italian people moved to the suburbs and along with the increase in intermarriages with non-Italians, lodge membership declined.

In the community studied, the Sons of Italy served as a place to meet and socialize; however from 1915 to 1984 their membership declined from 400 to 35. The building has been sold and the meetings now are held in the members' homes.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

This study has investigated the assimilation of (twentieth century) Italian immigrants and their children through a variety of educational experiences in a rural area. The objectives were to describe how they acquired their language, to determine the factors which affected their assimilation, and to compare and contrast through a review of the literature urban experiences with the rural experiences of interviewees in this study.

Little has been written about the Italian experiences in rural areas. Therefore, to supplement the published and unpublished studies on the Italians of the cities, personal interviews were conducted with rural Italian immigrants and their children in Washington, Pennsylvania. The population in the selected area was described and a representative subset of the population sample was chosen.

The section on background and subject characteristics included place of birth, schooling in Italy, family occupation, age at migration, and settlement patterns. As the evidence in Chapter 4 indicated, the majority of those who came from Southern Italy were agricultural workers who migrated to the United States for economic reasons.

The results of this study indicated that settlement of rural Italians depended upon their financial positions and the location of their relatives or friends. Usually, they settled in Italian neighborhoods, segregating themselves according to regions they

came from in Italy. They were put at a disadvantage by the language barrier, customs, religion, and mannerisms. They were also set apart by their dress and behavior. However, they were self-contained, and by banding together and isolating themselves, they felt secure and were able to retain their ethnic identity.

The results of the data from the interviews showed that 20 of the Italian immigrants, born in Italy and living in the target geographic area, never attended American schools because they were too old when they arrived. These people taught themselves the English language through self-education and help from others -- children, co-workers, neighbors, boarders, and relatives who migrated earlier -- these subjects acquired a working vocabulary of English necessary for survival. A few survived in the American way, where they learned to speak the language and were granted American citizenship at the same time.

Also, in spite of limited educational opportunities, the Italian immigrants made themselves understood, especially when shopping. They pointed to the merchandise, mimicked, and used various ingenious methods to make themselves understood.

Not until 1930 was adult education offered to the immigrants through the WPA. One-third of those interviewed took citizenship classes, but only a few continued with advanced English classes. The women claimed their husbands did not want them to go to school. Immigrants who were young enough to enroll in American schools learned America's culture and native tongue but were placed in the first grade, regardless of their age, until they acquired a working

knowledge of the language.

Since Italian was spoken in most of the immigrants' homes because the parents could not speak English, their children's acquisition of English was retarded. The students who were interested in obtaining an education sought help from relatives or other siblings. Immigrant parents did encourage their children to obtain an education. They respected the teachers and principals and were greatful for the free education. However, they seldom visited the school unless they were called.

The respondents recalled discrimination in high school but they felt it was not as prevalent as it was in the elementary school. Sometimes immigrant children were ignored, not called on to participate in class, were deprived of participation in some school functions such as plays and sports, and were seldom elected as class officers.

As the school became a major influence for the assimilation of Italian children, work experiences also became a primary factor in the assimilation of adult Italian immigrants because they were in constant contact with the English-speaking people. Since a majority worked in factories, coal mines, and on the railroad, it was to their advantage to speak some words in English and write numbers for recording the amount of coal mined or temperatures in the glass furnaces.

When asked how they were treated by their co-workers, a few said they were treated satisfactorily, but the majority complained about the prejudice, harassment, and discrimination found in these

jobs. Many experienced economic competition and jealousy among their co-workers, and occasionally even among their Italian friends. One respondent explained that the competition was due to historical problems that existed between people from various provinces in Italy. One example was given of a man who had an eye injury and was off work for one month. When he returned, he discovered his friends had informed his boss that he owned a home, making employment unnecessary.

There is some similarity between this study and Sister Matthews' which indicated that one of the channels for cultural assimilation was occupation, and that the schools contributed greatly to the assimilation of the Italian immigrant child. Sister Matthews also found that Italian parents did not actually "insist" that Italian be spoken at home, but since they were ignorant of English, that was the practical result (Matthews, 1966).

The Italians in rural areas were assimilated in varying degrees into the larger society; because they segregated themselves in the Italian neighborhoods, the pace of assimilation was slower. The English-speaking Protestants who immigrated had an easier adjustment as they more closely approximated existing American culture and standards. However, the Italian whose language, religion, and culture were so different more time was necessary to overcome the adjustment.

During the transition period of assimilation, this study found that some Italians experienced insecurity and conflicts. Even when the second generation rejected the values and ways of life of their

own families, they were not fully accepted in the main stream until they accepted both the English language and the cultural values.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for additional research are:

1. To extend the time period to 1980 and include a larger geographic area with a greater population.
2. To revise the questionnaire to include one or two additional categories such as school progress, outstanding teachers, community politics, and transportation.
3. To compare the assimilation of European immigrants with those from Asia.
4. To compare the assimilation of European immigrants before World War II with those who arrived after the war.
5. To investigate other forms of assimilation described by Gordon (1964) and Crispino (1990): martial, structural, identification, and civic assimilation.

Implications for Education

Oral history, "the collection of an individual's spoken memories of his life, of people he has known and events he has witnessed or participated in" (Hoopes, 1979, p. 7), is used by researchers in the social and political sciences so that sociologists and historians can record "spoken memories" as a complement to written records. Oral history could be employed in ethnic studies courses when investigating ethnic experiences. This study could be used as a model of procedures and questionnaires.

The technique of collecting oral histories was utilized in a rural

area of Georgia by Elliot Wigginton's students at the secondary level. Folklore was collected by personal interviews of elder people in the area. This material resulted in Foxfire, I, II, and III. A best seller, Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression, by Studds Terkel was also based on information obtained from oral interviews.

In history classes, oral interviews could be used to reconstruct the history of a community, resulting in the discovery of its early history, local historical sites, and records of local events. Projects might include interviewing retired workers from the mills and the coal mines. Students engaged in such projects would learn skills in communication, questioning, and listening and in transcribing tapes, organizing, and writing the information gathered.

In a multicultural course, the personal interviews would help students to investigate the similarities and differences of various ethnic groups including their values, beliefs, and attitudes. They would better understand and appreciate the struggle of various ethnic groups and their ancestors as outsiders in a strange land.

Overall, the rural Italian immigrants and their children had many of the same problems settling in a new country as their counterparts in urban areas. In fact, rural Italian immigrants perhaps had more problems in assimilation because resources were limited.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Those interviewed were divided into two groups: (1) Italian-born respondents who arrived in Washington, Pennsylvania, after age 14 and had no formal American education; and (2) Italian-born respondents who arrived before age 14 and second generation Italians who had a partial or complete American education.

Questions eliciting general information on their Italian background were asked of both groups. However, questions that the interviewer determined did not apply to the interviewee were not used.

Part I Questions

I. General Information

1. Where were you born? When?
2. Did you attend school in Italy? How many years?
3. Could you read/write in Italian?
4. Were any members of your family educated in Italy?
5. What kind of work did your father do?

II. What can you tell me about your migration to the United States from Italy?

1. At what age did you come to America.
2. Reason for migrating?
3. Were you accompanied by family, relatives, or friends?
4. Is your name the same as it was in Italy? If changed, why?
5. When you arrived in Washington, did you live in an Italian neighborhood? Did you board with relatives or friends?

III. What can you tell me about your family?

1. How many children were in your family?
2. What was your rank in the family?
3. Was it customary in your family to grant the oldest son educatinal opportunities?
4. What language was spoken in your home when you lived in America?
5. Could your parents speak English?
6. Where did they learn the language?
7. Did they teach you the language?
8. What other members of the family spoke English?

Part II Questions Addressed to Italian Born, Arriving After Age 14 with no American Education

I. Learning the English Language and Customs

1. Please tell me how, when, where, and who helped you learn to:

   a. Speak English
   b. Read English
   c. Write English
   d. Count, read numbers, and do arithmetic?

2. Were there evening classes for immigrants in the public schools? In the community?

   a. Where were they located?
   b. Did you attend? (ABE--Adult Basic Education Program)
   c. If so, did you take their test? (GED--General Educational Development Test)
   d. Were English classes offered in the churches?

3. What can you tell me about your early shopping trips and business transactions?

   a. How did the merchants treat you?
      Were they helpful with your purchases?
      Did they help you to count and make change?

   b. Was there an Italian grocery store in your neighborhood?
      i. Did you shop or visit there?
      ii. Did they teach you to speak English, count, read numbers, and/or make change?

4. Do you recall the peddler who visited in your neighborhood? Did you or your parents learn some English words from him/her?

5. Did you use the services of the interpreter for transactions at the bank, courthouse, visits to the doctor, or paying bills or taxes?

6. Could you read an American newspaper?

   a. If yes, who taught you?
   b. Did the paper help you to understand the English language and American culture? How?

7. Did you read the Italian newspaper for news in Italy and in America?

a. Did you subscribe to it or receive it from a friend?
b. How often did you receive it?
c. If you could not read the paper, did someone read it for you?
d. What were the highlights?

8. Did you use the service of the Vice Consul?

II. Occupation

1. What do you remember about your early work situation, and how were you able to perform your work?

a. How did you get your first job? What did you do?
b. Number of hours? Wages?
c. Were English classes offered for the workers?
d. How did you learn the names of tools and machines and their use? Who trained you?
e. Who helped you to communicate with the boss and co-workers?
f. What other ethnic groups worked with you?
g. How were you treated by them? Any discrimination?
h. Did you learn English on the job?

2. What were your goals?

3. Did you achieve them?

III. Organizations, Church, and Recreation

1. Tell me about the various organizations and clubs you belong to? Sons of Italy Lodge? Alpine Lodge? Settlement House? Others?

a. What were their objectives?
b. What activities did you participate in?
c. Did they help you with the English language or naturalization papers?
d. How did they help you to adjust to the new culture?

2. What role did the Church play in your early years in America?

a. What church did you attend?
b. Was there an Italian priest in your parish who helped you adjust to the American culture?
c. Were services held in Italian, English, or both?
d. Did the priest or Protestant minister visit your home?
e. Did the church have social activities? Did you participate in them?

3. What did you do for recreation?

   a. Do you recall visiting adults from different ethnic or religious groups? Did you only visit Italians?
   b. Did you visit relatives? Were most of your relatives living in Italy?
   c. How did you pass the time?
   d. Was there a great deal of "story telling" in your group?
   e. What topics did you talk about?
   f. Did someone read the newspaper or stories in Italian or English for you?
   g. Did you use the library?

IV. Is there anything else you can tell me not already covered about your educational experiences and how you learned the culture in order to adjust to American life?

Did anyone else teach you English? A neighbor? A girlfriend/boyfriend? A fiance? Relatives?

Part III Questions Addressed to Italian Born Arriving Before Age 14 with some American Education and Second Generation Italians

I. Learning the English Language and Customs

1. Please tell me how, when, where, and who helped you learn to:

   a. Speak English
   b. Read English
   c. Write English
   e. Count, read numbers, and do arithmetic?

II. School Experiences

1. What do you recall about your experiences in the public school?

   a. How old were you when you attended public school?
   b. What grade were you in?
   c. Where did you go to school?
   d. Did the children in the classroom appear to be approximately the same age? If not, could you give an estimate of the age span?
   e. Do you recall any impressions made on you or your feelings at the time regarding school or the classroom environment?
   f. Were any other members of your family attending school at the same time? Same school?
      i. What grade were they in?
      ii. Did you study together?
   g. What language was spoken at home during this period?
   h. Was pressure exerted by your parents to speak Italian only in the home?

2. Was any effort made in school to help you learn English or did you follow the same course as the English-speaking students?

   a. Were you given any extra time or attention to aid you in adjusting to the new situation?
   b. What was your impression of the teacher? (friendly, unfriendly, kind, helpful)
   c. Does one teacher stand out in your memory as influencing you or encouraging you to do well?
   d. Was there an Italian-American teacher?
   e. Did the teachers call on you to participate in class discussion?
   f. Was there any subject you particularly liked?

Disliked? Why?

g. Do you recall any reference being made to Italian history or heroes in your textbooks? Literature? Science? The arts: musicians, sculptors, publishers, and writers?

3. How did your parents feel about your schooling?

   a. Which of your parents stressed schooling and which wanted you to work?
   b. Did either or both of your parents ever visit the school? Meet teachers? Explain the circumstances.
   c. Did the school conduct programs to bring parents and children together? Explain.
   d. Did the teacher ever visit your home? For what reasons?
   e. Were there provisions for P.T.A. meetings? Did your parents attend?

4. Did you work part-time while in school?

   a. If yes, doing what? How old were you?
   b. Number of hours worked? Wages?
   c. How did you get your first job?
   d. Did you have time to study? When did you study? Where? Did your grades suffer?
   e. Did your parents encourage you to work? Why?
   f. Were you expected to contribute your wages to your parents?

5. If you did not work, do you recall how you got spending money to attend school functions?

6. Did you experience any discrimination either in or outside of school?

   a. Why were you discriminated against? Was it your accent? Type of clothing or jewelry worn? Food eaten during lunch period?
   b. Did the discrimination increase or decrease as you entered the higher grades?
   c. How did the teachers and your classmates treat you?
      i. Did they make fun of you? Call you names?
   d. How did you feel about being Italian?

7. What do you recall about school activities?

   a. What were some of the activities? Did you support them?
   b. Did you participate in sports or clubs?
   c. Were you invited to dances and parties?

d. Were you ever a candidate for class office?

8. Did you complete your high school education?

   a. If not, why did you drop out? Lack of funds? Clothes? Discrimination?
   b. What grade were you in when you dropped out?
   c. Did your parents object to your leaving school or did they urge you to do so?

9. Would you tell me about any formal education you had after high school?

   a. How was it financed?
   b. Subject studied? Major interests? Degree(s)? Honors?
   c. Did your parents encourage you to continue your education beyond the legal age of 14? Beyond high school?

III. Occupation

1. What do you remember about your early work situation, and how were you able to perform your work?

   a. How did you get your first job? Doing what?
   b. Number of yours worked? Wages?
   c. What other ethnic groups worked with you?
   d. How were you treated by them?

2. What were your goals?

3. Did you achieve them?

IV. Organizations, Church, and Recreation

1. Tell me about the various organizations and clubs you belong to? Sons of Italy Lodge? Alpine Lodge? Settlement House? YMCA? YWCA? Others?

   a. What were their objectives?
   b. What activities did you participate in?
   c. How did they help you adjust to the new culture?

2. What role did the Church play in your early years in America?

   a. What church did you attend?
   b. Was there an Italian priest in your parish who helped you adjust to the American culture?
   c. Were services held in Italian, English, or both?
   d. Did the priest or Protestant minister visit your Home?

e. Did the church have social activities? Did you participate in them?

4. What did you do for recreation? Did you use the library?

   a. Did you visit or play with any of your classmates outside of school?
   b. Do you recall playing with youngsters of various ethnic groups or did you only play with Italians?
   c. What do you remember as an outstanding place for recreation? Street corner? Alley? Playground? Protestant church? Others?

V. Is there anything else you can tell me not already covered about your educational experiences and how you learned the culture in order to adjust to American life? Did anyone else teach you English? A neighbor? A girlfriend/boyfriend? A fiance? Relatives?

APPENDIX B

RELEASE FORM

The tape recordings and contents of my interview with _____ may be used by her for such purposes as she sees fit, including publication or deposit in an oral history collection for public inspection.

_____ _____

Interviewee signature (Fictitious name or code)

_____ _____

Date Interviewer signature

_____

Date

ABSTRACT

This study examined the assimilation of twentieth century Italian immigrants and their children through a variety of educational experiences in a rural area. The objectives were to describe how they acquired their language, to determine factors which affected their assimilation, and to compare and contrast, through a review of the literature, urban experiences with the rural experiences of subjects in this study.

Little has been written about Italian immigrant experiences in rural areas. Therefore, to supplement the published and unpublished studies on the Italians in the cities, the techniques of oral history were utilized in order to study Italian immigrants and their children in Washington, Pennsylvania.

The results indicated that the majority of the Italian immigrants who came to Washington, Pennsylvania between 1890 - 1940 were from Southern Italy and for the most part were agricultural workers who migrated to the United States for economic reasons. It was also found that Italian immigrants were put at a disadvantage by the language barrier, customs, religion, and mannerisms. However, they were self-contained, and by banding together and isolating themselves, they felt secure and were able to retain an identity. This type of settlement helped them learn the English language from their own children, neighbors, boarders, and relatives who migrated earlier.

Most important, various factors facilitated assimilation of rural

Italian immigrants such as the English language, work experiences, lodges, churches, recreational activities and the newspapers. Finally, the implications of this study indicated that the techniques of oral history could be employed in ethnic studies courses along with helping use oral history to reconstruct the history of their communities.

RESUME

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EDUCATION

1943	Bachelor of Science, New York University.
1950	M.Litt. Sociology, University of Pittsburgh.
1950 (Summer)	Study Tour, Western Europe.
1953 (Summer)	Vergilian Society, Cumma, Italy.
1952-1960	Post-graduate Studies, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1965-1968	Post-graduate Studies, University of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland.
1966 (Summer)	N.S.F. grant, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
1971 (Summer)	N.S.F. grant, Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois.
1980-1986	Candidate for Ed.D., West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1973-1974	Part-time instructor in Sociology, Pennsylvania State University, Fayette Campus, Uniontown, Pennsylvania.
1971-1972	Assistant Professor of Sociology, Fairmont State College, Fairmont, West Virginia.
1969-1971	Assistant Professor of Sociology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pennsylvania.
1968-1969	Assistant Professor of Sociology, Clarion State College, Clarion, Pennsylvania.
1965-1968	Sociology Instructor, Towson State College, Baltimore, Maryland.
1964-1965	Sociology Instructor, West Liberty State College, West Liberty, West Virginia

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